

# Neonatal Unit

**This leaflet is a guide for parents. If you have any further questions, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for your baby.**

**For specific COVID 19 guidelines please see separate leaflet.**



## Philosophy of Care

St George's neonatal unit aims to provide medical and surgical neonatal care to the highest standard.

We provide family-centred care that supports parents to develop a close and loving relationship with their baby and which values parents as partners in care. We aim to enable babies to receive breast milk and to support breastfeeding wherever possible.

We are a part of the University of London and Kingston and we support the training of both medical and nursing staff. We aim to create an environment conducive to enquiry, learning and personal development appropriate for professional training. We are actively involved in neonatal research and will host both local, national and international neonatal research studies.



## Dear Parents,

Congratulations on the birth of your baby and welcome to the neonatal unit. Babies are admitted to the unit if they need extra care. Babies on the neonatal unit are cared for by staff specifically trained to look after newborn babies.

Your baby needs your love and attention during this time and the team will help you to be involved and at the centre of your baby's care.

The aim of this booklet is to provide you with some information about the neonatal unit, which we hope will help you during your stay. If there is anything you don't understand or about which you need more information, please ask a member of staff, even if you've asked before.

## Neonatal Unit Telephone Numbers

<b>ICU/High Dependency Reception</b>	<b>020 8725 1936</b>
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Intensive Care Nursery 1	020 8725 1937
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Intensive Care Nursery 2	020 8725 1938
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Intensive Care Nursery 3	020 8725 1939
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High Dependency Nursery 1	020 8266 6048
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High Dependency Nursery 2	020 8266 6049
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Isolation Nursery	020 8725 4744
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<b>Special Care Reception</b>	<b>020 8725 4304</b>
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Special Care Nursery	020 8725 1935
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Special Care Community Sisters	020 8725 3850
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Unit Counsellor	020 8725 4733
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Family Care Coordinator	020 8266 6045
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Hospital Switchboard	020 8672 1255
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# The Neonatal Unit

The unit is made up of three Intensive Care (IC) nurseries, one High Dependency nursery (HD) and Special Care (SC) (which is situated near the Ingredients Café). Each area offers different levels of care and your baby will be cared for in the area best suited to their needs.

To access the unit parents should press the relevant buzzer for your baby's nursery. Other visitors should use the Reception buzzer between 8am and 4pm and the nursery buzzer after 4pm. Parents are always welcome on the unit. At certain times there are ward rounds and nursing handovers in your baby's nursery. We ask that you respect the confidentiality of all babies who share the nursery with your baby as their detailed treatment is discussed. If you accidentally overhear facts about another baby please do not share this with other people. No information about your baby is given to anybody other than parents.

## **Parents have open access to the unit at all times**

During the Covid 19 Pandemic there are visiting restrictions in place on NNU. Grandparents or siblings can book an hour visit to see baby each day – please see separate information posters for guidance. Other family or friends are currently unable to visit the unit, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Staff are always able to ask parents/visitors to leave the nursery if this is necessary (e.g., if it is overcrowded and unsafe).

We are absolutely committed to Family Centred Care and will review our visiting policy regularly.

If you are feeling unwell please do not enter the neonatal unit as this may risk the babies' health. Please ask to speak with the nurse in charge if you are concerned about this.

People with cold sores, apart from baby's parents, are also asked not to come on to the unit. Any parents with a cold sore should speak to the nurse in charge for further advice.

Any person exposed to Chickenpox in the last 21 days should also seek advice before coming onto the unit, even if they feel well.

## **Handwashing**

Strict handwashing is important to protect your baby from infection. Please follow our handwashing policy when you enter the nursery and teach your visitors to do the same. Please gel your hands after washing and when exiting the unit.

## **Parking**

Ask your baby's nurse for a Parking Concession form enabling you to park in the visitor's car park for £10 per week.

## **Parent/family facilities**

Both the ICU/HD and Special Care areas have a **Family Sitting Room with kitchen** for your use. Free tea, coffee and snacks are provided and there is a refrigerator and microwave. The kitchen is checked regularly but if there is anything missing please tell the Reception staff.

## **WI-FI**

Free First Touch **Wi-Fi** is also provided.

**The Quiet Room** is for parents who need a little peaceful time to themselves. It is also used to update families about their baby's progress. Please do not to eat or sleep in this room.



A **toilet and shower** are located opposite the HD 1 Nursery and by Reception in Special Care.

In the hospital grounds near the NNU is a **children's garden** which families are encouraged to use in warm weather. Staff will be happy to issue you with the key.

There is a limited amount of **accommodation** in the hospital for families who live out of area or those whose babies are very sick. Availability of accommodation is reviewed daily at midday. Please speak to staff for further information.

There are several **cafes and restaurants** in the hospital.

## Staff

There is a team of staff on the unit who are here to help look after your baby and to support you. This includes nurses, a range of doctors, nurse practitioners, family care coordinators, counsellors, nursery nurses and community sisters. The whole team strives to carry out the Trust's values of being Kind, Respectful, Responsible and Excellent.

