

Welcome to the Paediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU)

Information for parents and families



PICU
at St George's

This booklet is designed to provide parents and carers with further information about the paediatric (children's) intensive care unit (PICU) at St George's Hospital.

Your child has been admitted to PICU because he or she needs close observation, monitoring and/or respiratory (breathing) life support. There are other wards besides PICU within the paediatric unit – Pinckney Ward, Nicholls Ward, Jungle Ward, Frederick Hewitt Ward, PSDU (the paediatric step down unit), the children's emergency department (A&E) and the children's outpatient unit. Your child may have come from one of these wards to PICU or may go to one of these wards during their stay.

At the entrance to all wards you will see a photo board with pictures of the staff your child may come into contact with. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to a member of staff caring for your child.

What happens on PICU?

At the start of each daytime and night time shift, the nurse in charge will evaluate the needs of all of the children on PICU. He/she will then allocate an appropriately trained nurse to look after your child. It may be that the nurse looking after your child is also caring for other children on the unit. He/she will let you know who you can call if you are concerned about your child whilst the nurse is looking after another patient.

The doctors in charge of your child's intensive care will be available to speak to you during the daytime or by arrangement at any other time. Any other doctors (for example, surgeons) who may be involved in your child's care will review your child daily or by appointment.

A staff handover (where nurses and doctors begin/end their shifts) occurs twice daily between 7.30 and 8.30am and at 8.30pm.

Ward rounds (where medical staff and anyone else involved in your child’s care meet to discuss your child’s progress) occur three times daily at the following times:

- 8.30am
- between 11am and 1pm
- 8.30pm

You should expect a visit from medical staff in your child’s bed space after the 8.30am and 8.30pm meetings. The medical ward round between 11am and 1pm is a teaching round. It is held away from the child’s bedside and is for medical professionals only. Your child’s nurse will attend when they are discussing your child.

The nursing and medical staff will update you on the plans for your child’s care as discussed in the ward round and will also alert you to any changes in your child’s condition throughout the day.

When are meal times?

Children’s meal times are as follows:

Breakfast	8am to 9am (or when your child wakes up)
Lunch	Midday
Dinner	5pm

The lunch and dinner trolleys are not based on PICU, so please ask your child’s nurse or ward receptionist for a meal voucher. Please feel free to bring your child’s

favourite foods or drinks into hospital. These can be stored in the refrigerator in the kitchen, if necessary. A microwave oven is also available. For health and safety reasons staff are not permitted to reheat food in the microwave oven, but you are welcome to do so if you wish.

Please ensure that any food brought in is labelled with your child's name and the date on which it was brought in, as we are legally required to dispose of food after a certain period of time.

Snack boxes are available for children – please speak with your nurse who can arrange for one to be ordered.

Rest and wellbeing

We have a quiet period between 12pm and 2pm. During this time we keep lights and activities to a minimum. Visitors are also kept to a minimum and we request that they adhere to the quiet period as well.

Are there teachers or play leaders on PICU?

Play leaders will visit your child if he/she is well enough. There is a parents' information board in the parents' area which offers more information and answers to any further questions you may have about this element of your child's care.

There is a school room located on the fifth floor outside Fredrick Hewitt ward, which is staffed by teachers and teaching assistants. If your child is well enough, he/she can attend the school during term time. Please speak to your child's nurse for more information.

Support for parents and families

The **Paediatric psychology team** is available to support you, your child and their siblings through the emotional and psychological challenges of having a child on PICU. You may wish to talk to someone about your thoughts and feelings, how you were coping or any questions you have. You may also want practical help with talking to or supporting your sick child and/or their siblings. We can come to visit parents at the bedside but also have some private rooms on the fifth floor, or we can arrange for a private space on PICU to meet. We can be a friendly ear to listen or offer advice on coping or managing feelings.

The Clinical Psychologists for PICU are:

Dr Ellie Atkins and Dr Julia Newbury.

