

General Critical Care Unit

Additional Support & Services

Patient Diaries

We offer all families and friends of patients in critical care the chance to write a diary. The diary is kept by the patient's bedside and you, other relatives, friends and staff are free to write in it whilst in critical care.

This is a very simple but effective way for both you and your relative to adjust and recover following time in critical care. If by chance you are not offered a diary and would like to take part please ask the nurse caring for your relative.

Leaving Critical Care

This can be a very emotional time for some people as mixed with the joy of leaving Critical Care is often a sense of insecurity and fear. This is quite natural following such intense monitoring and one to one nursing. We have two additional services to help with this transition. The Critical Care Out Reach Team and Follow up Nurse.

Follow Up Clinic

The follow up nurse will visit patients on the ward and talk through their memories and feelings about critical care.

Patients and their families are also sent an appointment to attend the Follow up Clinic once they are home. This is optional, but those people that attend often find it very beneficial in helping them deal with the psychological effects of critical illness.

Critical Care Outreach Team

Before discharge to a ward, patients will be assessed by an Critical care Outreach nurse.



Patient Information

The outreach team are trained in critical care nursing and may visit patients, before and after critical care. They liaise between staff on the wards and critical care doctors. The team will visit the patient on the ward and support staff to maximise appropriate care.

Sometimes the outreach team may feel it is necessary for a patient to return to critical care for further management.

Withdrawing Treatment

Sometimes it may be in the best interests of the patient for us stop giving life saving drugs and treatment and allow the patient to die.

This decision is made by a Critical Care Consultant but it will also include careful consideration by any other consultants involved in a patients care e.g. a patient's surgeon or physician.

Doctors in critical care will always talk about the withdrawal of treatment with the family of any patient they feel will not get better.

Organ Donation

If you feel that your relative would like to help in this way, please talk to the staff caring for your relative who will liaise with the organ donation nurses. The organ donor teams is based in the hospital and are available to help both relatives and critical care staff with this option.

Not all critically ill patients are suitable to donate their organs, but the earlier your wishes are discussed the better the chances for organ donation to occur.

When a Patient Dies

Sadly there are times when we are unable to save a patient's life and they die.

This may be sudden and unexpected, or it may be after a prolonged period in critical care. Whatever the circumstances we make sure that patients are free of pain and we try to ensure privacy and dignity at the end of life.

We will be with you to guide and support you through this difficult time. All families receive information on what to do following the loss of a relative or friend.

Bereavement Follow Up

After approximately six weeks all relatives bereaved in critical care will receive an invitation to attend a follow up interview with a member of the critical care bereavement team.

This gives bereaved families, carers and others they may invite, a chance to talk about what happened when their relative died, with someone who knows what critical care entails. It also helps identify any problems with grieving and can be a source of comfort and guidance during a time of great sadness. Attending is entirely optional and can be taken up at any time.

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format please contact 024 7696 6892 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

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Document History	
Department:	GCCU
Contact:	02476966892
Updated:	February 2020
Review:	February 2022
Version:	3.1
Reference:	HIC/LFT/1183/11