

Welcome to The Neonatal Intensive Care Unit

April 2023



An Introductory guide to the
Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) for Parents & Carers

Telephone number 01553 613730

Introduction

This booklet is designed to help you to get to know the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), its staff and layout and how we will help you care for your baby during their stay.

You can contact the unit day or night at any time on 01553 613730 to talk to the staff caring for your baby. If you are not on the unit your baby will be cared for 24 hours a day by nursing staff. If you are on the unit nursing staff will help and support you in caring for your baby.

You may at times feel overwhelmed and stressed as having a baby on NICU can be a difficult experience. If you have any worries or concerns, however small they may seem, please speak to a member of staff who will be happy to help.

Our aim is to help and support you to be able to make decisions and care for your baby. We will keep you fully involved and informed about your baby in a timely manner.

You will be given a parent care plan which will support you in caring for your baby. Nursing staff are able to support you with nappy area care, skin care, bathing, dressing, feeding, assessing your baby's health, comforting, holding and basic life support training. If you would like further help and advice please ask a member of staff.

NICU Parents are granted free parking on the hospital carpark while your baby is in NICU. Please ask your nurse for a parking scratch card.



Unit Layout

The unit has 3 cot rooms where babies are cared for. These are

- Cot Room 1 for the intensive and high dependency care where most babies come when they are first admitted
- Cot Room 2 for intensive, high dependency or special care for a single baby
- Cot Room 3 for high dependency or special care where babies need less intensive care

There is a Family room for you to use any time to prepare food and drinks, eat and relax.

Lockers are available on entering the unit and in the Family room. Please store any valuables, bags and outside coats in the lockers.

Mobile phones should not be used for phone calls in the nurseries as they can disturb other babies and their families. They can be used in the Family room but please be considerate of others whilst using them. You may take a photograph of your baby but please respect the privacy of other babies and families and consider what is in the background of your photo.

Toilets are available near the entrance of the unit. You will need to ask a member of staff to let you through to the toilets due to the locked security doors.

There is a milk kitchen which is used for all milk preparation. This area is a staff only area due to infection control and to keep the area as clean as possible. We recommend if you wish to express by your baby's cot. We have screens available for privacy.

We have 2 Parent and baby overnight rooms available with toilet and shower facilities for you to come and stay close to your baby. Please talk to one of the nurses if you wish to come and stay in one of our rooms. Priority will be given to parents whose babies are very poorly or whose baby is getting ready to go home, but all parents/carers are given the opportunity to stay with their baby before discharge from the neonatal unit.



Who works on the Unit

You will see lots of different staff members whilst your baby is on the Neonatal Unit (NICU) and your baby may be reviewed and cared for by different members of staff each day. To help you identify staff we have a picture gallery opposite the nurses' station.

The NICU Ward Manager is Kit King

We have 2 Ward clerks who are based at the staff base and are happy to assist and direct any queries for you. We have 2 Housekeepers who work on the unit every day and support the smooth running of the unit with supplies and equipment.

Nurse Practitioners - purple
Senior Sisters - navy blue
Registered Nurses – mid blue
Nursery Nurses & Senior neonatal
nursing assistants – light blue
Neonatal nursing assistants – light green
Trainee Nursing associates – white
Housekeepers - grey

Your baby will have a card on their cot/incubator which tells you which nurse is looking after you and your baby that day. The nurse who is allocated to you will introduce herself when you arrive on the unit. There is a nurse in charge allocated for each shift and they wear a red in charge badge.

The shift times for the nurses are Day shift
7.30am – 8.30pm

Night shift 7.30pm – 8.30am

The nursing handover takes place between 7.30am-8.30am & 7.30pm-8.30pm.

Please do not interrupt nurses who are wearing red aprons unless in an emergency as they are checking medications.

In the case of an emergency, please alert a member of staff immediately.



Doctors

The most senior doctors within the neonatal unit are known as Consultants. There are 7 Paediatric Consultants who have specialised experience and training in the care of babies and provide 24 hour cover 7 days a week. They also provide care and treatment for the children on the children's ward. When your baby is admitted to the Neonatal Unit they will be allocated a Consultant who will direct the care your baby needs. If you wish to speak to them or a senior doctor please ask one of the nurses to arrange this.

