



# Bear Ward

Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Foundation Trust: Information for Families

## Welcome to the High Dependency Unit (HDU) on Bear Ward

**This information sheet explains about the High Dependency Unit (HDU) on Bear Ward at Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH) - what to expect when your child stays and what happens when your child no longer needs high dependency care. If you have any questions during your stay, please ask any member of the Bear nursing team and they will be happy to assist you.**

### What is the High Dependency Unit (HDU)?

The HDU provides a safe and caring environment for your child and family and we, as nurses, will serve as advocates for you and your family.

The HDU is on Bear Ward, which is located on Level 6 of the Morgan Stanley Clinical Building. It comprises two four-bedded bays, although occasionally, we may need to nurse some HDU children in a cubicle. The nurses who will be caring for your child are part of a team and are children's nurses with training and experience in high dependency care settings. The ratio is normally one nurse to two HDU patients.

The aim of the HDU is to continue your child's recovery with either a step-down from intensive care or for those children requiring closer monitoring and nursing following surgery or procedures that may not have initially required intensive care.

Closer monitoring involves a nurse checking your child's condition with electronic equipment, which will be

attached to your child's body. These observations are carefully recorded and enable the nursing staff to closely observe any changes in your child's condition and provide information to doctors or nurse practitioners who will then be able to assess their progress.

### Why might my child need to stay in HDU?

There are many reasons why your child might need to stay in HDU:

- Your child may have had a complex or major surgical procedure which may require closer monitoring for a while after the operation
- It may be required short term as a precautionary measure if your child has come from another hospital and requires additional tests that need closer monitoring
- Your child may have had a stay on Cardiac Intensive Care (Flamingo Ward) but may still need close monitoring while they recover further before going to a ward bed.



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- If your child requires non-invasive breathing support, for instance CPAP, or an artificial airway, such as a tracheostomy, the HDU provides support and reassurance with closer monitoring.
- Your child may be transferred from one of our ward beds to this area if they need closer monitoring or become unwell while on the ward.

We will explain the exact reason why we believe your child will benefit from a stay on HDU when you arrive on Bear Ward and will be happy to answer any questions you may have, in order to make your stay as comfortable as possible.

## How long will my child stay in HDU?

The aim of the HDU is to act as a “stepping-stone” back to Bear Ward before discharge. It is located on the same floor and the team of nurses is the same. Most children will finish their recovery in one of the cubicles on Bear Ward. The ratio of nurses on the ward is usually one nurse to three patients compared with one nurse to two patients in the HDU.

Your child may only require one night in HDU but may occasionally need more time; especially if they have had major or complex surgery. Each morning, the ward round will review your child’s progress and assess whether they need continued monitoring or are well enough to be transferred to a ward bed. You are welcome to be present on the ward rounds although the doctors may return to update you when this is finished. All questions are welcome.

Occasionally, children may be transferred back to the Cardiac Intensive Care if they become unwell or require additional assistance.

## Who will be looking after my child?

Nurses on Bear Ward are all children’s nurses and have training in the care of the high dependency child who needs close monitoring. Your child will remain under the care of a consultant cardiologist and their team of doctors in HDU and also on the ward. Bear ward also has a team of cardiac nurse practitioners who have a wealth of experience and are available to give you additional information should you require it.

There will always be two nurses in your bay on each shift. In addition, there is always a nurse in charge of each shift who has overall responsibility for both the HDU and ward patients.

In addition, we have a dietician, psychologist, social worker, play specialist and play worker, school teacher, physiotherapist, pharmacist, family support workers, neonatal nurse advisor and should you need it, the availability of interpreters. The patient advice and liaison service (Pals) is also available should you wish to discuss something in private.



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## **Can I help to look after my child in the HDU?**

We encourage you to take part in your child's care as much as you feel able. Family centered care and involvement is integral to the well-being and recovery of the sick child in the HDU. Maintaining some kind of daily routine may help you and your child feel a little more at ease while in hospital. We are here to help you wash and feed your child, especially where there may be a lot of lines, drains or equipment. We ask that curtains are kept open unless it is during a wash or procedure. This ensures safety for your child and enables the nurses to see the monitors and your child clearly.

