We are now a smoke-free site: smoking will not be allowed anywhere on the hospital site. For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS stop smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169.

Other formats:

If you would like this information in another language, large print or audio, please ask the department where you are being treated, to contact the patient information team:
patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk.

Please note: We do not currently hold many leaflets in other languages; written translation requests are funded and agreed by the department who has authored the leaflet.

Children’s Services
Patient Information
Welcome to the Paediatric Intensive Care and High Dependency Unit

Document history
Authors Diana Sanderson
Pharmacist n/a
Department Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Hills Road, Cambridge, CB2 0QQ
www.cuh.org.uk
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Welcome to PICU/PHDU
Having your child admitted to Intensive Care or the High dependency unit is obviously an extremely anxious time for you and your family.
We have designed this booklet in order to answer some of the questions you may have about our unit.
The Paediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) and Paediatric High Dependency Unit (PHDU) at Addenbrooke's is a 13 bedded ward caring for sick children who need very close observation from doctors, nurses and other members of the PICU/HDU team.
Many of our patients are admitted as emergencies, or transfers from other wards at Addenbrooke's or other hospitals. Some of our patients have a planned stay with us after an operation.

Finding PICU/PHDU
The PICU is on Level 3 of the hospital.

From the main hospital entrance: Turn right as you enter through the revolving door, turn left and walk past the hairdresser, across the corridor to the C and D ward lifts. Use the stairs or lift to go up to level three (one floor up from the Concourse). As you exit the stairs or lifts, turn left, then left again and ward C3 is in front of you. Please ring the doorbell to the left of the main door and state who you are visiting to gain access to the PICU which is situated through ward C3.

The ward may be noisier than PICU/PHDU as there may be more children in each room, more visitors and the children are not as sick. There are televisions at each bed space and a family room with tea and coffee facilities. One family member is able to sleep by your child's bedside. Please read the leaflet 'Discharge from PICU' for further information on being transferred to a ward.

Privacy & Dignity
Same sex bays and bathrooms are offered in all wards except critical care and theatre recovery areas where the use of high-tech equipment and/or specialist one to one care is required.
A child psychologist is also present on the unit should your child need support during or after their stay.

- They have specialist knowledge in child development and emotional and behavioural difficulties in children.
- They can offer emotional support to children and help them make sense of what is happening and how they feel about their situation.

There are chaplains of all denominations available and a chapel for your use in the main concourse which is open 24 hours a day.

Please speak to your bedside nurse if you need help to access these facilities.

**Discharge from PICU/HDU**

When your child is well enough to leave Paediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) or the Paediatric High Dependency unit (PHDU) they will either return to a hospital near where you live, or they will be transferred to one of the children’s wards here at Addenbrooke’s.

We appreciate that leaving the unit can be another stressful time for you and may provoke feelings of fear and anxiety. However, it is important for you to know that we only discharge children when they are getting better and this is a positive step in their recovery.

Your child will be cared for by a team or teams of doctors depending on your child’s needs. The teams include junior doctors and a consultant who will head the team. They will monitor your child’s progress and visit daily, although they will not all be available on the wards at all times.

As your child is in the recovery stage, a nurse will not need to be at your child’s bedside at all times. This allows you more of an opportunity to have a more active role in your child’s care.

**Our address**

Paediatric Intensive Care
Box 7
Addenbrookes Hospital NHS trust
Cambridge University Hospital NHS Trust
Hills Road
Cambridge
CB2 2QQ

Tel: 01223 217715

**Who will look after my child?**

Our 13 beds are staffed by specially trained children’s nurses and your child will be allocated a nurse at the beginning of each shift. Your child will be allocated a consultant on admission who will remain your child’s consultant until they leave PICU/HDU. They will oversee the medical care for your child. Specialist registrar doctors will be available 24 hours a day to care for your child.

There is always a nurse in charge of the shift who can help with any questions you may have.

**When are visiting hours?**

We do not have set visiting hours. You are welcome to visit your child at any time. However, we have a ward round in the morning and you will be asked to leave for this. This is for confidentiality purposes.

We also ask that there are no more than two visitors at a time. This is because the bed spaces are limited for space and the doctors and nurses need room to work.

We encourage only parents/carers during rest time 1300-1430. Other visitors may be asked to leave at this time to allow the children to rest.
Can I see my child straight away?
This may be possible if your child is requiring high dependency care but will depend on your child’s condition. You may be asked to wait when your child is first admitted until we are able to get them settled in to the unit. Nurses and doctors will keep you fully informed and will keep you waiting no longer than necessary.

Can siblings visit?
Yes, siblings can visit and we encourage this as it can help with their understanding of the situation. During times of winter vomiting bugs the Trust does restrict children visiting. If this is the case you will be informed at the time.

Can I stay overnight with my child?
Yes, but not at the child’s bedside or in the parents room. We have parent accommodation on the hospital grounds. Acorn house is run through the sick children’s trust and endeavours to provide a space for you to sleep, cook your own meals, and have time away from the unit. It is very important that you get some rest while on PICU/HDU so please do not feel you have to stay if you would prefer to return home overnight.

Is it all right to touch my child?
Yes, of course. We encourage you to touch your child and become involved in any basic cares that you feel you would like to do. You play a very important role in your child’s care and we encourage this as long as you are comfortable to do so. Talking to your child and playing favourite stories and songs can also help and don’t forget their favourite teddy or special toy!

We have a dedicated hospital play specialist on PICU/HDU. Play has a special function in the hospital environment, and hospital/registered play specialists lead playful activities and use play as therapeutic tool, when your child is ready. It is also important that your child has some quiet time too though.

What facilities are available for you?
We have a parent’s room available for your use. It contains tea and coffee making facilities, a fridge and a microwave. There are newsagents, canteens, cash points, and a bank in the main concourse.

Parking at Addenbrooke’s
You will be able to make use of the visitor’s car parks or NCP car park on site. Please visit main reception for special rate tickets. Park and ride facilities are also available.

Looking after yourself
You will be encouraged to take regular breaks from the unit for meals as it is important that you remain fit and well during your child’s stay. Sleep is also important and we encourage you to get some rest overnight so you remain well. Breastfeeding mothers are offered food from the ward meal trolley. Please ask your nurse about this if you are a breastfeeding mother.

Support for you
We provide family centred care and supporting you is also important. Please ask the nurses or doctors about any questions or worries you have. We will always be willing to talk to you.

We also have a councillor practitioner team:
- They offer emotional and practical help to parents and families of children in PICU.
- They can help parents and families identify effective ways to cope with their current situation and assist them in making sense of what is happening.
- They can help families explore and reflect on the way they think and feel.
- They offer time to talk, which may be as a one off meeting or ongoing, depending on individual needs.