If you would like to speak to a psychologist for any reason, please ask your child's nurse.

PICU Family Liaison Nurse

Family Liaison nurse provides practical and emotional support to parents, carers and other family members from admission, throughout their stay until discharge from PICU. The Family Liaison nurse is available Monday to Friday between 9am to 5pm.

Parent Support Group

A group for parents and carers facilitated by the family-liaison nurse. Every parent with a child who is admitted to PICU is encouraged to join the group. We meet once a week every Wednesday at 10am in the parents' room.

The Spiritual Care Centre

The **chaplaincy team** is here for everyone – you do not have to be religious to use this service. Some people may

value the opportunity to talk to someone about what is happening to them or their child, and how they feel about the changes they are facing. The team includes, **Healthcare Chaplains, Roman Catholic Healthcare Chaplains and Muslim Healthcare Chaplains.** The Spiritual Care Centre is located on the ground floor of Grosvenor wing and is open 24 hours a day as a place for quiet reflection.

Please feel free to call her on **020 8725 3071** (between 9am and 5pm) for further support. Outside of these hours, please ask a member of the nursing team to contact the on call member of the chaplaincy team.

Interpreters and Language Line are available if you would like more information about your child and English is not your first language. Please speak to your nurses who will arrange this.

What facilities are at St George's?

Restaurant and shops

The Restaurant is located on the first floor of Lanesborough wing.

Meals and snacks are available from 7:30am to 7:45pm.

Meal times are:

- breakfast – 7.30 to 10am
- lunch – 11.45am to 2pm
- dinner – 5.30 to 7.45pm.

Parents should make sure they are eating and drinking themselves to keep up their strength and to stop from becoming dehydrated. There is a microwave oven and refrigerator for you to use if you need to bring in food from home. Breastfeeding mothers are entitled to free food.

Please ask your nurse, healthcare assistant or reception clerk for meal vouchers.

There are drinks and food machines in the canteen and in the lift areas of Lanesborough wing. There are also sandwich boxes for patients which you can request from the ward staff.

Whistlestops: this shop is at the main entrance to the hospital and sells magazines, stationary, confectionary and a small selection of toiletries. Opening times are Mon-Fri 8am to 8pm, Sat 9am to 7.30pm and Sun 9am to 6pm.

Marks and Spencer: is situated in the main entrance and sells food, snacks and flowers and it has a cafeteria.

Pret A Manager: ground floor Jenner Wing. Opens at 7am to 5pm. Counter-service, readymade sandwiches, breakfast, coffee, soaps and salads

Bank: there are cash machines in the main entrance next to Whistlestops and in the medical school on the ground floor.

On PICU

There is a parents' room opposite the PICU entrance. This consists of a kitchenette, seating, shower/toilet facilities and a rest area. You can gain access to this facility by obtaining a swipe card and a locker key from your child's nurse, healthcare assistant or the ward receptionist. You will need to pay a £5 refundable deposit for the card and key. Please remember to return the card and key when your child leaves the unit so as not to create difficulties for other parents wishing to access the area. Your deposit will be refunded to you when you return the card and key.

The nurse caring for your child will encourage you to eat, drink and rest during your child's stay on PICU. This is important, as it will help to restore your energy and keep you well for when your child is more awake and ready to

move to a general ward. You are welcome to bring in your own food to eat in the parents' room or parents' kitchen, but we ask that parents do not bring hot food and drink onto PICU.

Breastfeeding mothers are entitled to a meal from the patient food trolley if you are on PSDU. Please see your nurse for a meal voucher if you are a breast feeding mother and your child is on PICU. Snack boxes are also available for breastfeeding mothers, should this be preferred, it can be obtained from the Ingredients Restaurant (1st floor, Lanesborough Wing). Please ask your child's nurse, healthcare assistant or the ward receptionist if you require a meal or snack box.

