

# Your Stay in Hospital

A guide to hospital services



PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
Welcome to Bedford Hospital .....	2
About Bedford Hospital .....	2
Interpreting services .....	2
Overseas visitors .....	3
Learning Disability Liaison Nurse .....	3
Arrival on the hospital ward .....	3
Moving wards .....	4
Intensive care (critical care complex) .....	4
Carers .....	4
What you need to bring into hospital .....	5
Bedside services for patients .....	5
Life on the hospital ward .....	7
Social Services .....	9
Hospital staff and your care .....	9
Hospital staff uniforms .....	11
Consent to treatment .....	13
Top communications tips to improve your stay .....	13
Healthcare associated infections .....	14
Patients with hearing difficulties .....	15
Your mobility .....	15
Hospital catering services .....	16
Hospital visiting .....	18
Smoking .....	19
Security and safety .....	19
Your needs .....	20
Travelling to and from hospital .....	21
Financial assistance .....	22
Patients' Panel .....	22
Volunteering and voluntary services .....	23
Information about you and how we use it .....	23
Before you leave hospital .....	25
Let us know your views .....	27
Donations and charitable funds .....	28

## Welcome to Bedford Hospital

This folder will provide you with information about Bedford Hospital, your stay here, the services we provide and arrangements for when you are discharged, (when you go home or to another facility).

We hope this information will answer many of the questions you may have about being a hospital patient, and will help you to settle more easily onto your hospital ward.

If your stay in hospital was planned then you may have seen some of this information before, but if you came into hospital as an emergency, then much of it may be new.

Please take the time to read through this folder, and if you have any questions or concerns at any time (particularly about your treatment or care) please ask the nurses or doctors looking after you.

## About Bedford Hospital

Bedford Hospital NHS Trust is an acute district general hospital with about 400 beds, providing a range of services to 265,000 people living mainly in North and Mid Bedfordshire.

These services are primarily delivered from one site and include a 24-hour accident and emergency department, acute medicine, maternity, paediatrics, older people's services and a comprehensive range of surgical specialities.

The Trust is committed to providing high quality patient care and to ensuring the safety of patients and visitors at all times.

## Interpreting services

If your first or spoken language is not English and you need an interpreter to help you speak to staff, please ask a relative or friend to tell your nurse as soon as possible. Your GP may already have told us that you may need an interpreter, but if not, the nurse in charge of your ward will do their best to make arrangements to provide access to an interpreter as quickly as possible.

## Overseas Visitors Information on accessing NHS treatment

Are you coming to live or work in the UK?

Are you coming to the UK to holiday or to visit relatives/friends for more than three months?

Any patients who do not live permanently in the UK may not be entitled to free treatment.

As from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008 you must produce your European Health Insurance Card. If you do not produce your card you will be charged for all treatment received.

Proof of entitlement may be requested, for example your

- Date of entry to UK
- Passport
- Visa
- Work permit
- Payslips

Please see [www.dh.gov.uk/overseasvisitors](http://www.dh.gov.uk/overseasvisitors) for full policy and guidelines.

## Learning Disability Liaison Nurse

A Learning Disability Liaison Nurse is available to provide the following support to patients and carers:

- Advice and support to patients and carers to prepare for admission to hospital or an outpatient department.
- Offer specialist advice to carers and professionals.
- Offer support and advice to patients and carers during admission
- Support with planning discharge by making recommendations and referrals.

Please ask staff on your ward for contact details.

## Arrival on the hospital ward

When you arrive on your ward you will be welcomed and shown to your bed. The nursing/midwifery and/or medical staff will talk to you about your individual needs.

Please make it clear to staff by which name you would prefer to be called by and inform staff immediately if you suffer from any allergies (for example latex, medication like penicillin or any food stuffs).

You will be asked to wear a plastic identity bracelet at all times. This is important to ensure safe practice. If for any reason your bracelet is lost or removed please contact a staff member and it will be replaced.

We will ask you to give details about yourself and your next of kin. You may also be asked to provide contact details for an individual relative or friend who staff can contact to update about your condition and treatment. This person will then be asked to contact the rest of your family and friends. Using a single point of contact means staff don't have to make lots of phone calls to different members of your family, and gives them more time to care for you and for other patients on your ward.

### Moving wards

Sometimes it is necessary to transfer a patient to another part of the ward or to a different ward at some time during their stay, particularly if they were admitted as an emergency.

If this is necessary for you, your nurse/midwife will explain the reasons for the move (for example from a general to a surgical ward if you need an operation).

If you need to leave the ward at any time (to use the phone for example), for health, safety and fire regulatory reasons, please inform members of staff before doing so.

### Intensive care (critical care complex or CCC)

An admission to the critical care complex, (intensive care), can be an extremely anxious time for patients and relatives. When you are admitted, the critical care nursing staff will be happy to provide your relatives with the booklet: "*What happens in the Intensive Care Unit*". This provides useful information about intensive care, which may help to allay any fears and concerns you have.

