

# CHILDREN'S INTENSIVE CARE UNIT

University Hospital of Wales  
CARDIFF



INFORMATION FOR  
PARENTS AND CARERS

**Dear Parent / Carer,**

Welcome to the Children's Intensive Care Unit (PICU).

We recognise that the admission of your child to the PICU is a very worrying and stressful time for you as a family. You may experience a rollercoaster of feelings and emotions during your child's stay on PICU and it is not uncommon to feel helpless, anxious, tearful, angry, guilty or completely numb. All staff on the unit are here to help you and your family.

We hope this booklet provides you with some of the information you need to help you during your child's stay on the unit. We encourage you to ask questions and share your concerns with us.

## OUR UNIT



The Children's Intensive Care Unit (PICU) is the first and only Children's Intensive Care Unit in Wales, and cares for children from birth to 16 years of age.

You will meet many different members of the team during your child's stay on PICU. Please ask who people are if you cannot remember or have not been introduced to them.

Your child will be under the care of a Specialist Consultant experienced in Intensive Care, Children or both. You can ask to see your child's consultant, and arrangements will be made for you to speak with them.

Each day you will be able to speak to the team of doctors caring for your child. There is a doctor on duty 24 hours a day.

Your child will be cared for by a qualified children's nurse experienced in Intensive Care each shift. There are two main shifts - day and night duty.

There are two doctors ward rounds each day

- ❖ 8.30 am and 4.30 pm

Nursing handover takes place at

- ❖ 7.30 am and 7.30 pm

During this time, we kindly ask parents to leave the unit and wait in the relative's room, or use the opportunity to take a break. This ensures the privacy of all the children on the unit. Parents may also be asked to leave during an emergency situation.

All members of the PICU team will support you and keep you informed of your child's condition and ongoing care. We will always be open and honest with you.

## CARING FOR YOUR CHILD

Your child will be nursed in one of the 8 bed areas on the PICU



Your child will have many wires and tubes attached to them. The wires provide important information about your child to the medical and nursing staff caring for them, and the tubes allow staff to give your child the medicine they need to keep them asleep and pain free and help them get better.

The PICU environment can be very stressful and you may feel you are surrounded by machines, bright lights and unfamiliar sounds. For these reasons, you may feel unable to cope or help your child.

There are many ways for you to continue to carry out your role as a parent to your child and we will encourage and support you to do so when you feel ready.

The amount of care you feel able to carry out and will depend on you. Many parents wish to help wash their child or change their nappy while others are happy to watch until some of the tubes and wires have been removed.

Your child will be minimally clothed whilst on PICU so that the nurse can closely observe them. You may wish to bring in socks for your baby or particular items your child finds of comfort at home.

Your child will probably be able to hear you even if they are being kept asleep with medicine. They may therefore gain much comfort from the sound of your voice or the touch of your hand. You may like to bring in a favourite toy or blanket, read to them or play their favourite music. Remember you know your child best.

If you are breastfeeding your baby, you may wish to express your milk and equipment is available for you to do this. The nurse will provide you with the information you need. Your milk may then be given to your baby by one of the special tubes.

## CARING FOR YOU



Taking care of yourself is one of the best ways you can help your child.

This is an extremely stressful time for you and it is important that you remain both physically and emotionally strong for your child.

- ❖ Remember to eat and drink - you may not feel hungry but you need energy, so eat little and often.
- ❖ Take regular breaks away from the unit - it may seem difficult to leave your child for short periods, but this time will help you recharge. The nurse caring for your child will stay with them and contact you if necessary.

- ❖ Try to get enough rest and sleep. Parent accommodation is available for you at Ty Croeso within the hospital, so please ask if you wish to stay and the nurse caring for your child will try to arrange this for you.
- ❖ Use the support that is available to you, such as family and friends. During such times, people often appreciate being told what they can do to help.

There are many people within the hospital to help and support you. Staff on PICU can provide you with the relevant information should you require any of their support.

- ❖ Parent support nurse - the nurse caring for your child can give you the information you need or contact them on your behalf
- ❖ The hospital Chaplin is always available if you would like someone to talk to. You do not need to be religious or go to church to do so.

- ❖ The hospital chapel is situated on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor of B Block and is a peaceful place for you to take a break or have some quiet time. It is open 24 hours, 7 days a week. We can also arrange for your child to be christened or blessed if this is something you would like to do. Please ask us at any time so we can arrange for the religious leader of your choice to come to the unit.
- ❖ Hospital social worker
- ❖ Language interpretation service
- ❖ There are a number of Welsh speaking members of staff within the PICU team should this be your first language.

## BROTHERS AND SISTERS



When your child is admitted to PICU, it is natural for their brothers and sisters to feel confused and upset too. It is important to remember that their understanding of the situation may be different to yours and it is important to encourage them to ask questions and say how they feel. Give them simple explanations about what is happening.

You may decide to let them visit PICU, and the nurse caring for your child will support you to do this. Encourage them to bring something in with them for their brother or sister such as a drawing or card they have made, as this may help them to feel involved.

It is not unusual for your well children to feel upset when they are away from you or have

changes in their daily routine. Try to keep things as normal as possible for them. It is important that they spend time with you, either by visiting hospital or by you spending time with them at home.

You may also wish to explain what is happening to your child's school teacher who will be on hand to offer extra support.

As a team on PICU, we promote a family centred approach to care - this means that we wish to help and support the whole family during your stay in hospital.