The Consultants are supported by Registrars and they also oversee the work of the junior staff who are called ST1's or ST2's (senior Trainees) and Neonatal Nurse Practitioners.

Ward round

A ward round takes place daily between approximately 9.30am and 11.00am where your baby will be reviewed by a senior doctor and a plan of care will be made. Doctors and Nurse Practitioners are available at any time to review your baby if needed.

We encourage you to attend the ward round for your baby as this is a good opportunity to ask the doctors questions about your baby's progress and to contribute to the planning of your baby's care.

Please respect other babies and families privacy on the unit. Please do not ask about other babies care as we are unable to share this information. We will not share information about your baby with other parents or visitors and we will not give information over the phone to anyone else in your family unless you have specifically given written permission for us to do this.



Keeping your baby safe

Spending time with your Baby

Parents are welcomed to access the unit at any time, day or night.

Please speak to the ward manager, Kit if you require visitors to the unit to support you during your stay.

If you are unwell please do not visit the unit and discuss with a member of staff.

Preventing Infection

Please wash your hands at the sink with soap and water and then use the alcohol gel when entering and leaving the unit.

Please wash your hands with soap and water and then use the alcohol gel before touching your baby.

When you are having time interacting with your baby, you are encouraged for one parent to remove their mask when sitting and holding your baby.

For the safety of you and your baby please do not carry your baby around the unit.

Mobile Telephones

Please use the family room to make any phone calls to help maintain a quiet and calm environment for the babies in the nurseries.

Video Calls

Please ask a nurse before making any video calls in the nursery.

V-Create

V-Create is a NHS Trust secure video messaging service that helps patients, families and clinical teams stay connected through out your care journey. The NICU nurses will give you the information and opportunity to set this service up. The nursing team can then send photos and videos of your baby which can be reassuring and comforting when you can't be there.

Security Doors

To maintain the safety and security of the babies on the neonatal unit the doors are locked at all times. To enter the unit you will need to ring the bell and wait for a member of staff to answer it. The doorbell will be answered as soon as possible but at times there may be a delay due to staff being busy caring for the babies on the unit, therefore we ask you to please be patient. You will be asked to identify yourself. When you are ready to leave the unit please inform a member of staff who will be able to let you out.

Fire Alarms

There is a regular testing of the fire alarm system on Wednesday mornings. If you hear the alarm at any other time, please stay with your baby and the nurse in charge will give instructions on what to do. Other visitors will be asked to leave by the fire exit. If you discover a fire please set off the fire alarm and let a member of staff know immediately.

Baby Monitors

Your baby may be monitored during their stay on the neonatal unit. If alarms sounds please do not cancel them, the nursing staff will respond to these.

Equipment

Whilst your baby is on the neonatal unit they may be connected to monitors or other pieces of equipment for a variety of different reasons. A member of staff will explain what each piece of equipment is for and why your baby may need it. Please feel free to ask us if you have any questions.



Oxygen

Lots of babies will need additional oxygen whilst they are on the neonatal unit. The unit is therefore enriched with oxygen even after the oxygen has been turned off. Please make sure that you ventilate your clothing in the open for at least 15 minutes before going near to an open flame or source of ignition.

Smoking

Smoking is strictly prohibited on the neonatal unit and within the hospital. There is a designated smoking area at the hospital main entrance. Exposure to cigarette smoke both during pregnancy and after the birth can significantly increase the risk of cot death. If you would like advice and help about quitting smoking please ask a member of staff. To reduce the risk of exposure to your baby please do not smoke just before visiting your baby, remove outer clothing or change your clothes and do not hold your baby for up to one hour after you have had a cigarette.

For support in giving up smoking-

Call Smokefree on 0800 022 4 332 or visit their website www.smokefree.nhs.uk

Your Baby's stay on the Neonatal Unit

You may if you wish bring in small soft toys, clothes and blankets for your baby. Please label with your baby's name and wash them before you bring them in.

You will be given some information leaflets about becoming a parent of a poorly or premature baby. There is also other information and leaflets available. If you would like any more information then please ask a member of staff who will be happy to help you.



