Bexley Wing
High Dependency Unit
Ward J81
Information for patients and relatives
Welcome to Bexley Wing High Dependency Unit. This booklet is designed to provide information to patients who are admitted to the High Dependency Unit (HDU) and their relatives and friends.

With this booklet we aim to answer some of your questions, and hopefully ease some of your worries as we understand it is a distressing and emotional time to have someone admitted to a critical care environment.

Introduction

Patients are admitted to HDU for close monitoring when their condition requires a higher level of nursing care than on the wards, with the ratio of one qualified nurse to two patients.

Patients can be admitted to HDU from:

- Accident and Emergency Unit (A&E)
- Theatre
- Medical/Surgical wards
- Intensive care unit
- Other High Dependency units

Occasionally the patient’s condition can deteriorate whilst on HDU and they require transfer to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). We will inform you of this as soon as possible.
Where is the High Dependency Unit?

The high dependency unit can be found on Level 2 in the Bexley Wing; it is clearly sign posted HDU/WARD J81.

What does the HDU look like?

The HDU is a large open unit and has 16 possible bed spaces. There are no set male or female sections, but every effort is made to maintain dignity and privacy.

We have two side rooms used for patients requiring isolation due to infections or low immune systems. Critical Care Units can be noisy due to the sensitivity of the alarms, beeping of equipment and the general everyday activity of telephone rings and staff activity.
Phone numbers

Our direct lines are - 0113 206 9181 or 0113 206 7845. You may call us any time, day or night.

We do have cordless / portable phone on the unit. We are able to transfer your call to a portable phone so you can speak to your relative.

Please understand that we are a busy unit and when relatives call for information, the nurse looking after the patient has to leave the bedspace to take the call.

We appreciate that family want to know how their relative is, but there is little information we can give over the phone for reasons of confidentiality. We ask if one nominated family member could ring the unit in the morning, then pass on any information to other friends and family.

Intercom entry system and waiting area

The HDU is secured by a locked door and intercom/camera entry system for the safety of patients and staff.

When you arrive to visit someone, you will need to press the intercom outside the main unit and state who you are visiting. A member of staff will answer the intercom. Please be patient, due to work pressures staff maybe busy and may take time to answer the intercom.

Sometimes, you will not be able to come onto the unit immediately. Occasionally you may have to be seated in our waiting area whilst nursing or medical procedures are being
performed or if your relative has not returned from theatre. Generally, patients do not arrive back from theatre and the recovery room until early evening. However, you are more than welcome to sit and wait in our relative’s area which is situated on the approach corridor to HDU and is clearly sign posted.

We realise that time can pass slowly and you may feel frustrated by the lack of news, but as soon as we receive news that your relative is ready for collection from the recovery room, we will inform you. We will come and collect you when your relative is safely on the unit.

**Mobile phones**

As when visiting anyone in hospital we ask that you turn off your mobile phone. You will see mobiles in use by the doctors, this is so they are contactable in an emergency.

**Visiting**

Visiting times are *2.00pm - 7.00pm* daily. We have these visiting hours as ward rounds, physiotherapy and nursing care tends to occur in the morning. If you are unable to visit within our visiting hours, ring and ask to speak to the nurse in charge of the shift. We will be accommodating, wherever reasonable, in allowing you to visit outside these hours. We aim to keep cares and procedures to a minimum during protected meal times. Visitors can use this opportunity to take time out for walks, fresh air and drinks.

Protected mealtimes are *12 noon-1.00pm and 5.00-6.00pm.*
What to expect when you visit HDU

The initial reaction on entering a critical care environment for the first time can be overwhelming.

We believe it may be helpful to understand what the various equipment is for. The nurse at the bedspace will explain and answer any questions you may have.

The team

The staff on the HDU work together as a team to provide a high standard of care twenty four hours a day. Nursing staff are available to speak with you at any time to answer your questions. At the beginning of your visit please ask the nurse caring for your relative if you wish to speak to a doctor, they will make arrangements for this to happen.

During your stay you may come into contact with the following:

**Physiotherapists** - Breathing exercises, assist to sit out, limb exercises.

**Dietitian** – Ensure that each patient is receiving enough calories and nutrition.

**Pharmacist** – Is involved monitoring the effects of medicines on patients and in supplying the HDU with medication that our patients require

**Radiography** – Portable chest x-rays and scans maybe carried out on the unit.
**Pain Team** – Visit daily to review patients pain needs.

**The Critical Care Outreach Team** – Part of the Critical Care Service who follow up and support patients discharged from Intensive Care and High Dependency.

**Microbiologist** - Involved in monitoring the risk of infection and advising on appropriate treatments.

**HDU bedspace**

*This is a standard bed space you will expect to see.*
The monitor
All patients are attached to monitors which look like television screens. This machine constantly gives staff the information that they need, for example, blood pressure, heart rate, respirations, oxygen saturations and central venous pressure. The numbers on the screen constantly change and will bleep/alarm if levels rise or fall outside normal ranges. Don’t be too concerned if you hear the monitor alarm, they are very sensitive and just alert the staff of any changes.

Drips, pumps and tubes
You may see a number of drips and tubes attached to your relative. These are mainly inserted in patients when they are asleep. These are used for a variety of purposes including taking blood samples, for providing hydration and liquid food, giving drugs and draining waste.

