

A Guide for Parents Using the Neonatal Services



We are here to help

We know that this is an emotional time for parents. Our aim is to help you to look after your baby while he or she needs extra medical and nursing care.

You can contact us at any time but we ask that only parents call through to our Neonatal Unit (NNU) and Special Care Baby Unit (SCBU) on the telephone numbers below:

NNU Nurses Station, Lister Hospital:

Direct dial: 01438 284125 / 285199

Special Care (SCBU) Nurses Station, Lister Hospital:

Direct dial: 01438 285043

Please ask any questions you may have. If we cannot give an immediate answer we will arrange for you to talk to someone who can help.



Congratulations on the birth of your baby and welcome to the Neonatal Unit

Our philosophy is to promote good health with high quality care for babies using a family centred approach.

This booklet aims to introduce you to the Neonatal Unit, its practices and some of the specially trained staff you will meet and who will be looking after your baby.

The East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust provides a Level II Neonatal Service which includes Intensive, High Dependency and a Special Care service at the Lister Hospital in Stevenage.

Your baby will be transferred to the Neonatal Unit if they require intensive care, high dependency or for special care nursing, after a mutual discussion depending on your baby's needs.

On the Neonatal Unit we care for babies who are born earlier than expected or who have become unwell soon after birth.

The staff appreciate that it can be distressing for you to have your baby admitted to our unit so soon after they have been born. We will do our best to minimise the effects of the separation.

In this unit we practice family-centred care by involving parents and their baby to become the centre of the team, surrounded by caring staff to support them.

As you will be separated from your baby, we are happy to take a photograph of your baby on admission to the unit for you to keep. You are also welcome to take photographs and to record images of your baby. Please check with the staff looking after your baby before doing so.

Transfer Back From Other Hospitals

Neonatal Units operate within a designated network which consists of a number of hospitals within a specified region (Operational Delivery Network).

If your baby has been cared for at another unit, and when he/she is well enough to return, you might like to come and have a look around and meet the staff. You may also have questions about the transfer process which we will be happy to help you with.

If you are aware of the transfer and have the time, we would welcome you to visit the Unit so that we can answer any questions you may have. Alternatively, you may ring us on 01438 284125. However, if you are unable to visit, it may be helpful for you to make a list of your baby's likes and dislikes as you know your baby best. This list can then be handed to the nurse caring for your baby and placed in your baby's nursing care plan.

Hand Washing / Infection Control

Hand washing is extremely important for everyone visiting the Unit. Our staff work hard to maintain high standards of cleanliness. Please help them to help you. Sinks and hand washing instructions are provided at the entrance to the Unit and in all nurseries. We operate a 'bare below the elbow' policy at all times. Please remove watches and bracelets which could be a source of infection. Remember to use the hand gel provided after washing / drying hands.

Security

There are security doors on the entrances to the Unit. Everyone must take responsibility to ensure the door is closed after them and that they are not followed into the Unit.

On occasions, if the Unit is busy, there may be a short delay in answering the doorbell. These calls are answered by nursing staff who may be attending to a baby, please be patient.



Visiting

Parents, you are welcome on the Neonatal Unit at any time whilst your baby is here. Brothers and sisters of the baby are also very welcome although there may be times when access for siblings under 12 years is reduced. Please check with the nurse in charge.

On entering the Neonatal Unit, please remove your outside coats or jackets and place them on the coat hooks provided. When entering the nurseries, please wash your hands with soap and water.

During the morning, when the medical ward round takes place, we are happy for you to be present to be updated on your baby's condition and plan of care. However, due to confidentiality, visitors will be asked to leave the nursery when the doctors are attending other babies.

Alternatively, to stay on the ward during ward rounds and at nursing handover times, the nursing staff can provide you with noise-cancelling built-in radio headphones to wear. This will minimise the amount of time spent away from your baby. If you do not wish to wear the headphones during the above times whilst other babies are being attended to, you will be asked to leave the nursery - this is to protect other families' confidentiality. Please ask a member of staff for the leaflet that explains about wearing the headphones.

During the hours of 1pm - 3pm, the babies have a rest period. This is their opportunity to rest from the medical and nursing interventions they receive. This period is strictly for parents only to visit.

During the hours of 3pm – 6pm, one additional person may visit your baby when accompanied by one or both parents. This can be either one of the grandparents at a time, or only one nominated family member/friend. Unfortunately, no other visitors will be permitted to visit your baby while they are receiving care on the Neonatal Unit.

