You might see an empty bed while the poorly patient is being transferred; we appreciate that this may feel frustrating.

What if I am not happy in the temporary escalation space?

It is very important that we do everything we can to reduce overcrowding in our Emergency Department and assessment units so that we can continue to admit and treat, extremely ill patients arriving by ambulance.



We hope that you understand why it is necessary that you move to a temporary escalation space and we appreciate that this is a difficult situation. However, patient safety and the patient experience remain our priority and you will receive the same care and attention that you would if you were in a regular ward bed.

Further information

If you have any concerns or questions, please feel free to discuss them with your allocated nurse or the nurse in charge.

Contact us

If you have an issue or query that you would like us to help you resolve, please ask to speak to the nurse in charge in the first instance. Alternatively, our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) team may be able to help.

Tel: 0118 322 8338

Email: rbb-tr.pals@nhs.net

PALS is available to contact Monday to Friday 9am-4pm, phone lines open 10am-3pm



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

Please ask if you would like this information in another language or format

Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust, Oct 2026
Next review due: Oct 2028

NHS
Royal Berkshire
NHS Foundation Trust

Why am I being moved to a temporary escalation space?

Information for patients, relatives and carers

This leaflet explains why you might have to wait in a dedicated area on the ward while you wait to be discharged home, moved to the discharge lounge or allocated a bed.

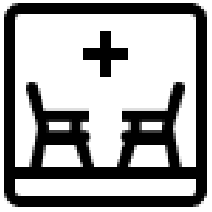
Why am I being moved?

During periods when the Emergency Department (A&E) and other assessment units are very busy and ambulances are waiting to deliver patients for emergency care, it is vital that beds are available on the relevant wards for patients needing specialist tests and treatment.

Patients already on some wards, who are well enough and who are almost ready to leave hospital, may be moved to a dedicated area, known as a temporary escalation space. This will free up a bed for an incoming, very poorly patient.

You will be told about the move before it happens.

Incoming patients who are stable and are waiting for a bed to become available may also be allocated to a temporary escalation space chair or bed.



What is a temporary escalation space?

It is a designated space with a comfortable chair or bed, where you can wait temporarily until you are ready to leave the ward – either to go home or to be admitted to a ward. The space may be in in another area of the ward, such as a ward corridor or day room. Your belongings will stay with you when you move to the temporary escalation space.

You will only be allocated this space if your doctors and nurses agree that you are well enough to do so, and this may happen any time between 6am and 7pm, 7 days a week.

Single sex accommodation needs will still be met to protect your privacy and dignity.

What care will I get while I wait?

Once you are settled in your chair or bed, you will be allocated a nurse who will regularly monitor you and provide the same care as you receive on the main ward. Your nurse will explain the routine on that ward.

A senior nurse or ward manager will also visit you to make sure you are comfortable and to answer any questions that you, your relatives and carers may have about what is happening.

Any medications or investigations you need will continue as planned.

Staff will check on you regularly, and ensure that you are comfortable.

You will have a bell or call bell if you need to call for assistance.

You will be safe in a visible and designated area, and have regular refreshments, meals and access to the toilets during this time.

Your care team will notify your relatives that you have moved to this space so they will know where you are.

How long will I wait in the temporary escalation space?

This will depend on what needs to happen next. It may be that you are waiting for transport, medication, a final assessment by your doctor or you are awaiting a space in the discharge lounge. Or you may be stable but awaiting a bed on a specialist ward.

The types of patients deemed suitable to wait in one of these spaces include:

- Those well enough to leave hospital but who are waiting for transport home or to a hospice or care home.
- Those whose condition is stable but who require a bed once one becomes available.
- Those with a transmissible infection who are waiting for a side room bed.

Your nurse will explain why you have been chosen as suitable for allocation to the temporary escalation space and will keep you updated on progress towards your next step on the patient journey, but it can take some time for these moves to be completed.