Please note that space on CCC is extremely limited, therefore it would be greatly appreciated if you would bring in only basic toiletries and try to keep valuables to an absolute minimum.

### Carers

Please ask your carers to bring in any information that would assist the multi-disciplinary team with your assessment and care, including the pink folder provided by community staff.

## What you need to bring into hospital

If you have come into hospital for a planned operation or treatment you will have been told what to bring with you before your admission. If you have come in as an emergency these are the items you are likely to need:

- Night-dress or pyjamas
- Dressing gown
- Slippers
- Toiletries
- Towel
- Tissues or handkerchiefs
- Stationery, stamps, pens
- Loose change for newspapers etc.
- Walking or dressing aid, (if used)
- Books, magazines
- Denture cleaner/bowl, (if used)
- Day clothes, (if appropriate)

If possible, ask a relative or friend to take away any valuables, together with your outdoor clothes, as storage space is limited on wards.

**Please note** the Trust cannot be held liable for your valuables and property during your hospital stay. Please do not bring jewellery, valuables or large sums of money into hospital, as we cannot be held responsible for their safety. You will only need a small amount of money for such things as newspapers and soft drinks. A cash machine, should you need it, is available in the hospital's Kempston Road reception area.

Please note that space is very limited on the wards and thieves do target public places such as hospitals.

## Bedside services for patients (*Hospicom*, hospital radio and use of patient-owned equipment)

### **Patient-owned equipment used on hospital premises**

Equipment used by patients while in the hospital must be restricted to small items which are powered either by batteries and/or an extra low voltage adaptor plug; plug in charger or in-line adaptor which is less than 25V output (the voltage is usually shown on the label attached to the adaptor casing). If you are unsure about the suitability of an adaptor please ask a member of staff to contact the estates engineering officer for advice.

The adaptor plug or in-line adaptor and associated mains lead must be visually inspected for damage by the ward staff before being used on Trust premises and a *visual inspection form* filled in by staff. Any damaged adaptor plugs, mains leads or in-line adaptors will be immediately withdrawn from service and if necessary confiscated until the item is replaced or repaired.

**Acceptable items that may be used are:**

- Laptop personal computers on battery power or via a low voltage power lead
- Personal MP3/music/video/photo players, (with earphones attached) and charger if needed
- Hand held televisions, (with earphones attached)
- Battery chargers for small batteries, (for example an AA plug in charger)
- Mobile phone chargers, (*see note*)
- Small personal DVD players, (with earphones attached), on battery power or via a low voltage adaptor or charger
- Personal CD players or radios, (with earphones attached), on battery power or with a charger
- Patient connected electrical medical devices.

**Examples of unacceptable items include:**

- Portable televisions on direct mains power 230 volt, (for example a 14 inch screen standard TV)
- Hi-Fi/Radio/CD/DVD players on direct mains power
- Hair dryers, tongs, straighteners, etc.
- Mains extension leads
- Any cooking devices including kettles
- Heaters or desk fans

The above lists are not exhaustive, please ask a member of staff to contact the estates engineering officer if you are in any doubt about the suitability of an item for use.

The Trust reserves the right to prevent the use of or remove any electrical item from the site if its use would contravene Trust policy and/or statutory regulations.

**Mobile phones**

To ensure the safety, privacy and confidentiality of staff and patients mobile phones must not be used in any ward or clinical area/department.

## Photographs

The taking of photographs is **not permitted** on hospital premises. The only exception to this is in the maternity department where parents, with permission from ward staff, can photograph their newborn babies.

## Bedside television and telephones

The bedside television and telephone service is provided by the *Hospicom* system in most of the clinical areas.

To use the *Hospicom* system you will need to purchase a *Hospicom* card from dispensers situated on alternate floors in the main block. Once you have purchased a card you will need to register on the system using the easy to follow on-screen instructions. You will be not charged for incoming calls.

Please note that *Hospicom* has kindly provided this service free of charge in the Riverbank children's ward.

Public telephones are located in the main hospital concourse.

## Hospital Radio Bedford

Bedford Hospital radio (registered charity no. 269428) is a free bedside radio service for patients run by volunteers. The radio broadcasts a mixture of programmes 24 hours a day on the *Hospicom* terminal and features a request programme from 8pm to 9pm on weekdays. Requests can be made using the *call hospital radio free* button on the *Hospicom* terminal when listening to the service or by calling 01234 792020 at any time. You can also place your request with the request teams who make regular evening visits to the wards. Please note this service is not presently available in all clinical areas. For general enquiries please contact the service via their website [www.hospitalradiobedford.org.uk](http://www.hospitalradiobedford.org.uk)

## Life on the hospital ward

### Daily routine

There is a busy daily ward routine at the hospital, involving patients receiving medication, having their observations including having their blood pressure/temperature/breathing rate taken - often early in the morning and at intervals during the day depending on their medical conditions. When it comes to settling down at night, it is likely to be earlier than you do at home, as many patients feel particularly tired at the end of day. The main lights will be switched off but there is a reading lamp next to your

bed. At certain times during the day you may see nursing staff meeting within your ward area to discuss changes in your care. These meetings are essential to keep lines of communication open and to ensure nursing staff are aware of the treatment you need.

