

## POLICY DOCUMENT

Policy Title:	Customer Care
Policy Group:	Information Governance and Administration
Policy Owner:	Director of Operations
Issue Date:	December 2023
Review Period:	24 months
Next Review Due	December 2025
Author:	S Burchell
Cross References:	Policies: Reception Operational Policy; Administration; Complaints; Information for Patients, Admission Transfer and Discharge or Death of Patients; Neuro and musculoskeletal Out Patient Physiotherapy, Internal Communications, Visiting
Evidence:	Patient Survey Reports, Complaints and Compliments
How implementation will be monitored:	Routine supervision by Information Services Manager, Director of Operations and Finance Manager.
Sanctions to apply for breach:	Retraining, disciplinary action if required
Computer File Ref.	O:\risk management\Policies\Information Governance and Administration
Policy Accepted by MT	14 <sup>th</sup> December 2023
Sign-off by CEO	

### Statement of purpose:

This policy describes the quality standards applying to customer care in non-clinical contexts.

Our customers include inpatients, family members and other visitors, outpatients, CCG officers, medical professionals and counsellors including those hiring our facilities.

### Policy Statement:

Holy Cross Hospital aims to treat our customers in a way that reflects well on the values of the Sisters and their charitable company.

We endeavour to maintain good, ongoing working relationships with our customers, to listen carefully and to respond positively and promptly as far as possible.

Although the principles of Customer Care apply throughout the organisation, the delivery of healthcare services to patients is managed within the Clinical Governance Framework. This policy therefore focuses particularly on services such as administration, housekeeping, maintenance and catering.

### Quality statement

We aim to provide a prompt, courteous and efficient first-point-of-contact service to our customers whether during office hours by members of the Reception team or out-of-hours by nursing staff.

Customers who call our offices by telephone during office hours will be answered as quickly as possible. People calling in person will be given prompt attention and their enquiries will

be answered courteously. Outside office hours, nursing staff will answer as quickly as possible although their priority is to give attention to any urgent patient needs.

Reception is staffed from 8.00am until 5.30pm from Monday to Friday. Excluding bank holidays

All of our staff take personal responsibility for achieving a good outcome for our customers.

### **Organisational arrangements:**

The Chief Executive is responsible for defining policy and standards in consultation with the Charitable Company, working through and with Management Team and the Advisory Committee.

Managers are responsible for day-to-day implementation of the policy and for working in consultation with staff teams to identify and commend good practice, challenge weak practice and report to Management Team on all aspects of customer care.

The Director of Patient Services is responsible for implementing good clinical practice and prepares, in collaboration with the Director of Operations and Clinical Governance Group, a Clinical Manual that sets out standards relating to Customer Care in all aspects of Clinical Services.

The team of administrative assistants who staff the Reception desk are the first point of contact with customers, either in person or by telephone. Depending on the particular customer, other departments may also have ongoing contact, including accounts and clinical departments.

When Reception is unstaffed, all telephone calls will be forwarded to the Nurse in Charge who will respond to any enquiries and pass any messages to Reception if necessary. Calls to the dedicated outpatient telephone line will go through to voicemail and any messages will be followed up at the first available opportunity. Visitors to the hospital arriving after office staff hours will find the doors locked but may gain entry via the intercom outside the main doors, which will communicate directly with the Nurse in Charge. The Nurse in Charge is then able to remotely release the entrance doors to allow access to a visitor once they have identified themselves.

### **Targets**

Our main non-clinical customer care targets are to:

- Answer all telephone calls at the first point of contact.
- Respond to emails within one working day. Where a substantive response is likely to take longer, we will send an acknowledgement and explain when the customer can expect to receive a full reply.
- Provide an ongoing, high quality, evidence-based service that is appropriate to customers' needs.
- Ensure that data we hold on our databases is accurate, up-to-date and secure.
- Forward patient sensitive data accurately, confidentially and effectively to appropriate people only as necessary and agreed with the "data subject".
- Forward a patient satisfaction survey to inpatients or their authorised representatives annually.
- Provide our staff with appropriate customer care training.

- Include customer care skills in our job descriptions and knowledge and skills framework.
- Hold regular meetings with staff to maintain service level standards and share good practice.
- Any suggestions to improve our services will be acted upon as far as practically possible.

Customer Care in the context of clinical work by doctors, nurses, therapists and care assistants is set out in the context of the Clinical Manual, Clinical Governance Framework and Plan and is subject to regular audit.

### **Customer Care in the context of Risk Management and Health and Safety**

Risk Management and Health and Safety considerations place obligations on Hospital staff with regards to the way in which work is carried out. At times, staff may need to explain to “customers” the reasons for undertaking tasks in particular ways.

The Administration team have an important role to play in terms of Hospital Risk Management including

- Security of persons and property by competent identification of visitors and alerting managers to issues of concern
- Accurate and comprehensive information management through digital and non-digital means
- Maintaining the Hospital’s reputation as a provider of high quality healthcare services delivered by an organisation within and upholding the values of the Roman Catholic Church
- Securing business for the hospital and its associates through careful booking of appointments, providing helpful and relevant information in response to enquiries and related issues and passing on information when required promptly and accurately.
- Timely and effective resolution of operational problems arising in the Reception area.

### **The Housekeeping and Maintenance team is responsible for:**

- Communicating with patients before commencing work in a room and explaining what tasks are necessary.
- Working carefully and efficiently to minimise inconvenience and the risk of accidents
- Providing signage to warn others of any hazards in their working area
- Taking care of patients’ personal clothing to the greatest extent possible and reporting promptly to the Assistant General Manager any difficulties arising.

### **The Catering team is responsible for:**

- Making contact with patients or nursing staff on patients’ behalf, to understand their requirements and preferences in choosing meals
- Providing food service that is personalised, well-presented and accurately reflects patients’ choices as well as being prepared in full accordance with the Hospital Specification.
- Offering a service as agreed with Management through the Dining Room to staff and visitors that respects customers’ wishes, provides good quality food and efficient service in pleasant and relaxing surroundings

The Hospital aims to ensure that contractors working for the Hospital understand and comply with the same standards. Contractors are required to read and sign the Hospital’s “Terms and Conditions” document to confirm their agreement.

**Managing the process**

- Customer comments and feedback are encouraged by the Hospital. Feedback forms are available from Reception, the Dining Room and are available online on the Hospital website at [www.holycross.org.uk](http://www.holycross.org.uk).
- All staff are given training in the compliment and complaint policy and procedure and understand how to respond to any person presenting a compliment or a complaint.
- Careful attention is given to acknowledging all complaints and comments received formally and informally and acting on suggestions for improvement whenever possible.
- Reports on complaints and comments are given to Management Team and the Advisory Committee.
- An annual inpatient survey is undertaken in order to see how we may improve our inpatient services.

**Policy review**

- This policy has been checked for overt or implied discrimination within the scope of the Hospital's policies on equality and diversity and none was found.
- The policy will be reviewed bi-annually to ensure that the system described continues to provide an effective framework for measuring quality and making changes to ensure proper customer care standards continue to be achieved.