To minimise the risk of infection, we ask that visitors do not handle or cuddle the babies whilst they are in the Neonatal Unit.

Parents' Sitting Room

When you or your visitors are not at the cot space visiting your baby, please use the parents' sitting room or wait by the maternity reception area. Please do not wait in the entrance to the Neonatal Unit or along the corridors, as these need to be kept clear for access.

Parking

Please discuss parking issues with the nurse caring for your baby. For parents with short stay babies, there are weekly tickets available from the display machine in the car park. For those parents with infants who require a longer stay, a monthly ticket is available.

Toys and Clothes

As your baby's condition improves, you may dress your baby in his or her own clothes but please ensure that staff are made aware to avoid them being sent to the hospital laundry. A label can be put on the cot to inform staff but unfortunately sometimes baby clothes can get sent to the laundry in error and not return.

You may leave a small (labelled and washable) toy or teddy in your baby's cot or incubator. Please ensure that the toy is washed at 60°c before putting it into your baby's cot / incubator because of the potential infection risk.

Providing for Your Baby

We would be grateful if parents could provide nappies for their babies.

Pastoral and Spiritual Care

Pastoral and spiritual care is available, regardless of faith, for support during what can be an emotional time. The Chaplain visits the Unit regularly and if specifically requested. Should you wish to speak to a member of the chaplaincy team, please speak to the Sister in charge.



Parents' Facilities

There is a parents' sitting room located at the entrance to the Unit with a children's play area and tea and coffee making facilities. Tea and coffee are provided. There is also free Wi-Fi you can access whilst visiting the unit.

There are rooms attached to the Unit where you and your partner can stay with your baby overnight before taking your baby home. These rooms can also be used by mothers to establish their breastfeeding. On some occasions the rooms are used by mothers for rest periods if they are not in use for the above. However, priority is given to parents whose babies are unwell and for parents prior to discharge.

Parents' Coffee Morning

The Neonatal team are keen to ensure that we provide the best possible service to families whilst your baby is being cared for on the Unit.

There is a Parents' Coffee Morning on the Unit every week, please see posters on the Unit for dates and times. The first hour of the session is facilitated by a member of the nursing team in an effort to answer any general concerns and questions that you may have and to offer support. The remainder of the session gives parents an opportunity to get to know each other.

Where to go for Food and Drink

- **Restaurant** - Located on Level 2 of the hospital, the restaurant provides a wide range of hot meals to purchase.

Opening Hours:

Breakfast: Monday to Friday, 7.30am - 10am

Lunch: Monday to Friday, 12 noon - 2.30pm

Saturday and Sunday, 12 noon - 2pm

- **Coffee Lounge** - Located in the upstairs part of the restaurant (can be accessed on Level 3 by walking past the lift area towards the chapel). Hot meals are also available to be purchased here alongside sandwiches, snacks and beverages. There are vending machines and microwave facilities here as well.

Opening Hours: Monday to Friday, 9.30am - 3pm

- **Coffee Shop** - Located at the main entrance of the hospital, the coffee shop provides hot and cold drinks, sandwiches and snacks.

Opening Hours: Monday to Friday, 7.30am - 5pm

Saturday and Sunday, 10am - 5pm

- **Coffee Shop** - Located in the Emergency Department.

Opening Hours: Monday to Sunday, 10am - 5pm

- **Vending Machines** - There are vending machines providing drinks and snacks throughout the hospital: Level 3 opposite Pathology, in the restaurant and in the Emergency Department on Level 2. The vending machines in the Coffee Lounge on Level 3 also provide hot meals.

- **WHSmith** - The shop is located on Level 3 in the main corridor of the entrance to the hospital.

Medical Staff

We have two dedicated Neonatal Consultants who are the Service Leads:

- ◆ Dr Jonathan Kefas, Clinical Director Acute Paediatrics and Neonatology
- ◆ Dr Ather Ahmed, Deputy Clinical Director Neonatology

On occasions other Consultant Paediatricians may also care for your baby.

There are also Registrars and Senior House Officer (SHO) doctors responsible for your baby's care. You will meet them on the Unit and during the ward rounds. They carry out the various procedures on the Unit such as blood tests, examinations and ultrasound scanning.

We also have a Neonatal Nurse Practitioner whose role is similar to the doctors and who will carry out similar procedures to the doctors.

