



Royal Berkshire
NHS Foundation Trust

Welcome to the Intensive Care Unit / Critical Care Area

Information for people whose
loved ones are admitted to
Intensive Care Unit (ICU)

0118 322 7257 / 7103

Our unit philosophy

“Here at the RBH ICU, we are passionate about our patient and staff experience.

We work in partnership with patients and relatives to deliver evidence based, high quality compassionate care.

We strive for excellence in all that we do. Through research we are able to safely evaluate new treatments which may benefit future patients.

We aim to restore health whenever possible and to minimise distress and suffering to our patients, their families and carers most especially when our patients are at the end of their life.

We will ensure the privacy and dignity of our patients and respect their religious and cultural beliefs.

We aspire to provide the best staff experience ensuring this is the best place to work, train and learn.”

If you have any important information relating to a patient, such as a Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA) or an Advance Care Directive, please inform the ICU team as soon as possible. Understanding a patient's wishes and any legal arrangements will help us provide the best possible care and support during this time.

What does our Critical Care area look like?

Our Critical Care area combines ICU and High Dependency Unit (HDU) beds, although it is referred to as ICU. Our ICU has 25 bed spaces that are divided into three pods. **Pod 1 beds 1 – 9** (three of which are side rooms). **Pod 2 beds 10 – 21** and **Pod 3 beds 22 – 25**. We do not have separate male and female sections but every effort is made to maintain privacy and dignity.

Please feel free to contact us at any time. However, we would appreciate you nominating one member of the family to phone for a progress report.

Direct phone numbers:

Pod 1 beds 1 – 9	0118 322 7257 or 0118 322 7103
Pod 2 beds 10 – 21	0119 322 7544
beds 10 – 13	0118 322 8498
beds 14 – 17	0118 322 8497
bed 18	0118 322 7913
bed 19	0118 322 7972
bed 20	0118 322 8005
Pod 3 beds 22 – 25	0118 322 5637

Entering the Critical Care area

People who are significant to the patient are welcome to visit. Once you arrive at reception, during the day, a member of our admin team will greet you and check with the team that your relative is ready for a visitor. Out of hours a member of staff will meet you in the Relatives Waiting Area and escort you to your loved one.

You must use the hand sanitiser on your hands before and after visiting to minimise the spread of infections. This can be found at each entrance / exit and at every bed space.

Do not visit the ICU if you are ill or have an infection. If you have an infection or have recently had diarrhoea or vomiting, please wait 48 hours following your last bout of diarrhoea or vomiting before visiting again.

Flowers are not permitted for infection prevention and control reasons.

Visiting our ICU

Our visiting times are between **8am and 10pm daily**. Mornings are usually our busiest times to visit as we have our daily ward round, visiting specialist teams along with rehabilitation sessions for the patients. You are of course welcome to visit the unit during this time; however, we do recommend visiting in the afternoon as this time is less likely to be interrupted. The afternoon is also a time where our team will most likely be available to update you.

We recognise that having a loved one in ICU is a stressful and often exhausting experience. We strongly recommend that you take regular breaks while visiting the unit to stay rested and hydrated. It is important that you look after your wellbeing, which is why our visiting times finish at 10pm to allow you and your loved one time to rest and recover.

Please could we ask that during your visit there are a maximum of 2 visitors per patient bedside.

We do allow children to visit but it is your decision as to whether a child should visit a loved one as you know your child best. Most patients and children do find visiting beneficial if done in a safe and controlled way.

Our staff

Each patient is looked after by our dedicated staff. There are consultants and a nurse in charge on every shift. Each patient will have a named nurse looking after them.

Nursing shift times are:

Day shift = 7am-7.30pm and Night shift = 7pm-7.30am.

Alongside the doctors, nurses and advanced critical care practitioners, our patients are supported by physiotherapists, speech and language therapists, dietitians, pharmacists, clinical psychological staff and other colleagues from around the hospital. Please feel free to ask for an explanation of each team members' job role if you are not sure what they do.

Patients' property

We have very limited space in the unit for storing property and ask that the patients only have essential items with them. Photographs of family and friends to display are also welcome. Money and other valuable items, e.g. jewellery, need to be taken home or locked in our safe.

