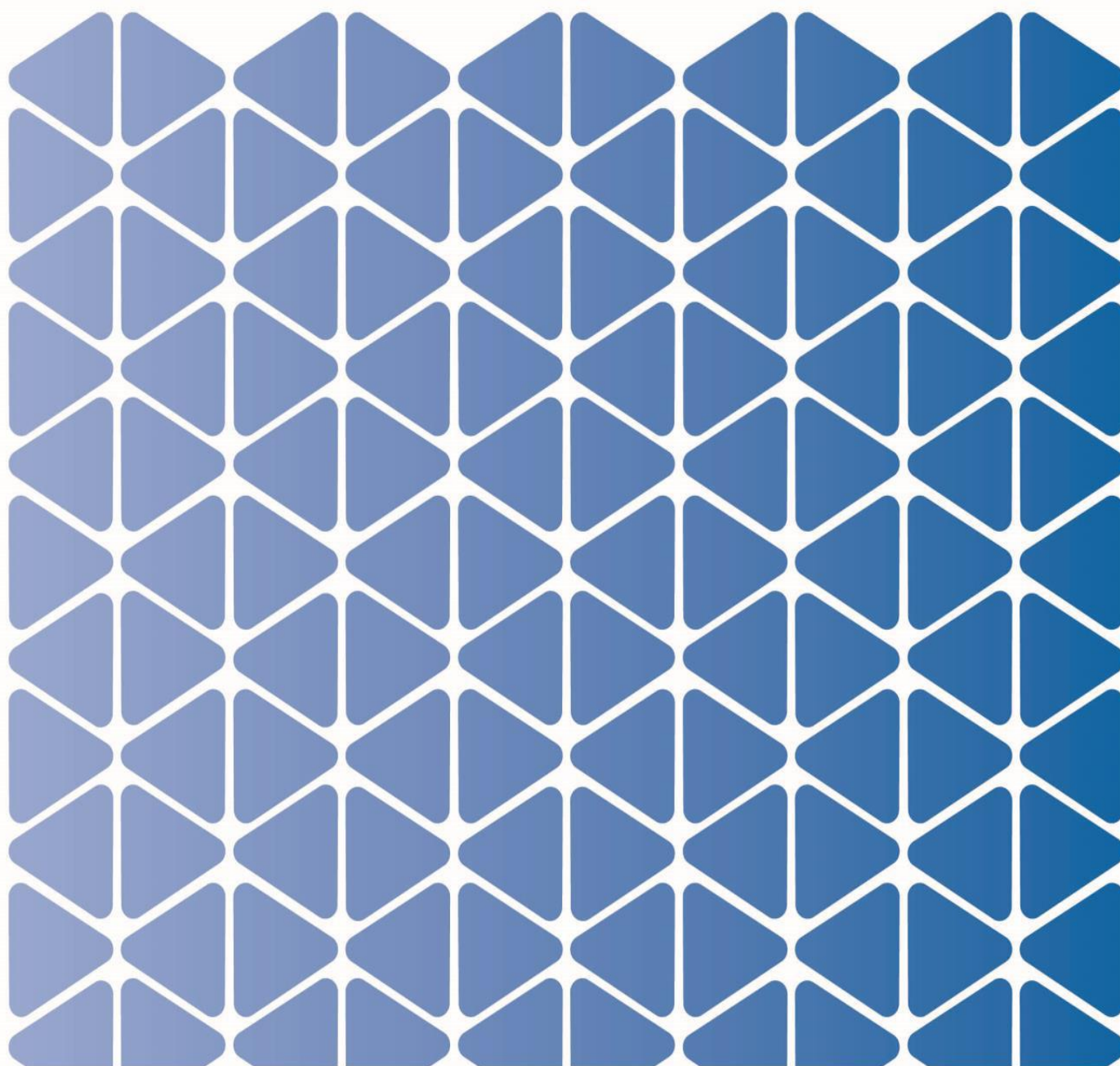


INFORMATION leaflet for parents and carers.

