

## Exeter Neonatal Unit



### Welcome

Congratulations on the birth of your baby(s) and welcome to the Exeter Neonatal Unit.

As a team, we recognise that having a baby stay on the Neonatal Unit can be a stressful experience for parents. This booklet aims to address some of the many questions you are likely to have. It includes information about life on the ward, your important role as a parent and how the medical and nursing team will help to care for your baby. If you have any further questions about the information in this booklet or any aspect of your baby's health or wellbeing, please do not hesitate to speak to a member of staff. We are here to help.

### Family Centred Care

'Family Centred Care' is a term used in healthcare to describe a partnership between families and health care providers. A partnership that works together to ensure planning, delivery, and evaluation of care always keeps the babies and families at the centre of everything we do.

We acknowledge that here on the neonatal unit and in everyday life that you the parent(s) are the most important person/people in your baby's life. We also understand that adjusting to the new and often stressful situation and environment takes

time. We encourage you to undertake as much care of your baby as you feel comfortable with. Each family is unique and the team are here to guide and encourage you as you care for your baby.

### Ward rounds

Exeter Neonatal Unit has a collaborative approach to ward rounds as we continue to strive to deliver quality care within the context of the family unit.

Ward rounds take place each morning; they are an opportunity for you to discuss and plan your baby's care with the Nursing and Medical team (usually made up of Neonatal Consultants, Associate Specialists, Junior Doctors, Advanced Neonatal Nurse Practitioners (ANNP's), Ward Co-ordinators and Nurses). We welcome you to contribute to the ward round by telling us how your baby has been doing lately. You can also ask questions and discuss any concerns you may have about your baby. We hope you will always feel fully up to date on your baby's progress and feel involved in the process.

We want you to know you are a valued member of your baby's caregiving team and that your voice is always heard. If for any reason you are unable to attend the ward round, a meeting with your baby's doctor will be arranged for another time. Please ask your baby's nurse to arrange this.



Due to the confidential nature of ward rounds, we do ask that you respect the privacy of other families when they are speaking with staff. Face coverings must be worn at all times by parents and staff during ward rounds (unless exemptions apply).

## Family Activity Sessions

Many families tell us that being informed is vital to feeling less worried about taking care of their baby, both in hospital and after discharge. Face to face parent activity sessions are currently on hold due to Covid-19, but do speak to your Nurse if there is anything you would like information about or help with. Please refer to your baby's 'Parent Led Discharge' board to help identify activities/topics you wish to learn about.

## The Nursing Team

Exeter Neonatal Unit has an experienced and dedicated nursing team. It is made up of Advanced Neonatal Nurse Practitioners, Matrons, Sisters, Staff Nurses, Assistant Practitioners and Healthcare Assistants. On admission your family will be given a 'named nurse' who will oversee your baby's care including their discharge home. We hope that you will come to see your named nurse as a familiar point of contact and a person who you can turn to with any questions or concerns.

The RD&E is also a teaching hospital so you will see medical and nursing students, who may, under supervision, participate in your baby's care.

## Unit Facilities

We are fortunate to have a modern and spacious unit here at Exeter with facilities for both parents and siblings. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic some facilities have been restricted to ensure the safety of babies, families and staff and to comply with Government guidelines.

## Wi-Fi

There is free Wi-Fi in the hospital. Log on to NHS Wi-Fi and follow the instructions. Sessions will last 4 hours. After this time you will be asked to log on again.

## The Retreat

The retreat is situated on the main NNU corridor past parent room 1. There are comfy sofas and beanbags to relax on. There is a CD player, adjustable lighting and there is also a diffuser with a range of essential oils you can use to relax.

Due to COVID-19 we kindly ask that only one family at a time use the retreat.

Sibling packs have been created to help the sibling(s) at home to feel a link to their new brother(s) or sister(s). Please ask your nurse if you have not received one.

## Parent Accommodation

We encourage all parents to stay with their baby whilst on the Neonatal Unit. There are five parent rooms available on the unit. We have 5 cubicles in low dependency with camp beds in them where you can sleep next to your baby. We also have a number of spare camp beds which can be set up for you to use in other areas of the unit.

