



Intensive Care Unit and High Dependency Unit

Introduction

Your relative or friend has been admitted to the **Intensive Care Unit (ICU) / High Dependency Unit (HDU)**. This booklet has been compiled to answer some of the questions that you may have.

On the ICU & HDU, we care for people who are extremely unwell, and who require an increased level of observation. Patients who have any significant past medical history or have prolonged or complicated surgery may also be admitted.

Our aim is to provide maximum medical and nursing care for very ill patients and support for relatives in a caring environment. We welcome your involvement and comments.

Information for relatives, carers and friends

Intensive Care Unit (ICU) direct 24hr line: (01793) 604521
Provides continuous monitoring and treatment of seriously ill patients using special medical equipment and services.

High Dependency Unit (HDU) direct 24hr line: (01793) 604527 / 604528

Patients are monitored more closely than on a normal ward, but not to the point of Intensive Care.



Intensive Care Unit and High Dependency Unit

Personal belongings

On ICU there is limited space to store property and valuables so we ask that you take your relative's valuables home with you. All that is needed on the unit is basic toiletries and maybe some books or music. Inform the nurse caring for your relative what you have brought and they can ensure that it is labelled properly.

Taking care and protecting yourselves

Having a relative or friend in ICU or HDU can be a very stressful and tiring time. It is understandable that you will be concerned about your loved one but it is also very important to take extra care of yourself.

Try to rest as much as possible, remember to eat and drink sensibly too.

It is best to try and have a reasonable night sleep away from the unit.

This allows you and your relative to have an adequate rest and will also prepare both of you for the day ahead.

Critical Care Outreach

Critical Care Outreach is a service designed to offer support to patients and staff across the Trust. We may have assisted in your admission to ICU/HDU. We also follow up any patients discharged from ICU/HDU. On discharge you will be cared for by ward staff, but the Critical Care Outreach team will see you daily.



Intensive Care Unit and High Dependency Unit

Visiting time

We have open visiting on the unit but we can be very busy especially in the mornings we therefore recommend visiting after 11am. For HDU patients visiting ends at 8pm.

Only two visitors per patient at a time as per Trust policy. We recommend short visits as ICU and recovering patients tire very quickly. We restrict visitors to next of kin only; other visitors including children may visit at the discretion of the patient's next-of-kin and the nurse in charge.

Waiting area

Within the unit there is one large waiting area with a kitchen – please help yourself to refreshments. Space at times can be limited; we therefore ask that consideration for others be shown.

Buzzer system

To ensure absolute safety of our patients and staff in the unit, we operate a controlled entry system monitored by a video screen. This also allows us the opportunity to ensure that your relative's nurse is available to update you. We therefore request that you use the buzzer system at the entrance to the unit.

The unit can be very busy at times and staff may be unable to answer immediately. Please wait for it to be answered. **You will be asked to take a seat in the waiting room** and the nurse caring for your relative will call you in to the unit. We do appreciate your patience and will ensure that you can see your relative as soon as possible.



Intensive Care Unit and High Dependency Unit

There is an internal intercom system in the waiting area and you can contact the unit if you are waiting longer than 15 minutes. You **must** use this phone to gain entry to the unit at all times.

Please do not open the door to other visitors or other family members.

Infection control

To prevent the spread of infection it is trust policy for **all visitors** to wash their hands with alcohol based gel prior to and after visiting their relative.

Parking

We provide parking tickets to next of kin for patients that have “very serious or life threatening” conditions, we cannot give out concessionary parking tickets for patients that are well enough to move to a ward – please ask the nurse caring for your relative.

Mobile Phones

The use of mobile phones is **not permitted** on the unit but you may use them in the waiting room or in the main corridor.

They must be turned off whilst visiting the unit.

Accommodation

Overnight accommodation is available where appropriate – please discuss any needs with the nurse in charge either in person or contact number 01793 604521. This is available overnight and will then be reviewed. We can only accommodate two people to stay in the room and the room **must** be vacated by



Intensive Care Unit and High Dependency Unit

10.00am for housekeeping. Rooms will be allocated on a daily basis.

If you need further details of our local hotels, accommodation and B&B's, you may contact the hospital main reception and they will be happy to help you. Tel: 01793 604020

Telephone calls

Relatives may telephone anytime. We recommend that **one member of the family should coordinate calls** and keep the rest of the family informed. We would appreciate it if you do **not** telephone the unit between 8am and 9 am as the ward round is in progress at this time and the nurse you need to speak to may not be able to take your call.

In order to protect patient confidentiality, we are unable to give extensive information over the phone. Your call is very important to us but if there is someone who has recently visited their update may be more satisfactory.

Spiritual care

The Chaplaincy department is located on the first floor with a chapel set aside for anyone seeking some quiet time. There is a chaplain available at all times. If you or your relative would like spiritual comfort and support chaplains of all denominations are available at all times. Please ask the nurse caring for your relative to arrange this.



Intensive Care Unit and High Dependency Unit

From 1st January 2019 smoking **will not be permitted** on any NHS site in England. Smoking will not be permitted within any of our buildings or anywhere outside on our sites. Smoking facilities will not be provided. Please be considerate of others when vaping in hospital grounds.

This information sheet is available to order in other languages and formats. If you would like a copy, please contact us on 01793 604031 or email gwh.pals@nhs.net

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