## **Medicines**

In order for us to prescribe your medication while you are in hospital, we need to know the medicines you normally take at home.

Please bring all the medicines you take into hospital with you, (in their original containers). There will be a lockable cupboard or drawer at your bedside to ensure they don't get lost and to ensure they are with you at all times. Please also bring a list of your medicines. The list you get with your prescription from your GP is ideal.

If you have a special card giving details of current treatment such as a steroid card, please bring that too. This will ensure the hospital doctor has all the information needed to prescribe everything you usually take while you are in hospital.

The pharmacist and the medicines management technician will check your own medicines and any newly prescribed items while you are in hospital to ensure that everything is prescribed correctly, and that you are taking the medication as prescribed. They will also arrange supplies of any medication you need both for use on the ward and to take home.

**Please note** that your medicines or doses may change while you are in hospital. Please read the labels on your medicines carefully before you are discharged to check the doses. If you have any questions at all, please ask to speak to either the pharmacist or a medicines management technician who will go through all of your medication with you.

If you would prefer to **self administer** your own medicines during your stay, please speak to your nurse on admission. While it may not be possible to do this around the time of an operation, once you are well enough to do so we recognise that self administering your tablets - as you do at home - will mean you get the right medicine at the right dose at the right time. Throughout your stay there will be the opportunity to discuss your medicines with the medicines management team when they come to your ward each day. Do ask, they are here to help you.

## **Mail**

Mail is delivered to the ward each morning. Please ask your relatives and friends to clearly write your name and ward on the envelope. The mailing address is: Your name, your ward, Bedford Hospital NHS Trust, Kempston Road, Bedford, MK42 9DJ

Outgoing mail, appropriately stamped, may be given to ward staff. There are daily Royal Mail collections from the hospital.

## **Social Services**

Bedfordshire Social Services has a team of social workers based at the hospital. If you are worried about how you will cope once you are ready to leave, ask to speak to one of the social workers to talk through your concerns and if appropriate make the necessary referrals. Subject to an assessment of your needs and financial situation, social services may be able to help you with support or information once you are ready to leave. No referral about you will be sent to social services and carers without your permission.

## **Hospital staff and your care**

You will be cared for by a variety of healthcare professionals during your stay in hospital. All staff should introduce themselves and their role to you and to your relatives.

### **Doctors**

You will be under the care of a **consultant** during your time in hospital. Your consultant's name is usually written on a board above your bed. Your consultant is in charge of a team of doctors who will also treat and care for you.

### **Medical Students**

Medical students, under the supervision of trained staff, are also involved in the care of patients but do not make decisions about treatment. We would greatly appreciate your co-operation with allowing medical students to be involved in your care as it helps them to learn, but if you do not wish to be seen by a student please let your nurse or doctor know.

### **Matron**

A Matron is in charge of a group of wards and departments and can usually deal with problems if other ward staff are unable to do so. The matron aims to strengthen leadership and ensure patients receive good quality care.

## **Nurse/Midwife**

Your care will be co-ordinated by a ward manager or midwife. Nurses/midwives work in shifts covering the ward 24 hours a day. Each shift works about eight hours and shifts change in the early morning, mid-afternoon and late evening. A few wards work on a 12 hour shift system. At each shift change the nurses/midwives who are going off duty tell the staff who are coming on duty about each of the patients on the ward and how they are at handover.

You may also meet other healthcare professionals who may provide care for you including:

## **Physiotherapist**

The aim of physiotherapy is to help you achieve you optimum functional potential in line with your personal care plan.

## **Occupational Therapist, (OT)**

Occupational therapists use selected familiar daily activities for assessment and treatment either to assist you to regain your abilities after illness, or to identify necessary aids or adaptations required to maximise your levels of function at discharge.

## **Radiographers**

Take your x rays and ultrasound scans.

## **Speech and Language Therapists, (SALT)**

The speech and language therapists help people with communications and swallowing difficulties. Speech and language therapists can help you with talking, understanding others, reading, writing and swallowing.

## **Dieticians**

Good nutrition is essential in aiding recovery. Any patient experiencing nutritional problems, for example eating only small amounts for several days or already following a special diet such as gluten free for Coeliac Disease, will be referred to the dietician.

## **Domestic staff**

Domestic assistants are responsible for cleaning the ward.

## **Housekeepers**

Ward housekeepers are responsible for serving meals/drinks and giving out and collecting menu cards.

## A selection of hospital staff uniforms



### **Matron**

Charcoal pinstripe dress and dark grey belt/tunic striped grey trousers.