## Milk Kitchen

The milk kitchen is in the centre of the unit. It is where you can wash your breast pump equipment and your baby's feeding equipment. There are freezers where breast milk can be stored. Extra sterile bottles for expressing can also be found here.

## Expressing

Each space in the unit has its own breast pump for you to use. On admission you will be given a hand expressing pack as well as a breast pump pack. The nurse caring for your baby will show you how to hand express and use the pump. If you go home whilst your baby is on the unit we can provide a portable breast pump for you. You can also pump at your bedside and in The Retreat if you prefer.

## Parent Kitchen

Due to Covid-19, this is currently located in the parent milk kitchen. You will find crockery, cutlery, a microwave and a fridge. We also provide tea, coffee, sugar and milk for you to use. Please label and date any personal food items that you leave in the kitchen. Resident parents who stay continuously on the unit are entitled to free meals which will be brought to you in your room. We can also supply some parents with a free packed lunch. Our ward assistants will come round and ask you if you would like one on a daily basis.

## Hospital Eating Facilities

### Oasis Restaurant

The hospital restaurant 'Oasis' is situated on Level 2 of the main hospital. It can be accessed using the 'Q' link corridor on the ground floor of the Centre for Women's Health. The restaurant provides a range of hot and cold meals and is open between 7.30am-8.30pm, 7 days a week. Due to Covid-19, this restaurant is sometimes only available for staff, so please check if there are any current restrictions

### Savour

Savour is a small coffee shop selling sandwiches and snacks. It is located in the entrance to the Centre for Women's Health (CWH). It currently offers a takeaway only service for all patients, visitors and staff. Outdoor seating is available outside the CWH entrance, please continue to observe social-distancing when using these facilities.

### Boots

On the main corridor of the hospital there is a Boots chemist. It also sells sandwiches and snacks.

### Vending Machines

There are a range of vending machines supplying drinks and snacks throughout the hospital.

### Cash Machines

You will find cash machines in the main hospital entrance and next to 'Oasis'.

## Visiting

Parents are welcome to be with their baby any time of the day or night. During the Covid-19 pandemic, we cannot allow other visiting during this time.

We try to keep the noise and light levels low on the unit. We also ask that you keep perfume/aftershave use to a minimum. Noise, light and strong smells can affect growth and brain development.



## Support Person

If you are single, or if your partner is unable to visit, you can nominate a support person to take their place. They can have 24 hour access and can visit when you are not here. It is important that you let the nursing staff know the name of this person for security reasons.

## Financial Assistance

You may qualify for help with health costs if you and your family receive any of the following:

- Income support
- Job seekers allowance
- Income related employment support allowance
- Working tax credits
- Low income certificate

For more help call 0300 330 1343

## Neonatal Research

Occasionally, the RD&E takes part in national research programmes. These help to improve outcomes for sick or premature babies. During your stay you may be asked if your baby can be included in a research programme. If this is the case, a member of the medical/nursing team will explain what the research is about and what it involves for your baby. You are under no obligation to take part and formal written consent from you is always required before your baby can participate in any programme.

## Baby in the family meetings

As a unit, we believe that it is important to care not just for your baby but your family as a whole. Each week, we hold a 'new baby in the family' meeting. We discuss how professionals can effectively work in partnership with you to meet your baby's needs.

## Data Collection

While your baby is receiving NHS neonatal care, staff enter data in an electronic record, just like information written in the medical notes. Some of this data is stored in a national neonatal research database. It is used to improve healthcare and services for newborn babies. The information stored has been de-identified. This means all information that could identify your baby has been removed.

If you do not wish for your baby's clinical information to be available for this purpose, please ask a member of staff for an opt-out form.

## Infection Control

Every Monday we routinely screen all babies for MRSA and pseudomonas infections. We take swabs from your baby's nose, umbilicus and nappy area. These infections can be harmful for babies who are unwell or premature. Our aim is to detect, treat and isolate these infections early with regular screening.

We also need to swab both parents (or mother and nominated support person) for COVID-19 to help minimise the transmission on the neonatal unit. We will do this on the day of your baby's admission then on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday for the first week and then weekly on a Thursday. We only swab babies for COVID-19 if they are symptomatic.

Please inform us immediately if you or someone in your household has a high temperature (more than 37.7 C), a continuous cough or a loss of smell or taste. Please stay at home (or in your parent room if you are already resident on NNU) until further instruction from staff.