Please bring a wash bag for your child and include a toothbrush, toothpaste, soap and hair washing products. We will supply nappies.

If you are breast-feeding, we have a designated room to do this on the ward. All milk is placed in either the fridge or freezer so that your baby's milk is ready for when they need it. Your nurse can help you with expressing or how to store it correctly.

## **Can my child have visitors?**

Parents can visit at any time but we ask that only two people are by the bedside at any time. This is partly because space is limited but also because your child needs rest and it is often too noisy with too many people at one time. Please remember to supervise brothers and sisters at all times if they come to visit. This includes the play areas.

We are trying hard to reduce the risk of infection so ask that you and your visitors remove outdoor coats and hang them on the hooks provided by the main door before you enter the HDU. Do not leave valuables in your coat pockets.

There is a sink as you come into the unit. Please wash your hands and use alcohol gel before you visit your child. Please ask your visitors to do the same.

If you or any visitor has had contact with coughs, colds or tummy bugs within the past 24 hours or exposure to chicken pox or measles, we would prefer you to wait until you are better before visiting.

## **Telephones**

Mobile phones should be switched off at all times while inside the ward and HDU area as they may interfere with electronic equipment. You are welcome to use them at any time in the parents' lounge area. Please do not use your own chargers at the bedside as they can pose as a fire hazard unless tested by our work's department. If your child is in hospital for a period of time, please ask your nurse how to go about having chargers tested.

Enquiries about your child are welcome any time of day or night but we request that relatives nominate one individual to ring the unit and then pass this information along.



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## **Food in HDU/Ward area**

From both an infection control and patient safety point of view, we would like to remind you that no parent or relative is allowed to eat at the bedside or bring hot drinks onto the unit. You are welcome to use the kitchen and dining area outside the ward for this. You are, however, allowed to have cold drinks or water by the bedside.

We are able to store a small selection of foods/snacks/drinks for your child in our locked kitchen area should you wish to bring your own.

## **Can I sleep by the bedside?**

We recognise that having a child in HDU can be stressful and that you want to be near them at all times. However, we strongly advise parents to sleep in hospital accommodation at nights so that you can also have some rest and be refreshed to be with your child during the day. Your child will never be left alone in the HDU.

We do have chairs by each bedside should you feel that you are unable to leave at night. These chairs convert to beds and as long as they do not prevent access to your child, then they can be used to sleep on. This again, ensures safety to your child and allows the nurse to walk freely around the bedside while caring for your child at night. The lights are dimmed at night but the HDU is never in total darkness.

If you leave the HDU for food or rest, your nurse will contact you immediately if your child becomes upset or wishes to have you there. Please update your contact numbers if they should change for any reason.

Accommodation for both parents is provided while your child is in HDU but please be aware that when they leave HDU for the ward area, we can only accommodate one parent. This is within the child's cubicle which has an ensuite bathroom with shower and hair drier.

## **Can my child have a single room?**

Children requiring high dependency care need closer monitoring so we are unable to nurse them in a single room unless they are at risk of an infection or have an infection. We are aware that as a four-bedded bay, there may be a mix of ages and genders at some stage. However, we take the utmost care to protect the privacy and dignity by giving support and compassion to your child at all times during their stay on Bear HDU.

When your child moves into one of the ward cubicles after their stay in HDU, the ward staff take into consideration a bed space that best meets their physical, psychological and social needs. Please tell us if your child has a preference for being with other children of their own age or gender and we will try to meet this request wherever possible.

## **Can I bring toys and games for my child?**

Each bed space has its own television with a games channel. You are welcome to bring any toys that your child wishes to have but please remember that space is limited although each child has their own small locker for their possessions.



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Please note that GOSH cannot accept liability for damage or loss of any personal property.

There is a large playroom on the ward and Bear Ward has a play specialist and play worker who can help keep your child entertained with arts and crafts during their stay. Please tidy up toys after use. The school teacher is also available daily during term time.

**We welcome any comments that can help improve our service and commitment to you and your child while at Great Ormond Street Hospital.**

## Notes

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Compiled by Bear Ward in collaboration with the Child and Family Information Group

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