Kangaroo Care (Also known as skin to skin)

Kangaroo care is skin to skin contact when a baby is placed undressed against its parent's chest. As soon as your baby is able to you will be able to have kangaroo care. Both parents are able to have this experience to help them to feel close to their baby. It is helpful to wear a loose blouse or shirt with buttons.

Kangaroo care can help you to feel closer to your baby and your baby will have the chance to get to know you better. Your baby will keep warm whilst having skin to skin as warmth will pass directly from you to your baby. Skin to skin will help your baby sleep more restfully and for longer which helps with growth. Your baby's breathing and heart beat are more likely to be regular when doing skin to skin and the monitors are less likely to alarm whilst having skin to skin.

Quiet time

It is important that your baby gets plenty of rest to help them grow and develop. On the unit we have a period of time each day called quiet time, where the lights are dimmed and the babies are allowed to rest with no unnecessary interruptions from nursing or medical staff.

In each nursery there is a sound ear which alerts you when the noise levels become too high. This is to help to remind everyone on the unit to keep the environment quiet and calm to enable the babies to rest. If your baby is in an incubator they will have a cover over the top of the incubator to protect your baby from the bright lights. It is also very important to keep noise levels low if your baby is in an incubator as the sounds outside of the incubator are much louder inside the incubator. Please make sure you do not tap or knock on the incubator or put things on top of the incubator. Please also close the incubator doors carefully and ensure you close them when you have finished.

To help your baby's development the nurses may use rolled up blankets and sheets to help position and support your baby. Please ask the nurses if you would like to learn how to do this. Your baby's own soft toys and blankets can be used for this as long as they are not too big and have been washed before bringing them into the hospital.

Your baby may not be asleep all of the time, and will want to have some time getting to know you. Your baby will love looking at your face and listening to your voice. The nurses will help you to understand and communicate with your baby.



Comfort Holding

Comfort holding is one of the many ways you and your baby can get to know each other and experience loving touch when they are not ready to be held. By gently cradling your baby with still and resting hands you can help your baby get back to sleep or encourage your baby to be quietly awake and responsive. Comfort holding is where you support your baby by placing your hands on their body to reassure them and make them feel secure and this is often more comforting than stroking or massaging.

Sometimes your baby may need to have treatment or procedures which are not comfortable. You can help to soothe and reassure your baby by carrying out comfort holding. The nursing staff can show you how to do this. If you do not feel able to do this for any reason then one of the nursing staff will be able to comfort your baby during the treatment and you can comfort your baby afterwards.

Feeding Your Baby

Staff will advise and support you in your feeding choices for your baby.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding provides many important health benefits for both you and your baby. Breast milk contains antibodies which can help to strengthen your baby's immune system and help to protect your baby against bacteria, viruses, life threatening gut infections. This is especially important to babies who are born prematurely or poorly. Breast milk is very easy to digest and is absorbed more easily than formula milk. Breastfeeding is good for your health too as it reduces the risk of breast and ovarian cancer.

Your baby may be too small or too sick to begin breastfeeding but you can still give them the best start by expressing your breast milk. The sooner you start to express your milk the more likely you are to establish a good supply. This can be done by hand expressing to begin with and then using a pump, the nursing staff can show you how to do this. There is a designated area on the unit for expressing milk which allows you to have some privacy. However if you wish to express whilst you are near to your baby we have privacy screens available. Information about expressing, breastfeeding and local breastfeeding support groups is available in the expressing room and in the parents' sitting room.

Skin to skin and close contact with your baby stimulates your breasts to make more milk and can help to boost your milk production. When your baby is ready to begin breastfeeding holding your baby skin to skin allows you to follow your baby's own feeding rhythm and feeding cues more closely and it is easier to put him/her to your breast when he/she wants to feed.

If you wish to express

Breast pumps are available to be loaned free of charge whilst your baby is on the unit. Once your baby is discharged breast pumps are available for hire from a supplier at a reduced cost and further information can be found on the neonatal unit. If you wish to express breast milk for your baby and not breast feed, you will be supported in doing this.