Ward Rounds

Ward rounds are carried out on a daily basis during the mornings for babies in the Intensive and High Dependency nurseries. Consultant ward rounds are carried out from 9:30am to approximately 1pm, but this can change depending on clinical needs and at weekends.

For babies in Special and Transitional Care, consultant ward rounds are carried out on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings from approximately 9:30am to 1pm.

The Consultants are very happy to meet with parents and discuss any concerns during ward rounds.

Nursing Staff

The Neonatal Unit Team consists of senior sisters, sisters, staff nurses, nursery nurses, an associate practitioner, clinical support workers, student nurses and student midwives, all of who will be involved in the care of your baby.

The nurses all wear “scrubs” which are more hygienic for caring for your baby. Staff will wear their identification and name badges for you to identify to whom you are speaking. The nurse caring for your baby will introduce themselves when you visit the Unit.

In the Intensive and High Dependency care rooms there are nurses with neonatal nursing qualifications to care for the babies. Nursing staff who are trained nurses but who are undertaking the Neonatal Intensive Care Course will also be working in the Intensive and High Dependency care rooms, under the supervision of neonatal trained nurses. In the other nurseries, there is a similar skill mix of nursing staff caring for your baby.

Other members of the Neonatal Team include:

- Outreach Sisters
- Infant Feeding Co-ordinators
- Family Support Nurse
- Health Visitor
- Unit Pharmacist
- Ophthalmologist
- Dietician
- Radiographers
- Hearing Screeners
- Social workers
- Chaplains

The Paediatric Liaison Health Visitor will ensure that you have details of your own health visitor and that he/ she is updated on your baby's condition.

Developmental Care

The goal of developmental care in our Neonatal Unit is to facilitate and promote your baby's growth and development.

This is achieved by managing the environment in which your baby is cared for; managing the lighting and sound, protecting sleep, promoting positive touch, non-nutritive sucking and kangaroo care are a few examples of providing an environment that supports the neurological and physiological aspects of your baby's development.

Staff will encourage you to be involved with your baby's care as soon as possible.

You will be given demonstrations on:

- Infant cues, touch and handling
- Nappy care
- Kangaroo care
- Skin care
- Mouth care
- Bathing
- Feeding
- Videos are available which parents may find useful
- Information booklets are also available

If you require further information or assistance please ask the nursing staff.

Intensive Care and High Dependency Nurseries

The intensive care area has two main nurseries – an Intensive Care nursery and a High Dependency nursery.

Both are equipped with the necessary equipment to care for your baby. Initial visits to the Unit can be alarming but the nurse caring for your baby will provide information and support to help you become comfortable when you visit.

Some pieces of equipment may look frightening but are essential for monitoring your baby's heart rate, respiratory rate, blood pressure and oxygen saturation readings. The neonatal nurses will explain this information to you.

There are a lot of alarms connected to the equipment. This can be frightening as you will be unfamiliar with the sounds. Alarms may be triggered by baby's movements and do not always indicate a serious problem. The nurses will respond to all alarms.

As your baby's condition improves, it is often necessary to move your baby to other nurseries. We will try to let you know before this happens so you are prepared.





Special Care Nurseries

Special care nurseries can accommodate up to six babies. Babies who do not require intensive care or high dependency care are nursed in these rooms until transferred to the postnatal ward for transitional care or discharged home.

Parents are encouraged to participate in their baby's care gaining the necessary skills, knowledge and confidence to care for, feed and handle their baby with the support of the nursing staff, in preparation for discharge home.

Transitional Care

The transitional care area is located within the postnatal ward. Babies are transferred from the special care nurseries to transitional care.

Your baby will continue to be looked after by the neonatal team with close communication with the midwifery team.

Transitional care enables you to have your baby with you so that you can establish feeding and participate in your baby's care before going home.





Feeding Your Baby

We encourage breastfeeding in our Unit as research has shown breast milk is best for all babies, especially if premature / sick. It provides the necessary nutrients and is easily digested. If your baby is unable to feed for him / herself there are trained staff available who support, encourage and give advice on expressing your breast milk.

The Neonatal Unit may be able to loan mothers an electric breast pump when discharged home from the postnatal ward while your baby is still on the Unit. Alternatively, we can provide you with information for hiring a breast pump. Please ask the nurse who is looking after your baby for more information.

