



Paediatric intensive care unit retrieval service

Information for patients, parents and guardians

If you have any questions about your child's possible transfer to PICU at Southampton or anything covered in this leaflet, please speak to their doctor or a member of our team.

Paediatric intensive care unit
Southampton Children's Hospital
Tremona Road
Southampton
Hampshire
SO16 6YD

Telephone: 023 8120 6972

www.uhs.nhs.uk/childrenshospital

Find out about the charities supporting our unit

www.southamptonhospitalcharity.org

www.friendsofpicu.org.uk

If you need a translation of this document, an interpreter or a version in large print, Braille or on audiotape, please telephone **023 8120 4688** for help.

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If you're unable to travel in the ambulance

There may be times when, in the interests of your child, we will only allow the medical team to accompany your child in the ambulance. In which case, we'll ask you or your child's current hospital to arrange your transport. For everyone's safety we ask that you don't follow the ambulance back to Southampton. We know this is a stressful time for you but taking a steady journey to Southampton is in the best interests of both you and your child.

We'll aim to provide you with accommodation if you need to stay at the hospital and we can provide you with information on this and the parking options if required. Please ask if you would like a map and directions to Southampton Children's Hospital.

This leaflet provides you with information about your child's possible transfer to the paediatric intensive care unit (PICU) at Southampton Children's Hospital.

Why might my child need to be transferred to PICU?

PICU is a dedicated children's intensive care unit, which offers care from a wide range of doctors and nurses, all of whom specialise in treating seriously ill children. It also has the benefit of highly specialised equipment which may not be available at your child's current hospital.

The decision whether or not to transfer your child will be extremely carefully considered. Your child's hospital will have talked to us in detail about their condition and, based on this information, we'll decide how we can best help. This may be by providing expert advice and guidance to the clinical team already caring for them, or we may come and assess your child with a view to transferring them into our specialist care.

There are some risks involved in moving ill children from one hospital to another. But in some cases, the benefits of giving your child access to specialist care outweigh the risks. If you would like to discuss this please speak to your child's doctor.

Our PICU retrieval team

The PICU retrieval team is the group of medical experts responsible for transferring your child from their current location to PICU in Southampton, if this is the best thing for them. The team is made up of a doctor, nurse, technician and ambulance driver, all of whom have undergone specialist training in the safe transfer of sick children.

When we arrive at your child's hospital we will come and introduce ourselves to you. We'll then meet and assess your child and will ask the team that have been looking after them to brief us fully on the treatment they have given so far.

Before setting off

If it's decided that transferring your child to PICU is the most appropriate course of action, we might need to spend a bit more time with him or her and possibly carry out further treatment, before it's safe to move them.

Once we have all the information we need, we'll talk to you about your child's condition and explain what we've done to prepare them for the journey. We're here to answer any questions you may have, so please feel free to ask us anything you'd like to know as it's important that you have all the available information.

Travelling with your child

Usually one parent (occasionally both parents, depending on the situation) can travel in the ambulance. You'll need to remain seated with your seatbelt on at all times. Space is limited so we ask that you only bring one piece of luggage.

If your child requires treatment during the journey, the ambulance will stop. We completely understand that if this happens it will be distressing for you and you'll naturally want to be close to your child, but it's very important that you stay seated and as calm as possible during this time. This will enable the team to focus on treating your child. It's the best thing you can do for your child at that point in time.

The team will try to keep you updated on your child's condition throughout the journey, but if urgent treatment is needed they will focus solely on your child and explain everything to you as soon as it is safe to do so. In some cases, this may not be until you arrive at PICU.

The ambulance may travel using lights and sirens through heavy traffic. If you normally suffer from travel sickness, you may find this is made worse during the journey.

