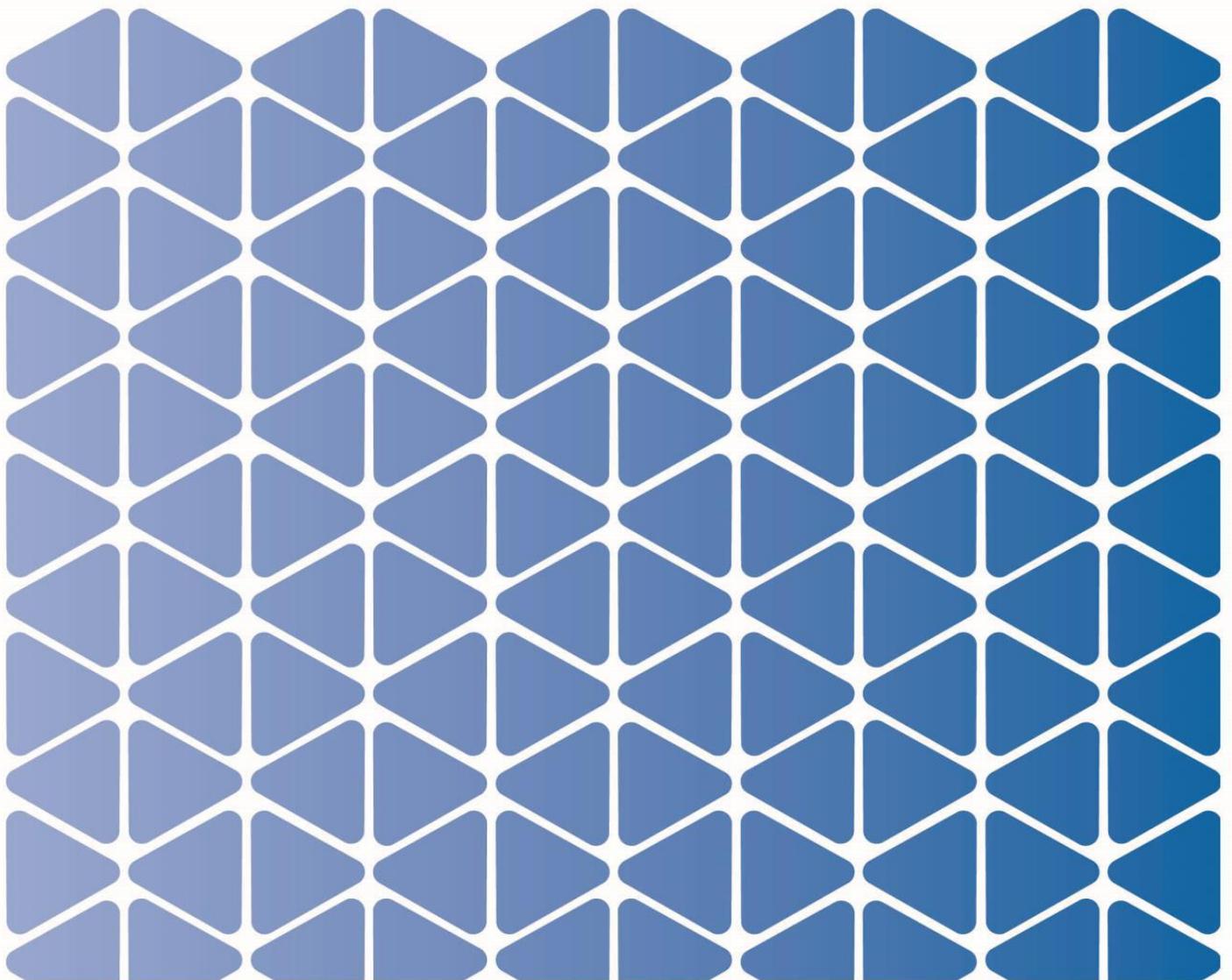




PATIENT INFORMATION

THE INTENSIVE CARE UNIT

A Guide for Patients, Relatives and Friends



Introduction to Intensive Care

The Intensive Care Unit is a ward designed to care for very sick patients who require close observation and monitoring.

Your relative/friend will be cared for by an experienced Multi-disciplinary team, including the Intensive Care Consultant in charge of the unit and the Consultant who admitted them to Hospital. Medical staff are present within the unit at all times and all ward staff are identifiable by uniform and name badge.

There is a great deal of equipment around the bed that is essential to the extra care patients need. Due to all the equipment it can be very noisy at times and there are a number of alarms that may sound, but these rarely indicate any sort of emergency situation.

Some of the equipment may be added or taken away depending on the treatment prescribed by the doctors. Don't be afraid to ask about the equipment, it may help you feel more comfortable in the surroundings.

It takes some time, often an hour or so, on the initial admission to settle the patient onto the unit, allowing the doctors and nurses to assess your relative/friend and commence all the necessary treatments. During this time you will be asked to wait in the relative's room.

