Paediatric Observation and Assessment Unit

An information guide
Paediatric Observation and Assessment Unit

**What is an observation and assessment (O&A) unit?**

An observation and assessment unit is a short stay decision making area where your child can be assessed, investigated, and observed, prior to being discharged home, or admitted to the inpatient ward. We have two observation and assessment units, the KOALA Unit at North Manchester General Hospital, and the Children’s Observation and Assessment Unit at the Royal Oldham Hospital.

**What time is the O&A unit open?**

The Children’s Observation and Assessment Unit is open every day of the year. The opening times on each unit vary depending on the time of year. Please ask a member of staff for the present opening times.

**Does the O&A unit have a direct line?**

Yes, each unit has its own direct telephone number.

KOALA Unit  0161 625 8112
Children’s Observation and Assessment Unit  0161 627 8864
What can I expect to happen whilst we are on the O&A unit?
When you arrive, a member of staff will welcome you and show you to the waiting area or a bed. During your stay, your child will be assessed by a nurse or health care support worker. He or she will then see a doctor. Your child may need to have one or more tests or investigations, all of which the nurse or doctor will fully explain.

Do I have to buy food for my child whilst we are on the unit?
We can provide snacks and drinks for your child but, unfortunately, not for parents or visitors. However, these are available to buy on the hospital sites. Each unit has a parent's notice board giving you details of canteen opening times, visiting times, car parking and other information. If you attend with your baby, and are breast-feeding, a snack and drink will be provided. A small selection of milk is available if your baby is formula fed.

Are there facilities to keep my child entertained?
All our units are welcoming and child friendly with a selection of toys to keep children amused. We also employ an experienced team of play specialists across all our hospital sites.

What about visitors?
As space is limited on our units, we suggest that no more than two visitors attend at any one time. Parents and carers should take full responsibility for any visiting siblings. We suggest that, unless it is urgent, visitors wait until your child is discharged home or moved to the inpatient ward.
What will happen if my child needs to be admitted overnight?
If your child requires admission, a nurse will escort you to the inpatient ward for further treatment. Rarely, your child may be transferred to another hospital. If this happens, the nurse and doctor will fully explain this. Once you are on the inpatient units, one parent will be able to stay overnight. Please ask a member of staff about visiting times.

What will happen if my child can go home but needs medication?
If your child needs to start medication, the doctor will write a prescription that will go to the hospital pharmacy. You should plan to wait between 1 and 3 hours for your child’s medication to arrive back in the unit.

My child is going home and the community nurses are visiting us at home. Who are they?
The children’s community nursing team are an experienced group of trained children’s nurses. They work with parents in the community to help them care for their sick child and, where possible, reduce or prevent readmission to hospital. They will monitor your child’s condition and provide you with advice and support.

If my child is unwell again, can I come straight back to the unit?
No. When your child is discharged home you will be given information and advice. This will include what to do if your child is unwell again.
If English is not your first language and you need help, please contact the Ethnic Health Team on 0161 627 8770.