Bottle feeding

If you wish to bottle feed, formula milk will be provided for your baby whilst your baby is on the neonatal unit. Please bring in bottles for your baby if you wish to bottle feed. If you have not yet bought bottles for your baby please ask nursing staff for advice on which bottles to buy as some bottles are more suitable for small and premature babies.

You will be shown how to make up formula feeds and how to clean and sterilise bottles for your baby.

Nasogastric tube feeding

If your baby is fed via a nasogastric tube you may be able to learn how to do this with support from the nurses. The nursing staff will be able to teach you how to carry out the feed and sign a competency form so that you are able to feed your baby by tube without direct supervision from the nursing staff.



Other neonatal services

The Neonatal Unit here in Kings' Lynn is part of the Eastern Neonatal Network. This means that the staff here work closely with the other neonatal units in East Anglia to provide care for any family and their baby who needs care in this area. Sometimes for a wide range of reasons babies and their families may need to be cared for between units. If your baby is born more than 13 weeks early, needs surgery or needs extra intensive support they will be cared for at Norwich, Cambridge or Luton & Dunstable. If your baby needs to be transferred for any reason this will be discussed with you and once they are ready they will be transferred back to Kings Lynn.

Paediatric and Neonatal Decision Support and Retrieval Service (PANDR)

If your baby needs to be transferred to another hospital for any reason they will be transported in a special incubator which is placed in an ambulance. It may be possible for one of you to travel with your baby but this is assessed on an individual basis. If you are not able to travel with your baby you will be kept fully up to date and the reasons you are not able to travel in the ambulance will be explained. For more information go to www.eoneonatalpccsicnetwork.nhs.uk

Transitional Care

If your baby is well enough and you are still resident on Castleacre ward your baby may be transferred to transitional care where a neonatal nurse will support you in caring for your baby until you are both ready to be discharged home.

Neonatal Community Team

Once your baby is well enough to go home you can be supported by the neonatal community team who can visit you in your home and offer support and advice. If your baby is well and the only reason they are staying in hospital is because they are being tube fed it may be possible if you wish to take your baby home tube feeding. Please speak to a member of staff and they will discuss this with you. They are also available for support and advice over the telephone.

The Neonatal Community Team Lead Nurse is Jane Hammans.



Food & Drink

There is Costa Coffee and 2 shops in the main entrance foyer. You are also welcome in The Hub which is in the centre of the hospital upstairs.

Chaplaincy

The hospital chaplaincy teams are here for you and your family. They offer a listening ear and an opportunity to off load some of your worries or concerns. They also love to share in the celebration of new life even if the baby's arrival is sooner than expected. The Chaplaincy role is mainly for your general support should you wish, but they can also offer a service of blessing or a prayer for your baby at any time. Chaplains are available to you any time of day or night and can be contacted via NICU staff or on 01553 613441 or at chaplains@qehkl.nhs.uk

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS are a confidential service and can help when you need advice, don't know where to turn to or have concerns about your healthcare at The Queen Elizabeth Hospital. PALS can provide advice, support and information for patients, their families and carers about care, concerns, problems, suggestions, complaints and queries. PALS can also offer advice on travel expense reimbursements. You can contact PALS at the PALS information desk at the main entrance of the hospital or telephone them on 01553 613351.

Useful Contact Numbers

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

Main switchboard 01553 613613 The
Neonatal Unit 01553613730 Castleacre
Ward 01553613710

Bliss

The special care baby charity provides vital support, information and guidance to families with premature and sick babies across the UK

Free phone helpline 0500 618140 www.bliss.org.uk

La Leche League GB Breastfeeding

For friendly mother to mother breastfeeding support from pregnancy through to weaning Helpline 0845 120 2918 www.laleche.org.uk

National Breastfeeding Helpline Tel:

0300 100 0212

Family information services for information on your local Children Centre.

Norfolk Telephone 0344 800 8020

www.childrenscentres.info

Cambridge Telephone 01223 699786

www.cambridgeshirechildrenscentres.org.uk

Lincolnshire Telephone 0800 195 1635

www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/childrencentre

Acknowledgement- Thank you to all of the parents who have offered advice and opinion to help make sure the information contained in this booklet is parent friendly and helpful.

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