



Royal Berkshire
NHS Foundation Trust

Welcome to Castle Ward

Information for patients,
relatives and carers

You have been referred to the medical team who have recommended that you are admitted to the hospital for further investigations and / or treatment. This leaflet provides information about the ward, which we hope you will find useful! Please ask any of our ward staff if you have any further questions.

Our commitment

We aim for excellence in the care we provide and for all patients to be treated with dignity and respect. We are proud to provide a safe environment and to involve patients and their relatives in their care.

Where we are

Castle Ward is on level 2, Battle Block. Please ring the bell next to the ward door to be let in.

Contact details

Castle 1: 0118 322 5424 Castle 2: 0118 322 5479

What to expect

On arrival, you will be allocated a bed. Our unit has 29 beds spread across 4 bays and 7 side rooms. Your bed is allocated according to your clinical needs and also bed availability.

We are proud to work as a team. However, you will have a nurse and a health care assistant (HCA) allocated to look after you during each shift. When shifts change, your new nurse and HCA will introduce themselves to you when they start.

You will be monitored regularly on the ward, with checks such as blood pressure and oxygen levels done.

On arrival at the ward, the Castle clinical team will look at your notes to see what tests or treatments have already been done and will then carry out further assessments. You may also be visited by different team members, such as therapists and pharmacists, whose aim is to ensure you are receiving the right treatment to support your recovery.

Drug rounds

We have protected drug rounds between 7.30–9.30am, 12.00–2.00pm, 5.00–7.00pm and 9.00 – 11.00pm. However, the nurses may administer medicines at other times, depending on individual patients' needs.

Meal times

Breakfast 8.00–10.00am

Lunch 12.00– 1.30pm

Dinner 5.00 – 6.30pm

Snacks and tea or coffee will be served between meals.

The hospital has established meal times. You can also ask for tea or coffee and these are available from our housekeeping staff. Water is also available at the bedside and can be topped up as needed.

If you have any specific dietary need, just let us know so we can make arrangements with the kitchen. You can request gluten-free, halal, vegetarian or food prepared in a different form, such as minced, pureed or liquid.

If you are advised to be 'Nil-By-Mouth' you will not be able to eat or drink anything. This may be for multiple reasons, but is often required if the team has worries about your swallowing, you have been vomiting or you are due for tests or procedures that require an empty stomach.

What about my belongings?

There is a cupboard to store your personal belongings next to your bed. It is your responsibility to look after them so please do not bring any valuables into hospital with you. If this is unavoidable, please ask your nurse / HCA to log and safely store it.

You are welcome to bring in your own clothes and toiletries.

However, we also have toiletries and pyjamas / gowns for patients to use.

What about my medication?

If you bring any medication with you, please hand it to the nurses. It will be locked safely in the cupboard next to you. Controlled drugs, such as morphine, will be locked away in a separate cupboard. Storing your medicines safely will protect other patients who may be confused from accidentally taking them.

The nurses will go through your medicines with you on the drug rounds, and the doctors may adjust them to depending on your current condition and any new medication needed. All prescribed medication administered will be listed on your drug chart. You will be informed about any changes made to your regular regime. If your regular medication is not needed in hospital, we might suggest it are taken home by relatives or friends visiting (particularly controlled drugs).

Some drugs are part of our ward stock, but others might need to be ordered from the hospital pharmacy.

Information about side rooms

Castle Ward has seven side rooms. Side rooms are used to protect those with a low-defence system from other patients and visitors, or for patients with infectious conditions. In the unlikely event we have no beds available in one of the bays, you may be put in a side room until a bed is available in a bay for you.

If you are in a side room and are worried about feeling isolated, please be assured that the ward staff will come into your room frequently to check on you and attend your needs. Visitors of patients being nursed in side rooms should speak to the nurse in charge before entering. If the patient has an easily transmissible infection, visitors will be asked to wash their hands before and after being in the room and may be asked to wear a mask to protect themselves and others.

Will I be asked to move wards?

Some patients may be admitted to Castle Ward as the only ward with available beds at that time. However, if you require specialist treatment, you may be moved to a specialist ward once a bed becomes available. If this is necessary, do not worry. All of your information and care plans will be handed over to the new ward. We will also endeavour to inform your next of kin about the move. If this is not possible, please be assured that when they call us or the main hospital number, we will tell them where you have been moved to.