Taking photographs

We **do not allow** relatives or friends to take photographs of patients, as this is a breach of individuals' rights to privacy and confidentiality.

Mobile phones

Patients and visitors can use mobile phones in public and communal areas but please be sensitive to the needs of others when using your phone. **Phone cameras are not to be used (see above).**

Car parking

Public parking is usually 'pay on exit'. However, when a patient is very unwell, close family can request a concessionary parking ticket, valid for one week. Visitors should speak to the bedside nurse, who will authorise the issue of a concessionary permit.

Facilities available

We do have one overnight room available that is allocated on a needs basis, which is reviewed daily.

Visit the Trust website www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk for further info about facilities www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/food-and-drink and www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/our-locations/royal-berkshire-hospital

Pets as Therapy in ICU

Studies show that the presence of companion animals can improve the wellbeing of patients and lower anxiety levels, simply by making the hospital environment happier, more enjoyable and less forbidding. During inspections, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) has observed the positive impact Animal Assisted Intervention (AAI) can have on critically ill patients and their relatives and how it also boosts staff morale.

Here at Royal Berkshire Hospital, we comply with the guidance from 'Intensive Care Society' for AAI and the protocol 'Working with Dogs in Healthcare Settings' by the 'Royal College of Nursing' as well as our own 'Pets as Therapy Protocol'. Copies of these documents are available upon request.

All Pets as Therapy visits to ICU will be initially discussed and agreed with the patient and relatives/carers and with our Infection Prevention Control Team where necessary prior to a visit taking place.

The Trust only allows pets from reputable organisations for Pets as Therapy visits. Cats, rodents, reptiles and farm animals are not allowed to visit ICU.

Royal Berks Charity ICU Fund U450

All donations are gratefully received and are used for many different aspects of the work in ICU that benefits patients, relatives and staff.



The easiest way to donate is to scan the QR code

on your mobile phone or you can visit <https://nhs.enthuse.com/ICU>.

Alternatively, cheques should be payable to “U450 Intensive Care” and sent to: Laura Milsom, c/o Intensive Care Unit, Royal Berkshire Hospital, London Road, Reading RG1 5AN.

To donate electronically, go to www.justgiving.com/royalberkscharity and click the link that fits your needs and follow the instructions.

If you are setting up a regular monthly, or one off payment please identify that it is going to ICU in the commentary.

You can set up a direct debit or make a one off payment into the Charity bank account – Lloyds TSB / Acc No 01587673 / Sort Code 30 96 96. **Please reference the payment with your surname and the fund number U450.**

Your views

We value the feedback we receive from our critically ill patients and their families and friends, as it is a measure of our service quality.

Ways to give feedback include:

1. Suggestions / comments box in the Relatives Waiting Area.
2. To any health care professional during or after the critical illness episode.
3. Through the Recovery after Critical Illness (RACI) process – at both clinic and 1:1 visits.
4. Through the Intensive Care Bereavement Team.
5. Through the ICU Support Network. www.readingicusupport.co.uk
6. Post a review on the NHS website www.nhs.uk/services/hospital/royal-berkshire-hospital/RHW01/leave-a-review
7. Tell your story on Care Opinion www.careopinion.org.uk/tellyourstory

The way we use your feedback:

1. At the time – if it is pertinent and safe to action the feedback immediately, we will do so.
2. Through the Clinical Governance process – all feedback is thematically analysed, reported and actioned.
3. Through clinical practice – communication of feedback is essential to be timely and current.
4. If a particular theme emerges, we will invite service users (patients, family and friends) to work with staff to resolve the issue.

Reading ICU Support Network

The Network offers support to both patients and their carers who have experienced critical illness.

You are welcome to attend our quarterly meetings enabling you to meet with others in a safe environment: listen to patients / carers sharing their stories as well as clinicians explaining the help they provided during your stay. Our website also allows you to access details of how the Intensive Care functions, the benefits of physiotherapy, ex-patient experiences and much more. The support we offer should help you along your recovery pathway.

The Recovery after Critical Illness team actively support our activities and will be happy to provide you with all relevant details.

www.readingicusupport.co.uk



To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

RBFT ICU. Revised: January 2025. Next review due: January 2027.