



Family Bays – What you need to know during your stay

The role of a birthing partner continues on our postnatal wards.

One supportive partner is now welcome to stay outside of visiting hours, and overnight, in our Family Bays. To maintain a safe and respectful environment everyone must follow the guidelines set out in this document. We will explain what is expected of you and what to expect while staying with us.

Introduction

Our Family Bays recognise the importance of partners and the support they offer to someone giving birth at the Royal Berkshire Hospital, because together you are partners in the birthing experience.

We recognise your role in this experience and value the support both physical, emotional, and mental you offer. We also recognise the importance of you bonding with the new arrival and value your wellbeing during this time. Based on feedback from women, birthing people, and their partners, we are pleased to now offer a space within our wards where one chosen partner can stay 24/7. These are our new Family Bays. We want these to be safe, welcoming spaces and to help us achieve this we ask all partners to read this document and agree to the terms set out.

If, at any time, you, your partner or any of your visitors, witness behaviour that violates these guidelines, is threatening or worries you in any way, please speak to the midwife in charge. If you are not satisfied with the response you can contact the unit coordinator by calling 0118 322 5111 and ask for 'Bleep 179' to escalate your concern.

If you break our guidelines or behave in an inappropriate way you will be asked to leave, and security will be notified that you may only return during visiting hours.

What are the do's and don'ts while staying in the Family Bays?

The number one priority is safety: your safety and creating a safe space for our teams to work and care for your partner and baby/babies.

During your stay **you must not take babies out of the postnatal wards.** If moving around the ward please only transport your baby/babies in their wheeled cots. This is a safety precaution to avoid slip and trips which can happen.

You must sign in and out of the wards using the sign in sheet available in the Family Bay.

You must always use the buzzer to enter and exit the wards.

We ask that you do not leave the ward between 9pm and 9am and remain in your Family Bay overnight. The hospital is strictly no smoking – including vaping. We ask that you do not leave the ward to smoke or vape overnight. This increases the midwives workload, is disruptive, and introduces second hand smoke (carried on your clothes) onto our wards.

Your space on the Family Bay

Each Family Bay has a bed for the person who has given birth, cots for the baby/babies and a reclining chair for you to sleep in if you need to. **You must not sleep on the bed** – this is for safety and hygiene reasons and is for the best interests of everyone.

There is minimal space for storing your belongings so please pack a small bag/rucksack and return home to pick up supplies. It is important to keep the floor clear so we can get to the bedside. Car seats will not be needed until your baby/babies are discharged.

We want to make sure no one who has given birth has to wait to use a bathroom. **You must use the designated partner bathroom** which can be found just outside of the Family Bay. Showers are only for those who have given birth.

Spaces for you on the wards

You can use the Infant Feeding Room for feeding your baby and we have the Nursery where you can prepare feeds or help with sterilising bottles or expressing equipment and here you will find helpful feeding information.

You may use the family kitchens to store and prepare food, there is a fridge, microwave and a kettle, along with some basic tea and coffee supplies. Please ensure any food you bring onto the wards is sealed and labelled with your name and the date.

Looking after yourself

Your wellbeing is important to us, and it is vital you take care of yourself. We are unable to provide meals in the same way that we can for your partner.

Onsite you can buy food in our canteen, from the M&S shop, or from the cafes – you will find a full list of these in the welcome booklet at the bedside. You are welcome to bring in food from home, please make sure this is in a sealed container and is labelled if it needs to be stored in the communal fridges. Please take all rubbish/leftovers away with you.

Wellbeing is more than food and we encourage you to return home to rest, refresh and replenish supplies during your stay.

Our top tips for a successful Family Bay stay

The Family Bays are new to the RBH, and we ask for your co-operation in the following ways to make these a success.

During this trial of Family Bays, we are increasing the number of people on the wards outside of visiting hours. We need to maintain a calm and peaceful space, especially overnight, we remind you to:

- ✓ Remain clothed at all times – the only time you can remove your top is to provide skin to skin with your baby which is actively encouraged.
- ✓ Always wear shoes, especially when moving around the wards.
- ✓ Be mindful of noise levels, allowing people to rest. Please be considerate when making phone or video calls on the wards.
- ✓ Keep voices low overnight, avoid making calls or using devices without headphones.
- ✓ Please be respectful of others. For some, having more people on the wards, especially of a different sex, may cause heightened anxiety and stress.

Thank you for helping us to improve and for making Level 4 a partner friendly place. This document was coproduced with local families by Royal Berkshire Maternity and Neonatal Voices Partnership and our Maternity Team.



Tell us about your family's experience of the Family Bays.



What worked? What could have been better? What impact did it have on your stay? Your feedback is collected by Royal Berkshire Maternity and Neonatal Voices Partnership.

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

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

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Our Maternity Strategy and Vision

'Working together with women, birthing people and families to offer compassionate, supportive care and informed choice; striving for equity and excellence in our maternity service.'

You can read our maternity strategy here



Compassionate

Aspirational

Resourceful

Excellent