### **Phlebotomist**

White tunic with blue and red trimming and blue trousers.



### **Physiotherapist**

White tunic tops/polo shirts with navy trim on the collar and sleeves and navy blue trousers.

### **Physiotherapy Assistant**

Pale blue tunic/dress and navy blue trousers.

### **Occupational Therapist**

White tunic with green trim and green trousers.



### **Ward Manager**

#### **Sister (female)**

Burgundy dress and belt with white trim on collar and cuffs or burgundy tunic with grey trousers.

#### **Male**

White tunic with black epaulettes and black or grey trousers.



### **Registered Nurse (female)**

Grey and white striped dress and belt/tunic and burgundy trousers.

### **Registered Midwife (female)**

Dark grey dress/tunic and dark grey trousers.

### **Registered Nurse (male)**

White tunic with burgundy epaulettes and dark grey trousers.

### **Student Nurse/Midwife**

White dress with purple epaulette and belt.



## A selection of hospital staff uniforms



### Clinical support worker/ Maternity care assistant

**(female)**

Grey dress and grey belt.

**(male)**

White tunic and dark grey trousers.



### Ward Clerk

Multi coloured blouse and navy skirt or trousers.

### Domestic Assistant

Navy blue and white floral blouse and navy blue trousers.



### Housekeepers

Navy blue trousers and a blue checked shirt.

### Radiographers

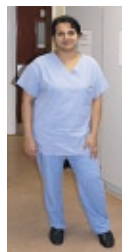
White tunic/dress with a red trim on the collar and sleeves and black trousers.



### Porters

White shirt, black trousers and sometimes burgundy jumper (when not accompanying a patient).

Some specialist staff (including nurses and doctors) may also wear blue '**scrubs**'. Many other staff will wear smart, everyday clothes and will be identified by wearing a hospital name badge. If you are not sure who someone is or what they do, please ask. For infection control purposes staff will not be wearing ties, long sleeves or white coats.



## Consent to treatment

We aim to give you enough information in a way you can understand, to enable you to make informed decisions about your care. Your doctor, nurse or other health professional will explain to you what your treatment will involve. For many treatments there are specific patient information leaflets available within the hospital to help you make an informed decision. Please ask the staff to make them available to you.

If your treatment involves an operation, or certain other procedures, you will be asked to sign a consent form. If you later change your mind you are entitled to withdraw consent even after signing. If the patient is unable to consent the medical team will ensure essential measures are taken in order to sustain life.

Please ask questions until you understand all you need to know and remember to tell the healthcare team about anything that concerns you or about any medication, allergies or past history, which might affect your general health.

## Top communication tips to improve your hospital stay

### **A step-by-step guide to help you get the best from the team looking after you:**

- 1) Ask a friend or family member to be present
- 2) Think about questions you might want to ask the team looking after you
- 3) Write down two or three most important questions
- 4) Write down details of your symptoms
- 5) Do not be afraid to ask if you do not understand any words, ask for them to be written down
- 6) Write things down, or ask a family member or friend to take notes
- 7) Check that you have covered everything

### **Questions you might want to ask the team looking after you:**

- Can I check that I've understood what you have just said?
- Can you explain it again? I still don't understand.
- What about any further tests or scans?
- What are the tests for?
- How long will it be before I get the results?
- Who will tell me the results of my tests?

### **About your treatment:**

- Are there other ways to treat my condition?
- What do you recommend?
- Are there any side effects or risks involved?
- How long will my treatment be?
- How effective is my treatment?
- What will happen if I don't have my treatment?
- Is there anything I should stop or avoid doing?
- Is there anything else I can do to help myself?

### **What happens next?**

- When will my medical team review my condition?
- Who do I tell if my condition gets worse?
- Do you have any written information?
- Where can I or my carers go to get more information?

We recommend looking at NHS Choices ([www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)) for health related topics.

## **Healthcare associated infections (MRSA, *Clostridium difficile*)**

When you are admitted to hospital or other places of care, you are exchanging the familiar surroundings of home to share a ward with other people. You may be more vulnerable to infection because of your illness, medication or surgery.

### **What you can do to help stop the spread of MRSA and other infections**

By its very nature, a hospital or other place of care, exposes you to other people's germs. You can help yourself and other patients by:

- Always washing and drying your hands after visiting the toilet and before you eat
- Not touching or fiddling with your wound or any device that is in your arm/leg/bladder or other body cavity – for example a drip or catheter
- Not exposing your wound to show your visitors
- Keeping the space around you tidy and uncluttered so that the cleaning staff can access all surfaces to remove dust easily – your visitors or relatives could help you to do this

- Telling your nurse, the matron or ward housekeeper, if you spot any dirt or dust on the ward or a patient toilet/bathing area that needs cleaning
- Washing and drying your hands before and after helping other patients
- Showering daily or as frequently as you are able – the nurses/midwives can help you with this if necessary
- Reminding staff about hand washing and drying if they forget – don't worry, they won't be offended. They may use hand gel nearby as this efficiently cleans hands as an alternative to soap and water
- Ask your visitors to clean their hands when entering or leaving the ward
- Ask your visitors to comply with the hospital visiting policy and ensure a maximum of two to a bed during specified visiting times and ask them not to sit on beds. Our Visitor's Charter, which is displayed throughout the hospital, outlines this policy

If you are worried about any aspect of infection control in hospital, discuss it with your doctor, nurse or midwife, or ask to speak to a member of the infection control team. The hospital also provides information leaflets about some hospital infections such as MRSA and *Clostridium difficile* (*C diff*) – please ask your nurse about these.