As soon as it is possible a member of staff will come to update you on the patient's condition and arrange for you to come into the unit to see them.

Although the initial admission is a busy time, please feel free to approach the staff with any concerns. They will try to answer questions as soon as possible.

Telephone Enquiries

You may call to ask about your relative/friend's progress at any time of the day or night but we are only able to give you limited information over the phone due to patient confidentiality. We appreciate that many family and friends may want to enquire about the patient.

It would be helpful if one person could be chosen to be the link to keep family and friends informed, as this minimises the number of phone calls that the nurse looking after the patient has to take, and reduces the noise disruption to other patients from phone ringing.

Worcester Hospital ICU Direct Dial: 01905 760598

Worcester Hospital Main Switchboard: 01905 763333

Alexandra Hospital ICU Direct Dial: 01527 512090

Alexandra Hospital Main Switchboard: 01527 503030

Visiting

Although we suggest visiting times, the unit has a flexible visiting policy depending on the needs of the patient, and you will not be refused access without good reason, as a guide though, there are two periods of the day which are less suitable for visitors.

Every morning a ward round is held by the Intensive Care Consultant in charge to assess all of the patients. It is usually best to visit after this so that we can give you the most up-to-date information on progress and future plans.

In the early afternoon we encourage our patients to rest from 3 – 4 pm each day, as this is a fundamental part of the recovery

process. We try to minimise disturbance to the patients during this time.

When you do visit, access to the Unit is by pressing the bell at the main door and using the intercom.

Visiting Times

Early Afternoon:	12.00pm to 3.00pm
Rest and Rehabilitation period:	3.00pm to 4.00pm
Afternoon/Evening:	4.00pm to 8.00pm

There may be times when we may be particularly busy caring for your relative/friend, but whatever is being carried out is for their benefit, so please be patient with us – we will call you in as soon as possible.

During nurse handover times, the patients' condition is discussed and to protect privacy and confidentiality visitors may be asked to wait outside.

Shift Handovers are at: 07:30 hrs – 08:00 hrs
13:30 hrs – 14:00 hrs
19:45 hrs – 20:00 hrs

We ask that you do not bring flowers into the unit as they present a risk of infection to the patients, but we welcome photographs, Get Well cards, books, newspapers, toys or small personal items.

At every visit you will be required to wash your hands and use alcohol gel at one of the designated sinks on arrival and before you leave.

You will also be asked to wear an apron around the bed space. This is an infection control measure to protect you and all the patients.

Who can visit?

A quiet, restful atmosphere is necessary to aid recovery and we therefore suggest that only close relatives/friends visit initially, but if there are particular people you would like to visit we leave it to your discretion.

We advise up to four visitors at a time as there is limited space around the bed. If the patient is conscious, we recommend visiting is limited to short periods to ensure they get sufficient rest.

Please remember that your relative/friend is going to need you in good health, so it is important that you take good care of yourself, get plenty of rest and eat and drink regularly.

Children are welcome to visit but this should be following a discussion with the Nurse in Charge as the ICU can be a distressing place for children.

There are sleeping facilities available which may be used overnight if necessary, but on the whole it is more beneficial for your health and welfare if you return home for a rest and to freshen up.

We will endeavour to keep you updated on your relative/friend's care. Please speak to the nurse at the bedside if you would like to arrange a meeting with doctors concerning the patient's treatment.

Always ask if you have questions or concerns, we are here to help you as much as possible.

Please do not be alarmed if when you come to visit your relative/friend you find they have been moved down the unit. Sometimes patients are moved to different bed spaces as their condition improves, or to accommodate new admissions.

How can you help?

It is natural when you first visit your sick relative/friend to feel shocked and unable to help. We would like to reassure you that your visits and continuous support is a valuable part of the patient's care in Intensive Care.

We always talk to our patients because we don't always know if they can hear us or not. If you have been told that your relative is unconscious due to their condition or drugs, they may feel reassured if you continue to speak to them in a normal manner, about events that have happened at home, family and friends, reminding them of the day, the date and time. The voice of a loved one could bring them a great deal of comfort and reassurance.

You might also like to consider helping to complete a Patient Diary of some of the more significant events that happened during their stay for them to look back on when they have recovered. Please speak to their Nurse for more details.

Physical contact may be a normal part of your relationship such as holding hands, kissing cheeks etc., but if you are anxious about the equipment please ask the nurse at their bedside. Curtains can be drawn for privacy and it may be possible for you to help with washing, hair and nail care if you would like to.

Patient personal belongings

Due to space restriction it is preferable if only a wash-bag, personal toiletries and spectacles are kept on the Intensive Care Unit.

We do not encourage money to be kept on the Unit but if there are large amounts of cash in their property upon the patients' admission this will be placed in the Hospital Safe in the Cashiers office and a receipt will be issued to be collected at a later time or date.

Items such as mobile phones, MP3 players, personal stereos, mini DVD players and tablet computers are allowed but must be clearly marked with the patients' name. Please be aware these items are not insured under any hospital policy and will remain your own responsibility if they are lost.

