

Welcome to the Oldham Intensive Care Unit

An information guide



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This leaflet has been designed to give you a brief introduction to the critical care areas of the Oldham Care Organisation and why your relative/loved one has been admitted.

Both the medical and nursing staff understands and appreciates that the days ahead may be extremely emotional and upsetting for both you and your family. We will offer you as much guidance and support as we can throughout this difficult time.

In Oldham Care Organisation if your relative/loved one is admitted onto Intensive Care POD A or POD B, they will receive continuous observation as well as specialised and intensive medical and nursing care. Patients who are admitted to the Critical Care areas fall into different categories. These are patients who are too ill to be looked after on a general hospital ward; patients who have an illness that requires close observation, monitoring and support from specialist equipment only available within the unit and patients who need specialist medication to maintain their normal body functions such as breathing, blood pressure and kidney function. Examples of such illnesses include heart attacks, pneumonia, major trauma following an accident, long or difficult operations, complications following major surgery, falls or poisoning.

The doctor or nurse looking after your relative/loved one will explain things to you in more detail when you visit. Some patients may not need such intensive care however may need close monitoring and will be in a high care bed in critical care.

Our Aims

We aim to provide a high standard of clinical care based on individual needs.

We also try and take into consideration personal, cultural and spiritual beliefs and do our utmost to provide an environment which supports these beliefs. We will strive to maintain comfort and dignity both in life and in the sad event of death.

Admission and on-going care

When a relative/loved one is admitted to the unit it may be sometime before you can come to the bedside to see them.

Whilst you are waiting, they will be examined and assessed by the medical/nursing staff and various monitoring lines and leads will be attached and inserted. These enable us to start any treatments or therapies that may be needed. Everything will be explained to you as soon as possible.

Patients who need intensive care may be heavily sedated when first admitted. This is to enable us to control their breathing and other bodily functions. They may look very different and be attached to lots of tubes and wires. This does not mean that you cannot touch them, although it is a good idea to check with the nurse first.

Don't be scared to talk to them, even though they are asleep, as they may still be able to hear you. They can also become very swollen which requires the removal of rings and other jewellery. These will either be returned to you or put into the hospital safe.

Your relative will be surrounded by lots of equipment. Due to this, the unit can be quite noisy and you may hear lots of equipment and monitor alarms. This is normal and does not necessarily mean that anything is wrong.

There is usually a ventilator, which is a machine that breathes for the patient. This is more commonly known as life support machine. There will also be a monitor that gives continuous reading of heart rate, blood pressure and oxygen levels. There may be many pumps that regulate the drips and drugs that are needed.

Each nurse usually looks after one patient if they are ventilated however, if they are not ventilated the nurse can have two patients. In addition there are senior and junior medical staff, Advanced Critical Care Practitioners, physiotherapists, dieticians, pharmacists and radiographers, as well as many support workers all helping to give your relative/loved one the best possible care.

All these people wear a variety of different uniforms. If you are unsure of who people are, do not hesitate to ask one of the nurses who will be happy to clarify things for you.

Your relative/loved one will receive the very best care and treatment possible. However, sometimes the illness may be too overwhelming and there is no treatment that can help your relative/loved one. In this case the doctor and nurse will discuss the options with you and your family, which may include discontinuing treatments and providing end of life to keep your loved one comfortable and pain free.

Sometimes, when it is clear your relative/loved ones prognosis is poor, the doctors and nurses may ask you your views on organ and tissue donation. We can arrange for a specialist from organ donation to come and see you. This is a very difficult and emotive issue for many people. However, please don't be afraid to ask for help or talk to the doctors and nurses about how you are feeling.

Once your relative/loved one's condition has improved and they are well enough, they will be transferred to a general ward. There will be a lot less nursing staff and equipment on these wards. This may be very frightening for you at first, but please be assured that this is

because your relative/loved one is getting better or does not need as much support.

Everything will be explained to you prior to transfer and what to expect following discharge from the unit.

General Information

Information relating to visiting times, telephone numbers, restaurant facilities etc. is located in a file in the relatives room and also available separately.

Please ask staff if you require any further information.