## VISITING



We have an open visiting policy on PICU that allows you to be with your child as much as possible and you must never feel you are in the way. Once again, we will ask you to leave the unit during doctors ward rounds, nursing handover and any emergency situation. Again, this is to ensure that the information being discussed about your child remains confidential to those caring for them and to you.

When you arrive on PICU, please can you ring the door bell before entering the main unit and wait for someone to respond. We kindly ask you to be patient as we may be busy.

Please either use the alcohol hand gel by the main door, or wash your hands on entering and leaving the unit. This is an important way of preventing the spread of infection.

Visiting is open to all family members and friends, however, please keep to two visitors at the bedside at any one time. Visitors arriving to PICU in your absence and not known to the nursing staff, will kindly be asked to wait in the waiting room until your return.

You can phone the unit at any time, however we can only give out information to parents and main carers as this information is confidential. We suggest you ask one family member to contact the unit and relay the information back to the rest of the family. This will be helpful in limiting the calls you receive on PICU, as the phone lines are emergency lines.

**PICU TELEPHONE NUMBER: 029 20743282 -  
this is a direct line to the unit**

## LEAVING PICU



The Consultant caring for your child will decide when they are well enough to leave PICU. This is a positive step forward in your child's recovery and means they no longer require the intensive monitoring, medical and nursing care they have received during their stay. It is also a time of change and adjustment, which can sometimes cause concerns for you as a parent.

Your child will be transferred to the Children's High Dependency Unit or one of the Children's Wards.



They will be cared for by a team of dedicated and experienced staff. During this time, you will find that some things are done differently to what you have been used to on PICU.

Your child will now need less frequent monitoring as their condition will have improved. They no longer require one to one nursing care. This means that the nurse caring for your child will have other children to look after as well.

This will allow you to become much more involved in your child's daily care and recovery.

The PICU nurse caring for your child will explain what to expect before, during and after your child leaves PICU. You may be given the opportunity to visit the new ward and be introduced to a member of the nursing team if you feel this would be helpful.

If we can do anything to make this time ahead easier for you as a family, please let us know.

## HOSPITAL FACILITIES



### ❖ WAITING AREAS

There are 2 waiting rooms for you to use along the B3 corridor outside PICU.

The first, situated at the end of the corridor, is a shared waiting room with visitors to the Adult Intensive Care Unit. This has a TV and drinking water dispenser. A cold drinks machine and public telephone are situated at the end of the corridor near the B Block lifts.

The second waiting room is a smaller, more private room with a bed settee, which can be used as emergency accommodation for you if your child is admitted during the night.

A visitor's toilet and shower cubicle is situated along the corridor, opposite the first waiting room.

### ❖ PARKING

Parents and carers of children admitted to PICU are entitled to a special parking permit, the ALPHA pass, which lasts for 24 hours. This can be bought from the VINCI office on the ground floor of the large multi-storey car park. The office is open 24 hours a day and staff there will then advise you as to where to park.

### ❖ HEATHFIELDS HOSPITAL CANTEEN

This is situated on the Upper Ground Floor of A Block, and is open 7 days a week from 7.30am

- |                               |                     |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| ❖ BREAKFAST                   | 7.30am - 10.30am    |
| ❖ LUNCH                       | 12.00 noon - 2.00pm |
| ❖ SUPPER                      | 5.00pm - 7.00pm     |
| ❖ NIGHT<br>HOT MEALS          | 9.30pm - 1.30am     |
| ❖ COFFEE CULTURE<br>Mon - Fri | 8.00am - 4.00pm     |

## CONCOURSE

This is situated on the ground floor at the main entrance of the hospital and has a small retail area which includes a bank, post office, coffee area and a small selection of shops

### ❖ NATWEST BANK

Mon - Fri 10.00am - 4.00pm

### ❖ POST OFFICE

Mon - Fri 9.00 am - 5.30 pm

Saturday 9.00am - 1.00pm

### ❖ BOOTS

Mon - Fri 8.00am - 6.00pm

Saturday 9.00am - 6.00pm

Sunday 12.00 - 5.00pm

### ❖ WHSMITH

Mon - Fri 7.30am - 8.00pm

Saturday 9.00am - 5.00pm

Sunday 10.00am - 6.00pm

### ❖ CAFÉ EXPRESS

Mon - Fri 8.00am - 5.00pm

## YOUR VIEWS



Your views are important to us. Please let us know if you have any thoughts or suggestions on how we can improve the care we provide to you as a family.

If you are unhappy with anything, we will make every effort to deal with the problem. However, should you wish to make a formal complaint, staff will explain the hospital's complaint procedure to you and give you the relevant written information you need to do so.

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION



- ❖ Please could all visitors to the unit ring the doorbell and wait for a member of staff to answer before entering. We ask that you be patient as staff may be busy and unable to answer straight away.
- ❖ Please could all visitors either use the alcohol hand gel by the main door, or wash your hands on entering and leaving the unit. This is an important way of preventing the spread of infection.

- ❖ Please could all visitors ensure mobile phones are switched off before entering the unit.
- ❖ Please let staff know if anyone wishing to visit is unwell.
- ❖ Please let staff know if you are pregnant as x-rays are taken frequently on the unit.
- ❖ Please remember that you will be asked to leave the unit during doctors ward rounds, nursing handover and any emergency situation. You will have the opportunity to be fully updated on your child's plan of care on your return. Our aim is to keep you fully informed at all times.
- ❖ Doctors ward rounds are at 8.30am and 4.30pm each day
- ❖ Nursing handover is at 7.30am and 7.30pm each day

