



# Critical Care Unit patient diaries

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## Information for patients and relatives from the Critical Care Unit

Patients who have had a stay in the Critical Care Unit often have little or no memory of their stay. Their memory for this time can be affected by the illness itself or the sedative drugs we give to our patients to keep them comfortable. Patients may also remember nightmares or hallucinations from this time that can be very frightening.

### How will a diary help?

Although doctors and nurses explain to patients why they were admitted to the Critical Care Unit, patients often forget what we have told them. Research has suggested that patients can become stressed and anxious when they do not fully understand what has been wrong with them.

To help patients understand more about their illness and critical care stay, the staff write patient diaries. A diary has been shown to reduce stress in patients after they are discharged to the wards and in the months after their stay.

### What is included in the diary?

A patient diary has been started for your relative. The nursing staff will make diary entries to explain what has brought the patient to the Critical Care Unit, what is wrong with them, and how they are progressing. Some patients may also have their photograph taken for their diary.

We encourage relatives to write in the diary, to pass on their messages to the patient, or to tell them news from home that they would like to hear.

### Where is the diary kept?

Your family's diary will be kept at the bedside in Critical Care; you just need to ask the nurse looking after your relative if you would like to make a diary entry.

### When will the patient get to read their diary?

When our patients are well enough they can read their diary. This is often when they have gone to a general ward. Here they will be seen by the Critical Care Outreach Team and the Follow-up and Rehabilitation Team, who will review the diaries with them at an appropriate time, if needed.

Once patients are well enough they are encouraged to go to the Critical Care Follow-up Rehabilitation Clinic and class, for ongoing physical and psychological support, and reflection of their critical illness.

### **What if I have any further questions or concerns?**

If you have any questions about patient diaries, please ask the nurse looking after your relative, or ask to meet with the critical care follow-up and rehabilitation nurse specialist (see numbers below).

#### **Kent and Canterbury Hospital, Canterbury**

- Critical Care Unit  
Telephone: 01227 783104
- Chaplain  
Telephone: 01227 864095

#### **Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother (QEQM) Hospital, Margate**

- Critical Care Unit  
Telephone: 01843 234415
- Matron's Office  
Telephone: 01843 235054
- Chaplain  
Telephone: 01843 234273

#### **William Harvey Hospital, Ashford**

- Critical Care Unit  
Telephone: 01233 616114
- Matron's Office  
Telephone: 01233 616804
- Chaplain  
Telephone: 01233 633331 and ask for the Chaplain

#### **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

Telephone: 01227 783145

Email: [ekh-tr](mailto:ekh-tr) ([ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net)), [pals@nhs.net](mailto:pals@nhs.net) ([.pals@nhs.net](mailto:.pals@nhs.net))

#### **Critical Care Follow-Up and Rehabilitation Specialist Nurse**

Mobile: 07771 378331

Email: [lucymummary@nhs.net](mailto:lucymummary@nhs.net) ([lucymummary@nhs.net](mailto:lucymummary@nhs.net))

**This leaflet has been produced with and for patients.**

If you would like this information in **another language, audio, Braille, Easy Read, or large print** please ask a member of staff. You can ask someone to contact us on your behalf.

**Any complaints, comments, concerns, or compliments** please speak to your doctor or nurse, or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01227 783145 (tel://+441227783145), or email [ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net) ([ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net))

**Patients should not bring large sums of money or valuables into hospital.** Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property has been handed into Trust staff for safe-keeping.

**Further patient leaflets** are available via the East Kent Hospitals website (<https://www.ekhft.nhs.uk/information-for-patients/patient-information/>).

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