Surgical masks are provided by security staff on entrance to the neonatal unit or from our NNU assistants. Please wear these whilst moving about the unit, in all communal areas and when a staff member enters your 2 meter 'family bubble'. When alone in your bubble you can take your face covering off whilst holding and interacting with your baby.

Please do not visit if you have had any diarrhoea or vomiting in the past 48 hours OR if you have a cough, sore throat or runny nose. If you are in any doubt please speak to your nurse.

Please wash your hands and take off outside coats on entering the unit. Pegs are provided by the entrance for your coats and jackets.

It is also really important to carry out hand hygiene before touching your baby. You will find alcohol gel at the end of your baby's cot/incubator.

Thank you for helping us to protect your baby against outside germs.

## Security

There are security measures in place to protect your baby whilst in hospital.

All babies will have two name bands on them.

All visitors are required to report to the security desk at level 2.

Entrance to the NNU is controlled by security.

Telephone information will be given to parents only.

## Parking

Parking permits are available whilst your baby is on the NNU. This will allow you to park free of charge, however, it does not guarantee a parking space.

## Common Interventions

### Pain Control

The unit has a pain management guideline. This is used to ensure babies are given appropriate pain relief. We encourage and support you to be with your baby to comfort them during any procedure.

We use a few drops of a sucrose solution, which we give to babies by mouth, as a method of pain relief. It has been shown to reduce the painful experience for babies and is given immediately prior to any procedure e.g. blood taking.

Talking, cuddling and breast feeding can also comfort babies during painful procedures.

## Hearing Test

All babies admitted to the neonatal unit will have a hearing test before discharge. This is part of a national screening programme to identify early hearing problems. There are specially trained staff who will talk you through the test before it is carried out. The test cannot be done without your agreement and written consent.

## Eye Check

Retinopathy of Prematurity or ROP is a condition where blood vessels in the retina are not fully developed. If development is not complete the retina can detach causing visual impairment.

Babies less than 32 weeks gestation or less than 1.5kgs birth weight are examined by a consultant ophthalmologist about 5-7 weeks after birth. They are then checked every 2 weeks until the blood vessels are fully developed. You will receive a leaflet explaining the procedure prior to the examination.

## Cranial Ultrasound

Some babies admitted for intensive care will have an ultrasound of their brain performed in the first 24 hours after admission. The scan is done to detect any bleeding or structural abnormalities in the brain. Most babies will require more than one scan. The doctors caring for your baby will explain the scan results to you.

## Donor Breast Milk

Breastfeeding and your breastmilk is best for your baby. If you are unable to feed your baby initially because your baby is too small or sick then you can express your milk. It can then be given to your baby by an orogastric or nasogastric tube – a tube that goes directly into the stomach via the nose or mouth.

If you are not able to provide milk for your baby then we have a supply of donated breast milk. The milk is tested, screened and pasteurised. If we think your baby would benefit from donor milk rather than formula milk we will discuss this and ask for your written consent before introducing it.

## Nutrition Ward Round

Once a week, on a Thursday, a nutrition ward round is held. The consultant, dietician, speech and language specialist (SALT) team, feeding coordinator and nurse in charge meet to discuss your baby's growth and feeding. If you would like to meet with the dietician or SALT please let the nurse caring for your baby know.

## When will my baby go home?

If your baby was born prematurely, discharge is likely to be around your due date. Before your baby can go home they will need to be:

- Feeding well
- Gaining weight
- Regulating their own temperature

Term babies are discharged when their medical condition allows. If your baby requires medication at home you will be shown how to administer it before you leave. You will be given a letter outlining your baby's care and treatment whilst on the NNU.

A letter will be sent to your GP and a midwife and/or health visitor will visit you at home.

## Help and Support

### Unit Counsellor

Having a baby on the unit can be stressful. If you would like to talk to a counsellor in confidence please ask the nurse looking after your baby for more details. If you would like access to counselling after your discharge from the unit, please contact the hospital within 3 months from the date you left the unit. Alternatively you can contact your GP. We also have access to a specialist mental health team and specialist mental health midwives. Lots of parents feel overwhelmed when they have a baby on the neonatal unit, so please let us know if you need help.