Opposite the Reception areas you will find photos of all our staff and a board telling you which doctor and nurse are running the unit each day.

If you have any questions or concerns please speak to a member of staff or ask to speak to Laura James, Neonatal Unit Matron or Cathie Wells, Special Care Ward Manager.



## Family Care Co-ordinator

St. George's Neonatal Unit is committed to promoting family centred care. Bobbie, the family care coordinator, can help you build confidence as you bond with and care for your new family. She will support you with practical issues during your stay. She is friendly and approachable if you have any concerns and will encourage you to be fully involved and at the centre of your baby's care. You are the one constant in your baby's life; you will know your baby best and your opinions and insights are crucial.



The neonatal unit can seem a very medical and scary environment where things may seem out of your control. However, you have a wonderful new addition to your family and there are many ways you can feel involved and empowered to care for your baby. The whole neonatal team will help and encourage you to do this.

Bobbie can be contacted by email on

[bobbie.everson@stgeorges.nhs.uk](mailto:bobbie.everson@stgeorges.nhs.uk)

## Unit Counsellor

Having a baby or babies on the neonatal unit is a worrying time for parents. When you have a baby who is unwell your feelings can be overwhelming.

Speaking to a counsellor may help you to cope during this difficult time by giving you the opportunity to talk confidentially about worries and concerns that you may be experiencing while your baby is here with us. It can help to express and explore thoughts and feelings to help you manage during your time on the unit.

Ruth and Becks are the counsellors based on the neonatal unit. If you would like to speak to them ask the nurse looking after your baby or contact them directly on 020 8725 4733 or by email

[ruth.hunter@stgeorges.nhs.uk](mailto:ruth.hunter@stgeorges.nhs.uk)

[rebekah.easton@stgeorges.nhs.uk](mailto:rebekah.easton@stgeorges.nhs.uk)

## Spiritual Care

The hospital chaplains are available 24 hours a day to people of faith or none. They can listen to your concerns, whatever they are, whether your baby is very ill or not. The hospital chapel is on the ground floor of Grosvenor Wing.

## Your role in your baby's care on the NNU

Our aim is to deliver family centred care and to enable you to be fully informed, supported and confident in caring for your baby during their stay on the NNU.

## What you can expect of Neonatal Unit staff

- The NNU team is here to help you at all times and ensure you are kept up to date about your baby's progress.
- Our aim is to ensure all parents are confident and skilled in looking after their baby.
- We want to help you get home as a family as soon as possible.

## What we expect of parents on NNU

- You read this leaflet which has important information about having a baby on NNU and about our facilities for families.
- You work with the nursing team to enable us to support you in caring for your baby.
- Parents should be here every day caring for your baby and having regular skin to skin cuddles (when this is possible). Please discuss with the team if there is a reason this cannot happen.
- As parent accommodation is very limited, availability is reviewed daily and you may be asked to leave your room when another family has a more urgent need.
- If we are able to offer you accommodation it is expected that you be on the unit, caring for your baby as often as possible.

We value parents as partners in care and hope you will feel fully involved in your baby's care. Staff will enable you to be with your baby as much as possible and encourage you to look after your baby, as you feel able.

When you are with your baby, as well as providing care for them, it is important for you to give them loving contact by talking, singing or reading with them, whilst giving them a loving touch (comfort or containment holding or skin to skin cuddles). Evidence shows that this really benefits your baby. This is how your baby will begin to know you and how you can recognise and respond to your baby's needs. This may feel daunting because your baby may seem so small and fragile but staff are able to help you with this, please ask them.

Our Quiet Room has an assortment of books about prematurity which parents may borrow and in your First Touch welcome bag there are also some useful leaflets from Bliss, the national charity for babies born premature or sick [www.bliss.org.uk](http://www.bliss.org.uk).



## Breastfeeding/Expressing

On the NNU we value breast milk for the babies and are committed to the UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative. We will help you to start expressing as soon as possible after the birth of your baby, ideally within six hours, if your baby cannot breastfeed yet. You will be given a hand expressing wallet which contains leaflets and equipment to help you to be able to successfully hand express in the first few days after your baby's birth. Staff will also show you how to use the electric breast pumps, usually on about day 3-4, or when you are ready to do this.

Expressing by your baby's cot side may boost your milk supply and screens are available for privacy. Looking at a picture of your baby, smelling a bonding square, imagining your baby in your arms feeding, all help to increase your milk supply.

There are also expressing rooms for you to use to express your milk and wash up your expressing kit. These are situated near the IC3 Nursery and in Special Care. Nursing staff will show you how to label and store your milk.

We encourage you to express frequently (8-10 times in 24 hours) to establish a good milk supply. Please speak to staff if you need to borrow an electric pump to use at home. When your baby can breastfeed, staff will help you with this.

We encourage the use of bonding squares, which mums place close to their skin and baby has close to them, swapping these over, so you both get to know each other's smell. This improves the success of expressing, feeding and bonding between you and your baby. Bonding squares can be found in the family areas or ask staff and should be washed daily.