Care of Critically Ill Children on the Children's Ward



Your child has been admitted to the children's ward in order for doctors and nurses to find out what is making them poorly and to start to treat them.

It may be that your child is too poorly to understand what is happening to them or that they appear too asleep to be able to hear you. Even if your child appears asleep it is important that you keep talking to them as sometimes, they can hear you.

We understand how scary it is for parents and families when their child is very poorly and we want you to feel able to talk to the staff about problems or things you don't understand.

Lots of people will be doing tests and procedures to your child and we will try to explain these as we go along and make sure you are happy for these things to be happening to your child.

This is called consent and we have to be sure you understand the procedure, why we are doing it, and that you are happy to give permission for us to do it.

It may be that your child becomes so poorly that they need to go to a specialist centre such as a children's intensive care unit. We will tell you if this is the case as early as we can. It can sometimes take a little time to find a bed on one of these units and we sometimes have to ring lots of hospitals.

These hospitals may seem a long way away, but they offer the sort of care your child will need and they will try to transfer you back to your local hospital as early as is safe for your child.

Once the bed has been arranged a team of doctors and nurses specially trained to transfer very poorly children between hospitals will come in an ambulance to collect your child. This is called the retrieval team.

Depending on how poorly your child is, the hospital doctors and anaesthetists may decide to put your child on a breathing machine and this is usually done in the anaesthetic room. This can also be done in accident and emergency or on the ward, as these are also safe places to put your child to sleep. This does not mean your child is having an operation in the hospital, but it is the place where the anaesthetists have all the equipment they need to hand.

The hospitals we usually use are Birmingham Children's Hospital, Royal Stoke University Hospital, Queens Medical Centre Nottingham, Bristol Children's Hospital.

When the retrieval team arrive, they will make sure everything they need for your child on the journey is set up safely and then transfer them in an ambulance back to their specialist unit.

It is absolutely vital that you do not try to follow the ambulance to the hospital as they may be travelling with blue lights and it is very dangerous to try and follow. You must make sure that you have a map and/ or directions and make your own way to the hospital, find somewhere to park and then make your way to the unit where your child is to be looked after.

You may find that you cannot always go straight in to see your child as the staff will be settling them in and setting up drugs and machinery. As soon as it is safe for you to go in, they will call you in.

If you have any questions about the information in this leaflet, please ensure you ask your nurse.

Please also remember that the care plan used by the nurse has room for you to write things you think of in it.

If your symptoms or condition worsens, or if you are concerned about anything, please call your GP, 111, or 999.

Patient Experience

We know that being admitted to hospital can be a difficult and unsettling time for you and your loved ones. If you have any questions or concerns, please do speak with a member of staff on the ward or in the relevant department who will do their best to answer your questions and reassure you.

Feedback

Feedback is really important and useful to us – it can tell us where we are working well and where improvements can be made. There are lots of ways you can share your experience with us including completing our Friends and Family Test – cards are available and can be posted on all wards, departments and clinics at our hospitals. We value your comments and feedback and thank you for taking the time to share this with us.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

If you have any concerns or questions about your care, we advise you to talk with the nurse in charge or the department manager in the first instance as they are best placed to answer any questions or resolve concerns quickly. If the relevant member of staff is unable to help resolve your concern, you can contact the PALS Team. We offer informal help, advice or support about any aspect of hospital services & experiences.

Our PALS team will liaise with the various departments in our hospitals on your behalf, if you feel unable to do so, to resolve your problems and where appropriate refer to outside help.

If you are still unhappy you can contact the Complaints Department, who can investigate your concerns. You can make a complaint orally, electronically or in writing and we can advise and guide you through the complaints procedure.

How to contact PALS:

Telephone Patient Services: 0300 123 1732 or via email at: wah-tr.PALS@nhs.net

Opening times:

The PALS telephone lines are open Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 4.00pm. Please be aware that you may need to leave a voicemail message, but we aim to return your call within one working day.

If you are unable to understand this leaflet, please communicate with a member of staff.