## Patients with hearing difficulties

If you wear a hearing aid, or have hearing difficulties, please tell the nurse/midwife and doctors looking after you. Let them know how best they should communicate with you. If you wear a hearing aid, and your batteries need to be replaced, tell a member of the nursing/midwifery team so they can contact the audiology department for assistance.

## Your mobility

Your own immobility can lead to health problems such as chest infections or pressure sores, which may increase the length of time you are in hospital. We will therefore encourage you to increase and maintain your independence by helping you to do

as much as you can for yourself, including walking and self care including washing and dressing.

If you do need help to move, we will use special equipment that makes moving safer, easier and less uncomfortable both for you and for staff. We will explain how the equipment works and any action you need to carry out. To protect our staff from back injury they will not move or handle you unaided.

We will regularly assess your ability to move and make a plan with you to help you move safely. Please feel free to ask questions or let us know of any worries you have.

## Hospital catering services

A booklet about catering services for patients and their visitors is kept at each bedside. If you do not have a copy, please ask the ward housekeeper.

It is our aim to provide you with nutritious and appetising meals during the course of your stay.

We provide three meals a day, which are served at the following times:

Breakfast: 7am to 11am

Lunch: 12pm (noon) to 12.45pm

Supper: 5.45pm to 6.30pm

Drinks (tea, coffee, hot chocolate etc), are served early in the morning, at breakfast, lunch and supper plus mid-morning, mid-afternoon and at bedtime (in adult areas only). A jug of drinking water will be available on your bedside locker and refilled on request.

**Please note** that on Riverbank Ward there are no hot drinks allowed due to the risk of accidentally scalding a child

It is not possible to reheat food, which has been brought in by patients or relatives due to an increased risk of food poisoning. Patients and their visitors are not permitted to enter ward kitchens.

Food is available at all times of day from the vending machines adjacent to the lifts on the ground floor. If you do happen to

miss the timed meals then nursing staff can request a lunch box from the kitchens.

### **Choosing your meal**

You will be given a menu card from which to choose your meals. Please complete the card ready for collection by the ward housekeeper.

### **Special diets**

If you are having an operation or special test your visitors should check with your nurse about bringing in snacks for you. Your doctor or dietician may arrange for you to have a special diet. It may be necessary for some patients to be nil by mouth, (NBM), for several hours before an operation. You may also need a special diet for certain tests. The reason for this will be explained to you by the medical/midwifery/nursing staff.

### **Diabetes**

All insulin treated diabetics will be encouraged to have a bedtime snack.

### **Halal meals**

We stock halal meals and this daily choice appears on your menu card.

### **Children's menu**

A menu for younger patients is available on Riverbank Ward.

### **Red Tray Project**

We have introduced the *red tray project* to highlight to our staff any patients who need help with eating. A trained member of staff may make a nutritional assessment on every patient admitted to the ward and may decide that you would benefit from careful monitoring or assistance with eating and drinking. Your meals will be served on a red tray to remind all staff that your food intake is being recorded and that you may need help to eat your food.

### **Shops and Restaurants**

Patients who have Intravenous (IV) drips, wound drains and various medical devices attached to them are respectfully requested not to use the Swannery or the Le Bistro restaurants. This is an infection control measure.

### **Bedford Hospital Shop**

Opening times: Monday to Friday 7am to 8pm; Saturday and Sunday 9am to 7pm. The shop is located by the main reception desk at Kempston Road entrance and offers a range of gifts, cards, message balloons, newspapers, magazines, soft toys, groceries and toiletries. All profits from the shop are directly returned to the Trust.

### **The Swannery Restaurant**

Opening times: Monday to Friday 7am to 8pm; Saturday and Sunday 9am to 5pm. The Swannery can be found located on the main hospital concourse near the Kempston Road entrance and offers a full range of snacks, drinks, sandwiches and meals. Children's portions and high chairs are available.

### **Le Bistro**

Opening times: 8.45am to 4pm. Le Bistro is located near the Bedford Hospital shop and offers a relaxed and friendly atmosphere to treat yourself and friends to freshly made coffee, continental pastries, filled baguettes and a hot dish of the day.