Discounts for parents

You will be offered a car parking form entitling you to reduced-rate parking for one car at either £8 per day or £10 per week. The parking form can be obtained from your child's nurse, healthcare assistant, or the ward receptionist. The form will need to be signed by a representative from PICU and presented to the security office (ground floor, Grosvenor Wing), where you will be issued with a parking card.

Can parents stay on the ward?

You can visit your child at any time and stay on the ward for as long as you wish. However, for safety reasons, we cannot have parent beds in the clinical area.

There are two parents' rooms near the ward and there are also facilities on Jungle Ward. The nurse in charge of the night shift will help you with your sleeping arrangements. Please respect any decision made as to where you are asked to sleep, as there is high demand for accommodation from all units within the hospital.

You may also be able to stay at Ronald McDonald House, which is located within the hospital grounds and provides free 'home away from home' accommodation for families while their child is in hospital. These rooms can be organised during working hours, however please be aware there can be a long waiting list and preference is given to families who live further away. Rooms are allocated by the Ronald McDonald house manager. Please speak to your nurse or receptionist for more information.

Are visitors allowed?

Parents are welcome at any time during the day or night however, visiting may be restricted if your child has an infection which could be spread to others or if your child needs protection from infections.

Family and friends are also welcome between the hours of 8am and 8pm. Visitors wishing to attend outside of these hours must make arrangements with the nurse in charge in advance.

Siblings are welcome to accompany you on the visit if you feel it is appropriate. However, please be aware of the PICU environment and how it can affect your children. If you are unsure, you can always talk it through with the Paediatric Psychologists. Please speak to your child's nurse if you think this would be helpful.

Due to limited space on the unit, we only allow two visitors at your child's bedside at any one time. We ask that you and any visitors are considerate of other children on the ward who may be very poorly. TVs, musical devices and other noisy equipment should therefore be used at a low volume or with earphones, particularly after 8pm. Mobile phones may be used on the unit to text but phone calls are restricted to outside the unit.

What about security?

On admission you will be asked to choose a password, which you should quote when phoning the unit for updates on your child. This password, which should only be used by parents, ensures that information about your child is only ever given to the correct people.

PICU and all paediatric wards are protected by a security system. To enter the ward, you will need to press the buzzer at the door and make yourself visible on the security camera. A member of staff will ask which patient you are visiting. They will then release the door lock for you from the nurse's station.

When you leave the unit you will need to press the large green exit button to the left of the door to release the lock. For the safety of everyone on the ward, please do not allow access to others unless they have also identified themselves to PICU staff.

Additional services available on PICU

Speech and Language Therapy

The Speech and Language Therapy team helps children who are staying on PICU with communication and feeding issues. Children will be seen after they are referred by their consultant. Children who need help with feeding are seen within two days of their referral and children who need communication support within three days. The Speech and Language Therapy team is available Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm. If you have concerns about your child's feeding or communication speak with the medical team about whether a referral to Speech and Language Therapy would be helpful.

Physiotherapy

The paediatric physiotherapy team is available to assess and treat patients on PICU Monday – Friday between the hours of 0830 and 1630. They are also available on weekends and public holidays although hours covered may vary significantly. Referrals to physiotherapy are received via the PICU medical team. Treatment interventions offered includes: airway clearance, ventilation set up and weaning, neurodevelopmental assessment, early rehabilitation and exercise prescription.

Occupational Therapy

The Occupational Therapy is available Monday to Friday between the hours of 8.30am to 4.30pm and your child can be referred to occupational therapy by the consultant. The service includes: advice around seating and positioning, assessment for provision of temporary loan seating during admission (as available), developmental support including upper limb and hands skills, play development and participation in daily activities.

Infection control

Keeping your hands clean is one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of infection around the hospital. We ask that you and your visitors help by washing your hands and/or using the alcohol gel every time you enter and leave both your child's bed space and the ward. Buggies are not permitted onto the unit at the bed spaces for infection control and safety reasons. Outside coats should be removed and hung up on pegs provided at the entrance to the unit.

If extra infection control considerations are in place for your child, the nurses will also request that you wear an appropriately coloured apron when you are at your child's bed space.