What happens when I am discharged?

If you have been told you are being discharged, it is good news! The ward team will involve you and, if necessary your relatives, about your discharge plan. We will provide you with any new medication you might need to start (if required) and also a summary of the care / treatments / investigations you have had during your hospital stay, (in an electronic discharge letter). This letter will also list any follow-up appointments booked for you. If the hospital pharmacy is closed when you are discharged, we may give you a prescription that can be collected from any local pharmacy.

While you wait for medication or transport to get you home, you may be moved to the Discharge Lounge, where they can sort out your discharge arrangements.

Who's who on the ward?

We are proud to be a big multi-disciplinary team, comprised by different staff groups, such as nurses, HCAs, doctors, housekeeping staff, therapists and pharmacists. Look out for the 'Staff you may see on Castle Ward' poster on the Ward Information board.

If you are not sure who someone is, don't hesitate to ask us our role! You should also be able to identify us by our name badge.

Information for relatives / visitors

- **Discharge:** If your relative is being discharged, we may contact you to come and pick them up. If you are unable to do so, we will make alternative arrangements to get your relative home safe. If you have any concerns regarding their discharge, please don't hesitate to speak to us.
- **Visitor parking:** The hospital has 'pay on exit' parking for visitors. Free and concessionary parking permits are only issued for a particular group of patients and relatives. Please ask the nurse in charge on the ward whether you are eligible for one.
- **Patient updates:** To get an update on the condition of the patient please telephone the ward. Detailed information can only be passed on to the named next of kin and will require authorisation from the patient, if they have the capacity to do so. Sensitive or confidential information is unlikely to be shared over the phone and we advise you to come to the ward for this. We advise that you speak to the patient first; the doctors see them every day to update them on their condition and care plan. The medical team cover different wards, have different duties and look after many patients. This means that they might not be able to come and speak to you as quickly as you would like. Nevertheless, there is the possibility of arranging a time with the medical team to discuss the condition of the patient before you come to the ward.

We also ask one person is allocated as the main contact, who can then communicate with the rest of the family, to minimise interruptions to the ward workflow to answer phone calls.

- **Medical wards rounds:** These happen between between 9.00am–13.00. You are welcome to be present at the round to get an update. Please be aware that doctors have around 29 patients to visit during the rounds so may not see your relative until later.
- **Visiting times:** You are welcome to come and visit the patient anytime. We encourage family and friends to sit with them, help them with meals and participate in their personal care. If you bring any valuables or medicines, please let the nurse looking after your relative know. Do not administer any medicines without informing the nurses, as there might have been changes to the patient's medication regime.

The number of visitors allowed per patient varies. Sometimes, the ward may be closed to protect patients or visitors. Please see to the information at the ward door or telephone the ward for advice. When visitors are allowed, we asked that you keep it to one visitor at a time, to reduce disturbing other patients' well-being and privacy.

Certain times tend to be very busy on the ward, such as between 7.00–10.00am, 12.00–2.00pm and 5.00–7.00pm. However, as a medical ward, how busy the ward is, varies every day.

At busy times, we may ask visitors to step outside to allow the staff to perform assessments and other activities, such as positioning and hygiene care.

- **Infection control:** Please ensure that you use the hand gel at the ward entrance. Also, if you are visiting someone in a side room, please speak to the nurse in charge before entering, and ensure you wash or gel your hands before and after being in the room.

Questions and concerns

If you have any questions or concerns about your care, please talk to your allocated nurse or the nurse in charge (a senior staff nurse available at the nurse station). If you would like to escalate any concerns to someone else, you can ask to speak to the ward manager or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 0118 322 8338 or email PALS@royalberkshire.nhs.uk. For other general enquiries, including hospital appointments, you can contact the switchboard operator on 0118 322 5111, who will put you through to the appropriate department.

Providing feedback

You may get a Friends and Family Test card; usually when you are ready to be discharged. It will ask "Overall, how was your experience of our service?" Your feedback provides us with a better understanding of the needs of our patients and visitors and enables us to continually improve the care we give.

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 Castle Ward, December 2023

Next review due: December 2025