**Vending machines** are located in Britannia Road entrance, Accident and Emergency and Kempston Road concourse.

## **Hospital visiting**

Visiting times are generally 2pm to 8pm. Quiet times and ward rounds vary from ward to ward and it would be helpful if visits could be avoided during these times. Please adhere to the individual wards visitors' guidance and discuss any issues with the nurse/midwife in charge. Patients sometimes feel that they are getting too many visitors. If this is a problem for you please speak to a nurse/midwife. If a relative or friend, with your agreement, wants to speak to a doctor about your care or treatment please ask your nurse/midwife to arrange an appointment. If an interpreter is needed please tell your nurse/midwife.

### **Bedford Hospital Visitors' Charter**

When visiting relatives or friends we ask you to follow these simple rules:

- Maximum of two visitors per bed
- Only children over eight years-old unless agreed with nurse in charge

- Only visit for short periods and allow rest before next visitors arrive
- No smoking – anywhere on the site
- Turn off mobile phones in clinical areas
- No photography of any patients unless consent is specifically given
- No flowers or plants
- Do not visit if you are unwell or have an infection, including a stomach upset, for 72 hours after symptoms have stopped
- Please use the hand gel and sinks provided when arriving and leaving the ward

### **In special circumstances**

The Trust can provide overnight accommodation for some relatives on site. John Baker House is a facility funded by charitable funds for the convenience and comfort of relatives at these difficult times. Please speak to the ward manager or nurse in charge for more information.

## Smoking

For the health and safety of all patients and staff smoking is not allowed anywhere, including the hospital grounds. For help and advice on stopping smoking, specialist support is available at Bedford Hospital through the Bedfordshire Stop Smoking Service. For more information please call 0800 013 0553.

Alcohol is not allowed onto the hospital premises at any time.

## Security and safety

Security staff ensure the safety of patients and staff within the hospital and its grounds. The hospital is equipped with closed circuit TV cameras, which are monitored from the security control room. Security staff patrol the hospital grounds and car parks.

### **Expected standards of behaviour on Trust property:**

The following are examples of behaviours that are NOT acceptable on hospital premises:

- Excessive noise, e.g. loud or intrusive behaviour or shouting
- Threatening or abusive language involving excessive swearing or offensive remarks

- Derogatory racial or sexual remarks
- Malicious allegations relating to members of staff, other patients or visitors
- Offensive sexual gestures or behaviours
- Abusing alcohol or drugs in hospital
- Drug dealing
- Wilful damage to Trust property
- Theft
- Threats or threatening behaviour
- Lack of respect for patient confidentiality.

The Trust has a zero tolerance policy in place, which is intended to ensure that the need to protect staff is properly balanced against the need to provide healthcare to individuals.

### **Fire policy for patients and visitors**

All staff are trained in fire and evacuation procedures. In the unlikely event of a fire, nursing/midwifery staff will take control of the situation and co-ordinate any necessary action. Patients and their visitors are requested to follow the instructions given to them in an emergency.

## **Your needs**

### **Privacy and dignity**

Our aim is to ensure that your right to privacy is respected. On arrival, staff should ask you how you wish to be addressed. Wherever possible male and female patients will be in single sex rooms or single sex bays within ward areas. Where this is not physically possible, for example in specialist areas such as the Accident and Emergency department, (A&E), Acute Assessment Unit, (AAU), Whitbread Ward, Coronary Care Unit, (CCU), Critical Care Complex, (CCC), and Riverbank Ward, (children and teenagers), appropriate screens or curtains will be provided to ensure your privacy. All wards and other areas have separate toilet and washing facilities for male and female patients.

### **Cultural and religious needs**

The hospital chaplaincy cares for the spiritual and religious needs of patients and visitors. We will respect your faith and ensure wherever possible you are able to practice it while in hospital. If you do not express any particular faith, then we will make ourselves available to offer a friendly face and a listening

ear. You may also have specific cultural needs, which we will respond to and respect wherever possible. If you would like to see a chaplain or a minister from your own faith, please ask the ward staff to contact them.

We have a Chapel and an Islamic Prayer Room on the ground floor of the hospital next to the Swannery restaurant. These are open during office hours for quiet prayer and reflection. Access at other times can be requested via a member of staff.

### **Bereavement services**

A bereavement guide has been written by hospital staff in an attempt to give you the essential information you need. Please ask any of the nursing/midwifery staff for a copy.

## **Travelling to and from hospital**

### **Car parking and public transport**

The main visitors' car park is in front of the hospital in Kempston Road. The overflow car park is in Britannia Road. There is a pay and display system in operation where the tariffs are clearly displayed.

In some cases the car parking office, (located by the Kempston Road entrance), can make concessions for visitors and patients, attending the hospital on a long-term basis. For more information please speak to the ward or clinic manager.