What will my child need in hospital?

We try to keep life on the unit as normal as possible for the children. Unfortunately some illnesses and their treatments can be very disruptive. In these cases, little reminders of home, such as favourite toys, music, photos and books can be helpful. You may also bring any special comforters that your child uses at home.

We would also ask that you bring in the following items:

- Nappies (if your child uses them).
- Barrier cream, such as Sudocrem® or Vaseline®.
- A wash bag containing toiletries such as soap/shower gel, a flannel, toothbrush, toothpaste, shampoo and a hairbrush.
- Clothing, especially clean socks, underwear, loose T-shirts, shirts, shorts and night clothes (loose clothing is more comfortable and easier to fit over drips and monitoring equipment).
- Slippers or shoes with non-slip soles – these are for when your child recovers and becomes more active around the ward.
- Items of clothing, bags and toys are not allowed on the floor and window seal. Please place these items in your locker and away from the floor.
- Please keep the areas around the bed space clear for the event of an emergency.

Please only bring in what is needed, as space at the bedside is limited. Nursing staff will be happy to advise you.

Small amounts of change might be useful for buying items from the hospital shop, but please do not bring in any valuables or large amounts of cash. We will ask you to sign a disclaimer agreeing that St George's is not liable for any loss or damage to your property.

Privacy and dignity

The children's department at St George's Hospital is dedicated to ensuring that children of all ages are offered a high level of privacy and dignity. We try to create a suitable environment for your child. This includes placing your child on a ward with other patients of the same age and sex. Although we try to consider all of these things, your child's clinical condition and needs may take priority over them.

You will be asked to sign a form to confirm that privacy and dignity issues have been discussed with you. If you have any concerns, please do not hesitate to discuss this with your nurse or the nurse in charge.

Getting better

We will encourage you to help out with your child's care as they begin to get better. Please let us know if there are any elements of your child's care that you are unsure about.

Paediatric Step Down Unit (PSDU) on the fifth floor. This offers continuing care and observation from the PICU team as your child begins to get better. Your child may be transferred there temporarily from PICU before being admitted to the general children's ward. This is not necessary for all children and, depending on their medical condition, many are able to go straight to the ward.

Once your child's health has improved sufficiently, they may be transferred to one of the other children's wards at St George's or to another hospital closer to home. If you would like to receive further information about this, please speak to the nurse in charge of your child's care.

If your child stays at St George's, the ward to which he/she is transferred will depend on his/her needs.

- **Pinckney Ward** is primarily for children needing isolation (care away from others) because of the risk of infection.
- **Nicholls Ward** is primarily for children who are having/have had surgery or with neurological and neurosurgical conditions.
- **Jungle Ward** is for children needing day surgery/treatment only.
- **Frederick Hewitt Ward** is for children with medical conditions.

Once your child is on the ward, the same rules apply with regards to having no more than two visitors at any one time and no hot foods or drinks at your child's bed space.

What happens when my child is well enough to go home?

After your child is discharged from hospital, they may be required to attend a follow-up appointment at the Dragon Centre (the children's outpatient department) or at your local hospital. You should be given an appointment for this before leaving the hospital. If you do not receive an appointment time, please ask one of the ward staff.

Further information

If there is anything that we haven't covered in this leaflet or you have any questions or concerns about your child's care, please speak to your named nurse or any member of the nursing team. Even though the ward and our staff are often very busy, we are always happy to answer your questions. Alternatively, you can contact the PICU team on **020 8725 1932** or **020 8725 2431**.

Information about contacting parent support groups, websites or national helplines is available in the parents'

room. If the information you require is not available, please speak to your nurse who will be happy to help you.

Notes

Additional services

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough Wing (near the lift foyer).

Tel: 020 8725 2453 **Email:** pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

Web: www.nhs.uk

NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

Tel: 111



Reference: PAE_WPI_02 **Published:** April 2019 **Review date:** April 2021