We also encourage the use of headphones where possible as not to disturb other patients' rest.

Religious support

There are Chapels located at both The Alexandra and Worcester Hospitals. The Alexandra Chapel is located on the ground floor, on the right hand side of the main entrance. The Worcester Chapel is located in the main reception area behind the Costa Coffee Shop. Both Chapels are always open for the use of anyone of any faith for silence, prayer and thought.

Chaplains from all denominations can visit the unit upon request or your own regular chaplain or representative of your own faith can be contacted at your request.

Car parking

The trust operates 'Pay and Display' car parks. As visitors often spend long periods of time in Intensive Care we are able to issue concessionary car parking passes to close family/friends for the duration of the patients' stay. Please ask any member of staff for a form which you will then need to take to the Cashiers office in exchange for the passes.

If you are called to the Intensive Care Unit urgently, please park your car in any designated parking space and we will liaise with security when you arrive and leave.

What happens when a patient leaves Intensive Care?

Patients who no longer require Intensive or High Dependency care are transferred to the ward environment.

Transfer to the ward environment is a positive step. It is perfectly normal for relatives and friends to feel unsettled, because less support and monitoring will be required.

Be assured that we do not transfer any patient until we are satisfied that they no longer require Intensive or High Dependency Care.

Patients who are transferred out of Intensive Care are visited by the Critical Care Outreach Team which helps us maintain links with the ward and support the patients' continued recovery.

The Intensive Care follow up clinic offers a service to patients after discharge from their hospital stay.

Patients are invited to attend the clinic two to three months after their return home from hospital to have their individual needs assessed by a specialised team- including an outreach nurse, occupational therapist and a physiotherapist. The clinic offers both physical and mental assessments of each patient, signposting them to other services they may need.

The service aims to improve patient experience by helping the survivors of critical illness and their families to get back to living their normal lives as quickly as possible.

Complaints procedure

If you have a concern about any aspect of the unit, please feel free to speak to any member of the team. If you continue to have concerns please ask to make an appointment with the Intensive Care Matron / Clinical Director.

We value feedback and would welcome the opportunity to put a bad situation right as soon as possible.

Leaflets are available explaining how you may also contact the Patients Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) for impartial help and a completely confidential source of contact.

Please feel free to liaise with them if you have concerns about any other aspect of your hospital stay or visit, or if we are unable to resolve your worries.

The PALS team can be contacted on
Tel: 0300 123 1732

Or by email: wah-tr.pet@nhs.net

Worcester Hospital Facilities

There is a tea and coffee machine available in the Intensive Care relatives room at the Worcester Hospital, there is also water and squash available inside the unit.

There is a restaurant located on Level 0 of the Hospital that is open Monday to Friday 8.00am to 7.30pm, Saturday 8.00am to 12.00pm. There is a Costa Coffee shop situated in the main entrance serving beverages and food which is open Weekdays 7.30am – 7.30pm and Weekends 8.30am to 7.30pm.

Newspapers, drinks, snacks, gifts etc., can be obtained from the WRVS Shop which is also located in the main entrance and is open Monday – Friday 8am – 8pm, and weekends 10am – 8pm.

There are public toilets located throughout the Hospital including disabled facilities next to the relative's room.

A regular bus service operates between the Hospital and Worcester City Centre. There are bus stops around the Hospital site and timetable information is available in the main entrance.

The Alexandra Hospital Facilities

There is tea and coffee making facilities in the Intensive Care relative's room at the Alexandra Hospital, there is water and squash as well as a small fridge available for use.

Quinney's Restaurant is located along the corridor from Intensive Care Unit at The Alexandra Hospital. It is open from 7:30am to 11:30am serving breakfast, lunch 11:30 to 2:00pm, hot snacks, sandwiches and light bites 2:00pm to 6:00pm and 6:00pm to 7:00pm serving evening meals. It is open on the weekends from 8:30am to 11:00am serving breakfast. Please be aware that Quinney's Restaurant do not take card payments and are cash only.

There is a League of Friends Coffee Shop located along from the Hospital main entrance. It has a menu available of hot and cold drinks, sandwiches and cakes. Opening times vary with the availability of volunteers.

Newspapers, drinks, snacks, gifts etc. are available from W.H Smiths Newsagents which is also located in the main reception area of the Hospital; it is open 8:00am to 8:00pm.

There are public toilets located throughout the Hospital including disabled access where signposted.

A regular bus service operates between the Hospital and Redditch town centre as well as other destinations. Timetables are available at the front reception desk.

If you need any further information on anything please do not hesitate to ask a member of staff who will be happy to help.

The below section is for you to add further useful contacts and make notes.

Name	Address & Telephone Number

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.PET@nhs.net

Opening times:

The PALS telephone lines are open Monday to Thursday from 8.30am to 4.30pm and Friday: 8.30am to 4.00pm. Please be aware that a voicemail service is in use at busy times, but messages will be returned as quickly as possible.

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