### **Park and ride**

A park and ride bus service, which operates from Elstow Road Park and Ride car park stops at the hospital. It runs every ten to 15 minutes into Bedford town centre. For more information please visit: [www.bedfordshire.gov.uk/park/welcome](http://www.bedfordshire.gov.uk/park/welcome)

### **Disabled parking**

Disabled parking bays can be found close to the main entrances and parking for disabled blue badge holders is free. Disabled parking is not allowed on double yellow lines anywhere on the hospital site.

### **Cycle parking**

Bicycles can be locked in the bike shelter adjacent to Kempston Road entrance.

## **Bus service**

There are frequent direct bus services between the hospital and Bedford town centre. A regularly updated electronic display of various local bus times can be viewed at the Kempston Road entrance. If you wish to obtain a hard copy of these bus times please ask the receptionist at our Kempston Road entrance.

## **Financial assistance**

### **Travel claims**

If you are receiving jobseekers allowance, income support, family credit or disability working allowance, you may be entitled to reclaim your travel and car parking expenses when attending the hospital for treatment. You will need to complete a *patient travel form*, available from your ward, and take it to General Office, (located on the ground floor), for processing.

### **Income Support, Family Credit and Disability Working Allowance**

You will need to show your benefit award notice or your payment book along with any bus/coach or rail tickets and your hospital appointment card to the staff in the General Office, (located on the ground floor).

General Office opening times are Monday to Thursday 9.30am to 5pm and Friday 9.30am to 4.30pm. The office is closed daily between 12.30pm and 1pm.

## **Patients' Panel**

Our Patients' Panel is made up of representatives from the community and volunteers. It meets bi-monthly to provide input on the future of Bedford Hospital, getting involved in committees throughout the hospital and bringing a patients' view to the services the hospital provides.

If you would like to know more about getting involved with the development of the hospital please contact the Director of Nursing and Patient Service on 01234 792292.

## Volunteering and voluntary services

Volunteers work in many areas of the Trust and contribute the extras that we hope make all the difference to your comfort whilst in hospital.

Volunteers may be found helping in the following areas:

- Help desks – acting as guides and giving directions
- Wards – reading and shopping at the hospital shop for patients
- A&E – talking, giving information and assisting with the basic comforts for patients
- Ward visitor – visit and talk to patients
- Chaplaincy volunteers – may assist the chaplains and help to take patients to the chapel for services
- Helping with raising funds for the hospital
- Library trolley service – may visit wards daily
- Voluntary meal assistants

## Information about you and how we use it

Information about you, your medical treatment and family background may be recorded, either on paper, electronically or both, as part of providing you with health care service. This information forms part of your health record and will be kept in case we need to see you again.

Your information may be used for:

- Providing you with health care services such as diagnosis, investigation and treatment
- Looking after the health of the general public
- Managing and planning the work of the hospital and the National Health Service
- Training and educating staff
- Medical or health services research
- Ensuring and improving the quality of care of treatment

We may need to share information about you with other people involved in your care, such as your GP, dentist, health visitor, and community nurse/midwife, social worker or other healthcare providers.

Information may be used for research projects, which have been approved by the Local Research Ethics Committee. We will ask for your consent if we need to use information that

clearly identifies you. For instance, some research studies identify specific people so that information from the research can contribute to future care.

Sometimes we are legally required to pass on information, for example to notify a birth, assist the police with the prevention and detection of serious crime or safeguarding vulnerable patients, both adults and children.

Some information is collected by central services such as NHS Clearing Service, Health Authorities and the Department of Health. Further uses of this information are strictly controlled by the NHS Information Authority. The information collected is not used to make any decisions about the treatment or care that you receive from your hospital or GP.

If you have any questions about how the information about you might be used please speak to one of the nurses or doctors looking after you.

The Trust is committed to data protection and we take care to ensure that confidential information is looked after properly. If we need to use or pass on information which would identify you are removed wherever possible.

The Trust and its staff have a responsibility to comply with current legislation, NHS and other guidance, and professional codes of conduct. All the staff working at the Trust have a duty to keep information about you confidential.

## **Your Rights**

You have the right to access your health record, (your medical notes). If you are staying in hospital you can usually look at your health record folder. Your consultant may suggest that a member of staff is present to explain medical terms if necessary and answer your questions. If you would like to see your own notes, please speak to your consultant or one of the midwives/nurses on the ward. You can also look through your folder of nursing notes, which is usually kept by your bed. If you would prefer, we can keep your midwifery/nursing notes at the nurses' station.

If you would like to see your health record after you leave hospital, or if you would like copies of your health record, you

will need to ask for a *subject access request* form to be sent to you. Please fill in and return the form stating which copies of your medical notes you wish to have.

There is a charge for subject access requests. Further charges are made for providing copies. When we receive your completed form and the fee, we aim to respond to the request within 40 days. You have the right to ask for your information to be changed or blocked if you feel that the information we are holding about you is incorrect.

To make a subject access request please write to:  
Subject Access Officer  
Bedford Hospital NHS Trust  
Kempston Road  
Bedford MK42 9DJ

01234 355122 extension 5828

You may be contacted and asked to provide additional identification.