Donor breast milk may be available in some circumstances if there is a high risk of formula milk intolerance and mother's breast milk is unavailable. This will be discussed fully with you and your consent obtained.

Your baby may require a nasogastric feeding tube until they are sufficiently mature to breastfeed or bottle feed. Breast milk will be given when available or alternatively, some premature babies may be given a pre-term formula.

If you choose to bottle feed, please discuss with staff. Formula will be supplied while your baby is on the Unit and staff will support you with all aspects of preparing and feeding your baby.

Routine Blood Tests

During their stay on the Neonatal Unit, all babies are continually monitored by nursing and medical staff.

To assist the nursing and medical staff in their assessment, some routine procedures are performed on your baby.

- Blood sugar monitoring
- Serum bilirubin levels (SBR) - used to monitor your baby's jaundice levels
- Blood gases - used to assess adequate ventilation
- Routine newborn blood spot screening - performed on day one and day six to eight. An information leaflet will be given to you explaining the details
- Weekly routine blood tests to monitor the blood count, kidney and bone chemistry

Some babies may require a blood transfusion during their stay in the Unit. This will be discussed with you prior to the blood transfusion if found necessary, except in an emergency.

If you have concerns or objections to blood transfusions, please let us know so we can discuss this with you.

Every effort will be made to discuss investigations and treatment prior to the procedure. However, in an emergency, priority will be given to caring for your baby and information will then be shared with you afterwards.

Hearing Screening

As part of a national programme, all babies will be given a hearing check just before discharge or an appointment will be sent to you by post when discharged.

Cranial Ultrasound Scan

This is the same type of scan as those performed during pregnancy but this will look at the baby's brain. Babies born before 32 weeks gestation usually have routine brain scans.

Eye Tests

An eye test is performed on babies of less than 32 weeks gestation and/ or for babies of less than 1500 grams. This is to check that the blood vessels at the back of the eyes are developing normally.



When Your Baby Is Ready For Discharge

Discharge from the Neonatal Unit

The length of time your baby will spend on the Neonatal Unit will depend on the reason for your baby's admission and the progress he / she has made.

Your baby will be discharged home when there are no acute medical problems. Your baby may be discharged home with a feeding tube under the care of the Outreach team.

Neonatal Outreach Service

Some babies will continue to require long term care e.g. oxygen therapy or nasogastric tube feed. If this care can be given by parents at home, your baby may be discharged home and seen on regular visits by the Neonatal Outreach team. This option will be fully discussed and planned with parents by the Outreach Sister.

A basic life support session will be provided by the Outreach Sisters normally prior to discharge for those babies on the Outreach scheme.

Follow Up

You may have already had a visit from your Health Visitor while on the Neonatal Unit and they will continue to visit you when your baby is at home. Your Health Visitor will provide you with information on feeding and any other issues that may be worrying to you.

You may be given an outpatient appointment to attend one of the Consultants' follow-up clinics which are held on a Monday afternoon or Tuesday morning at the Lister hospital and Wednesday afternoons at The New QEII hospital.

Families Group

The Lister Neonatal Unit Families Group provides an opportunity for parents whose babies have been discharged from the Unit to meet with other parents and staff to discuss your experiences of our service in an informal setting.

The group meets once every six weeks in the evening, focusing on Family Centred Care. It is led by our Parent Representative who also attends and represents the group at other departmental and network meetings.

The group fundraises for the Unit, works with staff and offers support to current families to try to make the experience of having a baby in the Neonatal Unit a positive experience. It also provides an opportunity to present and discuss new ideas with parents prior to implementation.



The Neonatal Unit mural commissioned by the Families Group to celebrate the lives of the babies cared for there.

On the Unit you will find a Families Group leaflet with a tear-off slip for you to pass on your contact details should you wish to be involved.

For more details please visit www.listerneonatalunitfamiliesgroup.org



Important Things to Remember

- You can contact us at any time.
- Staff are happy to discuss your baby's condition with you and to answer any questions you may have.



- You are always welcome to visit.
- We welcome your comments and feedback. You can do this via our Neonatal survey and the Friends and Family Test survey. Please ask a member of staff for more details.



Contact Telephone Numbers:

Direct Line for Neonatal Unit, Lister Hospital: 01438 284125

Further Information:

For more information see the Bliss Baby Charity website at:

www.bliss.org.uk

Bliss helpline telephone number: 0808 801 0322

Or e-mail: hello@bliss.org.uk

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You can request this information in a different format or another language.

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