Visiting Times

There is a Care Organisation 'Open Visiting Policy', which states you can visit at any time. However due to how poorly the patients are in the Intensive Care Unit we request that relatives come between to visit between 14:00 - 20:00 hours. This is due to the fact that many procedures occur in the morning. Furthermore, it is to maintain our patients' confidentiality when ward rounds are taking place.

Please also be aware that our patients may require nursing or medical care at any time of the day or night and you may be asked to wait in the waiting area. This can sometimes be for extensive time. It must be highlighted that every effort will be made to reduce the waiting times.

The number of visitors allowed at the bedside is restricted to **two** as the nurses need to have easy access around the bedside. However if there are exceptions for any particular reasons, please discuss with the nurse caring for your relative.

You are welcome to telephone any time of the day or night and we will be able to give you an update on your relative/loved one's condition. However, we are unable to discuss specific details over

the phone. If you have a large family, it may be best to nominate one or two people to ring the hospital and let them update everyone else.

When you visit the unit, please ring the bell at the door and a nurse will attend to you as soon as possible. If treatment is being given to your relative/loved one, you may be asked to wait in the waiting room.

Please discuss with the nurse in charge if you want to bring young children into the unit.

Mobile phones must not be used on the critical care areas and taking photos are prohibited. However phones can be used in the waiting room.

In order to reduce any infection being passed on to your relative/loved one, please make sure you wash your hands or use the alcohol hand rub provided when entering and leaving the unit.

We recommend that you take home any of your relatives/loved one's personal items. You can leave their toiletries, although do not worry if you cannot get these as we can supply them. Please do not bring flowers, plants and balloons on to the unit. However cards, one or two photographs or small religious items can be accommodated.

It is important that you take care of yourself during this stressful time and get regular sleep and meals. We have limited overnight accommodation available. The nurse looking after your relative/loved one will be able to advise you on this. You can also use the restaurant, which is open Monday to Friday (Saturday & Sunday only till 11am).

If you require any further services e.g. social worker, chaplain, sick notes, discussions with the medical staff or the Patient Advisory Liaison Service (PALS), then please do not hesitate to speak to any

member of staff who will be happy to arrange any of these things for you.

We aim to provide the very highest quality possible standard of care within the intensive care unit. If you have any ideas or suggestions of how we could improve our service please speak to the nurse in charge, or fill in a questionnaire which is anonymous or alternatively write to the Lead Nurse of the Intensive care unit.

However, if you feel that we have not sufficiently reached a high standard of care and you wish to make a complaint, please in the first instance speak to the nurse in charge of the ward. They will do their best to answer your complaint or advise you of how to take the complaint forward.

The Intensive Care Society was founded in 1970 and aims to improve the care of the critically ill through education and research. They can also provide information to their relatives and you can contact them on www.ics.ac.uk

If English is not your first language and you need help, please contact the Interpretation and Translation Service

Jeśli angielski nie jest twoim pierwszym językiem i potrzebujesz pomocy, skontaktuj się z działem tłumaczeń ustnych i pisemnych

اگر انگریزی آپ کی پہلی زبان نہیں ہے اور آپ کو مدد کی ضرورت ہے تو ، براہ کرم ترجمانی اور ترجمہ خدمت سے رابطہ کریں

Dacă engleza nu este prima ta limbă și ai nevoie de ajutor, te rugăm să contactezi Serviciul de interpretare și traducere

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To improve our care environment for Patients, Visitors and Staff, **Northern Care Alliance NHS Group** is Smoke Free including buildings, grounds & car parks.

For advice on stopping smoking contact the Specialist Stop Smoking Service on 01706 517 522

For general enquiries please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 0161 604 5897

For enquiries regarding clinic appointments, clinical care and treatment please contact 0161 624 0420 and the Switchboard Operator will put you through to the correct department / service

The Northern Care Alliance NHS Group (NCA) is one of the largest NHS organisations in the country, employing 17,000 staff and providing a range of hospital and community healthcare services to around 1 million people across Salford, Oldham, Bury, Rochdale and surrounding areas. Our Care Organisations are responsible for providing our services, delivering safe, high quality and reliable care to the local communities they serve.

The NCA brings together Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust and the hospitals and community services of The Royal Oldham Hospital, Fairfield General Hospital in Bury, and Rochdale Infirmary (currently part of The Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust).



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