

## Critical Care

### Visiting Critical Care



#### HANDS

Use the available alcohol hand gel and wash your hands with soap and water when entering or leaving the Critical Care Unit.

This information is to help you prepare to visit patients in the Critical Care Units.

Please remember that we're here to help you. Please contact the Critical Care team if you have a question about visiting patients in the Critical Care Units. Our contact telephone number is **024 7696 6561**.

### About Critical Care

The Critical Care Units provide intensive care for patients.

Intensive care is provided to treat patients needing constant observation or care that uses specialist equipment and treatments. This may be needed due to major surgery, serious injury, or serious illness.

Patients are sometimes transferred out of critical care as they get better. Patients can be transferred from Critical Care to a High Dependency Unit.



## Patient Information

(HDU) or an Enhanced Care Unit (ECU). Patients can then be transferred to a general hospital ward when ready.

Some patients are in a critical care unit for a shorter time than others. This depends on their illness or injury.

## Our Critical Care Units

Our Critical Care Units are two areas:

- Cardiothoracic Critical Care Unit
- General Critical Care Unit

Both Units care for all types of patients who need intensive care.

Patients undergoing cardiac or thoracic surgery are mostly cared for in the Cardiothoracic Critical Care Unit.

We may need to move patients from one area to another within the Critical Care Units. We inform the patient and the next of kin of any move between Units.

Our critical care areas use separated side rooms and walled areas to care for patients who have infectious illnesses.

## Visiting times

Visiting times are **11am to 1pm** and **3pm to 7pm** every day.

Please be aware that these times can change when we need to protect our patients. Changes to visiting times can happen when we need to take infection control measures.

When we make changes to visiting times we:

- let the next of kin and key family members know
- let visitors know with posters and leaflets available at the entrance to the critical care area

### **Outside of normal visiting times**

Please ring the doorbell at the entrance to the critical care area. We will respond to you as soon as we can.

### **Who can visit?**

- Visiting is only for immediate family and very close loved ones.
- A maximum of **2 people** can visit a patient's bedside at once. We request this as critical care is busy with our staff and special equipment.
- We do not recommend a lot of visitors for intensive care patients. Intensive care patients get tired easily. This does not help their care.
- Friends and other loved ones should wait until patients are moved to a ward area before visiting.
- Please do not visit if you feel unwell.

We ask you to follow our requests. They are in place to support our patients and keep them safe while they need intensive care. We understand this can be difficult to manage as you and your loved ones want to support the patients in our care.

We need your help to let other friends and loved ones know this information.

### **If you test positive for COVID-19:**

- please do not visit either of the Critical Care units
- please follow the Government isolation guidance

## Patient Information

### **What to expect during your visit**

Please bring as few personal belongings as possible.

You should not bring bags, handbags, electronic devices, gifts, food or other unnecessary items. We ask you to follow this to help keep the critical care area clean and safe for our patients.

There is limited space at the patient's bedside. This means that we do not have patient lockers to store personal belongings.

You should remove your outer clothing (like your coat or jacket) when you visit.

We recommend you have no sleeves and do not wear jewellery below your elbows. This allows you to easily wash your hands with soap and water or hand gel. These are available to you when you visit.

We try to keep the critical care units as quiet and calm as possible for our patients. We ask our visitors to help us achieve this.

No children under the age of 10 years can visit the Unit unless this is agreed with the Modern Matron or deputy before your visit.

### **Your visit to General Critical Care Unit**

#### **Normal visiting times**

Please check-in at the General Critical Care Unit reception desk when you arrive. We will ask for your name and who you have come to visit. A member of our team will then collect you take you to the patient you're visiting.

#### **Outside of normal visiting times**

Please ring the doorbell at the entrance of the General Critical Care Unit when visiting outside of normal visiting times. Please allow us a few minutes to respond as we will be providing patient care.

## **Your visit to Cardiothoracic Critical Care Unit**

### **At all times**

Please ring the doorbell outside the entrance of the Cardiothoracic Critical Care Unit. We will come and ask you who you've come to visit. We may ask you to wait while we check this with the nurse in charge of the patient's care. We will then return to collect and take you to the patient you're visiting.

### **Support during your visit**

Your visit may be upsetting. We understand you may need comfort and support during or after your visit. You are most welcome to use our relative's room during this time.

We are also able to offer an overnight room for relatives when needed. Please speak to a member of our team for support with this.

We can also support you as you leave your visit. Please ask a member of the team if you would like us to support you as you leave the patient's bedside.

### **When leaving the Critical Care Units**

Please put the PPE you have worn in the bins provided when you leave the Critical Care Units.

Please wash and clean your hands when asked. This is to help protect yourself and others from infection.

You will be given a new face mask so you can leave the hospital setting safely.

## Patient Information

### When not to visit

#### Please do not visit:

- if you feel unwell
- if you have symptoms of COVID-19
- if you have tested positive for COVID-19 and you should be following the Government self-isolation guidance

Anyone showing symptoms of high-risk infection or COVID-19 will be asked to leave. They will not be allowed to visit our patients.

You should not visit if you have flu-like symptoms, a chest infection, diarrhoea or vomiting. We ask this to keep our patients safe.

We would be happy to arrange a convenient time to update you on your loved one's status if you cannot visit. We can update you by telephone or virtually using one of our bedside iPads.

### If you are unable to visit

#### Telephone updates

We can support you during this difficult time by arranging times for telephone updates about your loved one. Please request this by asking a member of our team or contacting the phone number at the end of this leaflet.

#### Virtual visits

We can also arrange a **virtual visit** to the bedside using Facetime if you have the equipment to connect with us. A member of our team will hold one of our iPads at the patient's bedside during the Virtual Visit.

A nurse will assist the conversation with you for a short time if the patient cannot communicate.

## Patient Information

We can help support WhatsApp or private telephone communications if you provide us with a phone for patients.

The patient's views on virtual visiting will be sought, honoured and documented wherever possible.

We will store patient personal devices in line with the healthcare setting's guidance on safe keeping of property.

## Messages, photographs and symbolic items

We can also pass messages or photographs to the patient if conversations are difficult. You can provide these by email. Please provide the patient's full name and date of birth so we can ensure your messages or photographs go to them.

Please email your messages or photographs to:  
[GMBGENCC@uhcw.nhs.uk](mailto:GMBGENCC@uhcw.nhs.uk).

We can also pass on any physical items to the patients that connect them to friends and loved ones.

## Car parking

Visitors are encouraged to pay for car parking through alternative ways to avoid queues at payment machines. Payments can be made by:

- PAYPHONE mobile app
- by visiting [www.paybyphone.co.uk](http://www.paybyphone.co.uk)
- texting REG and your car registration to 65565
- by calling 0304007275

You can pay at any time until midnight on the day of parking.

If you use the pay machines onsite, please use the alcohol gel before and after.

## Contact information

If you have any questions, please contact the Critical Care team on 024 7696 6561.

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, please speak to the Critical Care team and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke-free policy.

## Did we get it right?

We would like you to tell us what you think about our services. This helps us make further improvements and recognise members of staff who provide a good service.

Have your say. Scan the QR code or visit:  
[www.uhcw.nhs.uk/feedback](http://www.uhcw.nhs.uk/feedback)



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