Be prepared for your relative to look different from the last time you saw them.
They may be attached to the following drips and tubes:

**Arterial line** - Situated in the wrist to take blood tests to determine the amount of oxygen and carbon dioxide in the blood. This is also used for constant blood pressure monitoring.

**Catheter** - A flexible tube inserted into the bladder to allow the drainage of urine from the bladder. A measuring device will be visible at the bottom of the bed.

**Central line** - Line / catheter is placed into a large vein in the neck or chest. It is used to administer medication, liquid food, fluids and to obtain blood samples. Some specialist drugs can only be administered by this route.

**Chest drain** - It is a flexible tube that is inserted through the side of the chest into the pleural space. It is used to remove air or fluid from the lung.

**Epidural** - A thin catheter / tube inserted into your spine in the anaesthetic room. Attached to drugs to numb the site of your operation.

**NG** - Nasogastric tube (NGT), a plastic tube inserted into the nose to drain fluid from the stomach or as a means of feeding the patient

**NJ** - Nasojejunal tube, similar to the NGT, except it passes through the stomach into one of the upper parts if the intestine called the jejunum to feed the patient.

**Oxygen** - Maybe in the form of nasal cannula or face mask. Other more specialist masks may be used.
**PCAS** - Patient Controlled Analgesia System, button controlled morphine syringe controlled by the patient.

**Robinsons Drain** - A non-suction wound drain system.

**Peripheral Cannula** - Is a small flexible plastic tube that is inserted through the skin into the vein. This allows medication and fluids to go directly into your blood.

Patients vary as to how much they remember about their stay on HDU. Often the strong pain killers such as morphine and epidural drugs can make patients muddled and confused.

Patients often talk about un-real things, show signs of hallucinations, nightmares and delusions. Nursing staff always reassure the patient and relatives that this is temporary and due to the nature of the surgery or strong pain relief.

**Infection control**

Please leave infections at home. Don’t visit if you are unwell, for the protection of staff and patients. Alcohol gel is available at the entrance, please gel your hands on entering and leaving the Unit. You can also find the alcohol gel at the bed space for your use. You can send or bring your relative ‘get well cards’, but flowers are not advised due to infection.

*If you find an empty alcohol gel or soap dispenser please inform a member of staff.*
Visitor information

At the bedspace

- When visiting, please ensure that only two visitors at a time are at each bed space. This is so the nursing staff can care safely for your relative and attend to the machines and pumps. If you have more than two visitors you can swap at intervals to suit yourselves.

- There are chairs around the unit you can bring to the bedspace so you can sit next to your relative. We ask that you return them to where you found them once you have finished visiting. Please do not sit on the beds when you visit.

- Although we are a big unit, we do not have any storage to keep patients property. The only essentials the patient may need are a toiletry bag, dentures, spectacles, photos or personal mementos.

- We encourage families to take property home until your relative is discharged to a ward.

- We do not advise that babies or children visit the Unit due to the risk of infection being passed on to them. They can find it daunting and upsetting. If you have any queries about young visitors please speak to the nurse in charge.

- Please don’t eat food or drink at the bedspaces. The majority of the patients on HDU are not able to drink and may not appreciate seeing relatives drinking in front of them.
**Hotel**

Bexley Wing Hotel is located on the 8th floor and is available for relatives and patients. All rooms have en-suite facilities and a lockable safe. There are single and twin and disabled rooms available. All rooms have a television, with tea and coffee making facilities.

For enquiries and bookings ring: 0113 206 7687.

After office hours please contact the Night Nurse Practitioner. HDU staff can help you with this.

**Waiting area**

As mentioned before, we have a relatives waiting area, just off the main unit. There are toilets, a television and hot drinks machine there for your use. You will find a telephone there. You can call through to the unit to enquire how long it may be until you can come through to see your relative.

**Discharge to the ward**

The length of stay on HDU varies on each individual’s condition. Patients are usually transferred to the ward during the day, however due to acute admissions and high demands for critical care beds, it is not uncommon for patients to be transferred to wards during the night. However we do try to avoid this wherever possible. Please be aware that visiting times on other wards may be different. Please contact your transferring ward for times.
Café and restaurant

There is a café open Monday to Friday 7.30am - 7.30pm, Saturday and Sunday 9.30am - 5.30pm). The restaurant on Level 0 in the Bexley Wing has limited opening hours and there is a newsagent near the main entrance. The Gledhow Wing has a larger restaurant you can also visit. ATM machines for cash withdrawals are available in Bexley Wing and Gledhow Wing.

Faith Centre

The Faith Centre is on Level 1 and is open 24 hours a day. The centre is an open space available to everyone of whatever background or faith.

Phone number: 0113 206 5935 / 0113 206 4365
Getting to Bexley Wing

**By car;** follow signs for St James’s Hospital, Bexley Wing. The Multi-storey car park has 1,300 spaces for patients and relatives. This car park offers a “pay as you leave” system. There is a pedestrian walkway from the car park leading to the main entrance off the plaza.

**By bus;** the main stops for Bexley Wing are located on Beckett Street which runs adjacent to the hospital site. Access to all floors can be made from this entrance (Level -2) with lifts and stairs to all areas.

**Bexley Wing** Level 0 (Ground Floor)
Complaints

Please discuss any worries or concerns with the staff on the Unit. If unresolved and you feel that it is necessary to make a written complaint, we will guide you through the complaint leaflet, which are available in the relatives area.