### **Clinical research/ trials**

Clinical research looks at health, disease and illness. Through clinical research, new medicines, vaccines, medical and health procedures are developed. Each research trial is approved via the local Research Ethics Committee. While you are in hospital a health professional may ask if you would like to take part in a research study. They will give you full details about the research project and what is involved in your care. It is for you to decide whether to take part or not; your care will not be affected by your decision.

## **Before you leave hospital**

Staff will fully inform you of your arrangements for your discharge. You may be given a letter or one may be posted to your GP when you return home. This will explain to your GP the treatment you have received, any new medication prescribed or changes to current medication doses and any further treatment required.

During your stay, you may have had a small plastic tube (cannula) in a vein, often in your arm, which may have been attached to a drip or used to give you drugs. Please make sure that your nurse/ midwife removes this tube before you leave the hospital.

Members of staff will discuss and agree with you any arrangements that have been made with community nursing/ midwifery or Social Services. Please let us know if there is anything that you do not understand.

Please make sure that:

- You have arranged your transport home
- You have adequate clothing for your journey home
- If you are discharged to residential care then ask your relatives/carers to bring in appropriate clothing for an ongoing stay
- You have collected anything which you have left with the staff for safekeeping
- You have obtained a medical certificate from the nursing staff if you need one
- You have handed back all hospital property for example, patient's own drug key, books, appliances etc
- You have your front door key, or someone waiting for you at home

### **Leaving hospital**

Plans for your discharge will be discussed and agreed with you on admission to the hospital. If you think there may be any difficulties with your discharge please tell the nurse/midwife in charge of your care.

When the doctor (or midwife for most maternity patients) says you can go home there may be a short delay whilst final arrangements are made.

Once the doctor has decided which medicines you will need to take home, the pharmacist will approve your prescription and any further medicine required for discharge will be dispensed by pharmacy. This may take a short time.

A medical discharge letter will be sent to your GP and a duplicate letter will be given to you in case you have to get in contact with the on call doctor.

Wherever possible we will send you home with the medicines that you brought from home and those that we have supplied you with on the ward.

We will try to ensure that you will be discharged with at least 14 days supply of medication. You will be given an explanation of the dosage and how and when you should take the medicines.

This should give you plenty of time to arrange to see your GP to obtain further supplies. Please ask if there is anything about which you are unsure.

## Let us know your views

### **Comments and complaints**

If you are pleased with the care you received, or have any suggestions about how we can improve our services please let us know.

We welcome your comments.

Listening and responding to your views is an important way of ensuring that our services meet your needs. You may be asked to take part in the national patient survey. Your comments will be noted and where feasible action will be taken to improve the service we provide to you.

If you are unhappy about any aspect of your care or treatment, please ask to speak to the ward manager or matron in the first instance, who may be able to solve the problem straight away.

If you would prefer to talk to somebody not directly involved in your care, you may also contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service, (PALS).

### **Patient Advice and Liaison Service, (PALS)**

As a patient, relative or carer, sometimes you may need to turn to someone for on the spot help, advice or support. The PALS team is available to help, advise or support patients and carers for all the health services in Bedford Hospital.

The service aims to:

- Help with any concerns you may have about the care provided
- Help sort out problems quickly on your behalf
- Listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries
- Guide you through the different services in the Trust

The service is confidential and any correspondence should be addressed to: PALS, Bedford Hospital NHS Trust, Kempston Road, Bedford, MK42 9DJ

Opening hours are Monday to Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm (excluding bank holidays and public holidays)

Telephone 01234 795814 extension 4624/4628/4629.

If you wish to speak to someone outside of these hours, please ask to speak to the clinical site practitioner/bed manager.

If you wish to put a complaint in writing please address your letter to:

Chief Executive, Bedford Hospital NHS Trust, Kempston Road, Bedford, MK42 9DJ.

## Donations and charitable funds

Our services at Bedford Hospital are financed from central government and we strive to provide the highest level of services to our patients from this funding. However, there are ways in which donations can make an important difference, such as a more sophisticated piece of equipment, extra comforts for patients, specialist training for staff and funding for research projects.

Some people express their gratitude for the help or care which they have received by making a donation to the Trust. When giving, you can specify a purpose for the money, such as the purchase of equipment, or alternatively your gift can be for the general purposes of the Trust or for a ward or department, (this allows greater flexibility in how the money is used).

If you would like more information please ask one of the members of staff in your clinical area who will contact the General Office on extension 2110.

Donated funds are subject to strict controls and may only be used for charitable purposes, defined by law and the object of the charity.

### **Gifts to staff**

#### **Please bear in mind that staff are not able to accept individual gifts**

Small gifts such as a box of chocolates can be accepted if they are to benefit a whole ward or department.

A charitable funds information leaflet can be obtained from the ward clerk in each clinical area.