

Critical Care Transfers

This leaflet provides you with information about why critically ill patients sometimes have to be moved.

This is called a 'Critical Care Transfer'.

When a patient is critically ill, we all know it is a difficult time for patients and their relatives.

It can feel unsettling or worrying when a patient needs to be moved to a different ward or hospital. We will ensure you are fully informed about what is happening and why.

If you have any questions, please speak with the staff caring for you or your relative.



West Yorkshire
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Patient Advice & Liaison Service (PALS)

If you require any further information, support or advice about the hospital services that you or your relative is receiving, you can contact the hospital PALS team. Contact details will be available from the nursing staff on the ward, the hospital main reception or the hospital switchboard.

Alternatively you can access your hospitals via the following link:

www.wyccn.org/critical-care-units

There is also information and support for patients and relatives affected by critical illness at:

www.wyccn.org/patient-information



or provided by ICU Steps

www.icusteps.org



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A leaflet for patients and relatives

Critical Care Transfers

What is a critical care transfer?

This is when a critically ill patient has to be moved to another unit or hospital.

Why do we transfer patients?

We know that a transfer can be unsettling for patients and their relatives, but there are circumstances when a transfer is necessary. These can include:

- Moving to a hospital where specialist care can be provided
- Returning to a hospital nearer home
- Allowing access to critical care for other patients who may be too unstable for transfer

The medical and nursing team will be able to explain the reason for the transfer.

What can you expect?

You (or your relative) will be supported by a team of staff who are familiar with the care of critically ill patients and their needs during transfer. The speed at which the transfer is carried out will depend on the reason for transfer.

We will explain clearly what is happening, even if the transfer needs to be carried out quickly.

Communication

Once it has been decided that you (or your relative) needs to be transferred, the hospital staff will speak to you about it and what to expect.

They will tell you:

- Where you/your relative is going
- The reason for the transfer
- When the transfer will happen
- What you will need to do
- Contact details of the destination ward/hospital

Transport

An ambulance will be arranged for the patient to be transferred.

The patient will be supported by staff trained and experienced in transporting critically ill patients. Due to space required, it is not possible for relatives or friends to travel with the patient.

Relatives will be given details about where the patient will be going to, and can meet the patient there.

Escorting staff & equipment

Where possible, the staff currently looking after you (or your relative) will undertake the transfer. Sometimes, however, this may need to be a different team who will receive a full handover of care. They will be familiar with the care of critically ill patients and their needs during transfer.

Special equipment is used to ensure the patient can be transferred safely. The patient will be moved onto a special trolley. This is to ensure comfort and stability before the transfer happens. The patient will stay on this while going to the new ward or hospital.

Travelling to the new hospital or critical care area

When a patient is moved by ambulance, relatives will need to make their own travel arrangements to the new ward or hospital. For safety reasons, please do not try to follow the ambulance.

Occasionally a patient's condition can change during transfer. If this happens, the ambulance transfer team caring for them will decide what is best for the patient. It may mean, very occasionally, taking them to a nearer hospital.

You will be contacted by the hospital as soon as possible if this happens.

On Arrival

It will take some time to:

- Complete the handover of care to the new nursing & medical team
- Swap over the monitoring and equipment in use by the patient during transfer, to that of the receiving ward or hospital
- The transferring team will inform the receiving ward or hospital who to expect (e.g. relatives/carers)

Depending on the reason for the transfer there may also be a period of time undergoing tests, investigations or treatment. The staff will be able to give you information about this and how long it may take.

Contact Details for the new ward/hospital

(To be completed by staff before the patient leaves)

Name of Patient

New Hospital name, address & postcode

Unit/Ward Name