If you have made an informed decision to formula feed please discuss this with the team. Formula is not an option for some sick babies - we will discuss this with you and try to support you with your feeding intention or discuss other feeding options available.

## Donating Milk

We have a milk bank on the unit. If you would like to become a milk donor, please ask a member of staff. A leaflet was included in your hand expressing wallet or staff can give you a copy.

## Screening

Please look at the Screening leaflet which was given to you in the First Touch cloth bag on admission or ask staff for a copy.

Routine screening tests include: Newborn blood spot, hearing and eye screening and cranial ultrasounds.

Immunisations are also given when due, unless otherwise indicated.

Screening and Immunisation records will be written in baby's Red Child Health Record book which you can obtain from the unit if you haven't got one already.



## Transfer to local hospital

Some families feel that they would like their baby to stay in St George's Neonatal Unit for the rest of his/her hospital care rather than being transferred back to their local hospital.

Unfortunately, this is not possible because, just as you and your baby needed specialist care, there are other babies waiting to be transferred for similar reasons.

Babies who are born within the South London Neonatal Network can be transferred to any hospital within the network according to their clinical need. This may not be the hospital in which they were originally born. This is to provide the most appropriate care for your baby as well as trying to keep him or her as close to your family home as possible.

You can be reassured that your baby will only be transferred back to a unit providing the appropriate level of care once specialist care at St George's is no longer needed.

Sharmaine is the Neonatal Unit Discharge coordinator – please ask to speak to her regarding your baby's transfer/discharge.



## Special Care

The Special Care (SC) Unit is often a bright, busy and sometimes noisy environment which provides continuous care for babies requiring extra support. This can include tube feeding, oxygen therapy and phototherapy and is usually the final step towards going home. It is not uncommon, however, for babies to be transferred back to High Dependency or Intensive Care temporarily, normally due to infection.

On Special Care it is vital that you are caring for your baby as much as possible, every day. You will increase your ability to care for your baby the more time you spend at the hospital being involved in all of your baby's care and you will both begin to recognise and respond to each other with confidence.

If you would like some guidance in how to stimulate your baby developmentally when they are ready, please ask staff. We have nursery nurses who work on the unit who can help with this.

## Going Home

The most important thing any family wants to know is when you can take your baby home. Throughout your baby's stay on the NNU, you will have completed a "Parentcraft Sheet" to ensure you are confident and competent at caring for your baby and that you have had resuscitation training. When the doctors have said that your baby is ready to go home, we encourage you to stay with your baby in one of our rooming-in bedrooms for a few nights, to ensure you feel confident with your baby's feeding and care. During this time please ask staff for meal vouchers to help buy food (funded by First Touch) if you need them.

## Discharge

By the time your baby is discharged, they will be just like any newborn baby, so unless staff have mentioned anything special to you, you should care for baby as if they had gone straight home with you from hospital.

Small babies sometimes need feeding more often and their feeds take longer, which you will have discovered whilst rooming in. When first home, don't be surprised at how much of your day is spent just looking after your baby.

A team of Community Neonatal Sisters will visit babies who reside in the Wandsworth area after discharge. Other families may be supported by their Health visitor, Community midwife or GP.



It is the policy of the Neonatal Unit to notify Community Health Visitors and GP's of admissions to the neonatal unit. Usually this is medical information about the baby's condition. Occasionally, more sensitive information may need to be shared if a child may be at risk of harm.

Sharing of information is helpful to community health professionals to plan for your baby's discharge and follow up. The Health Visitor will contact you prior to making a home visit.



## First Touch

First Touch is the official charity of St George's Neonatal Unit and supports its work by funding state-of-the art equipment and initiatives which are outside of the scope of NHS budgets.

First Touch knows that having a baby on the NNU is a very strange, stressful and bewildering experience and that small things can make a big difference. So, along with incubators and other equipment, and granting funds for specialist staff training we also support families. We provide things such as welcome bags, cool bags for breast milk, journey boxes, toiletries, meals for resident parents, travel grants for families in financial need, magazines and decaffeinated drinks for breastfeeding mums, toys for visiting siblings and refreshments for the weekly Parents' Group.

First Touch is run by two part-time members of staff, Sarah Collins, Charity Director and Louise Williams, Charity Co-ordinator. They can be reached by email at

[info@first-touch.org.uk](mailto:info@first-touch.org.uk)



[www.first-touch.org.uk](http://www.first-touch.org.uk)

Facebook @firsttouchnnu



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Neonatal Unit  
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Blackshaw Road  
London  
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Tel: 020 8672 1255

**For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit [www.stgeorges.nhs.uk](http://www.stgeorges.nhs.uk)**

# Useful sources of information

[www.bliss.org.uk](http://www.bliss.org.uk)

[www.laleche.org.uk](http://www.laleche.org.uk)

[www.kellymom.com](http://www.kellymom.com)

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## 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](mailto: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](http://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



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