Transferring your child to a Paediatric Intensive Care Unit
If you forget which Paediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) your child is going to, please don’t hesitate to ask one of the STRS team. The staff at the PICU will provide more detailed information about their services and hospital following your arrival.

This leaflet includes local transport and parking information which could be subject to change. For travel in London please check on www.tfl.gov.uk for the most up-to-date information.
The South Thames Retrieval Service (STRS)

The team you have met are part of the South Thames Retrieval Service (STRS) for children. STRS transport critically ill children from District General Hospitals (DGHs) to the most appropriate PICU within South London; St George’s Hospital, King’s College Hospital, or Evelina London Children’s Hospital. If a child has a specific need (for example liver problems) we will transfer them to a PICU that specialises in the care they need.

Transferring your child to a PICU

Your child's doctor has asked for your child to be transferred to a PICU. We understand that this is an extremely stressful time for you and we will try to help you in any way we can.

What is a retrieval team?

A retrieval team is comprised of a doctor or a retrieval nurse practitioner (RNP), a nurse and an ambulance technician. The nurse has a specialist qualification in children’s intensive care and further training in the transportation of critically ill children. Both the doctor/RNP and nurse are all senior members of the PICU team at Evelina London. The ambulance technicians have specialised training and work for St John Ambulance.

What is the retrieval service?

Your local hospital will have called STRS to make a referral. A doctor/RNP from STRS will discuss your child’s condition and treatment with the team looking after them, and will advise on further treatment strategies after discussion with the consultant. Once your child has been accepted for transfer, the retrieval team will be deployed.

When the STRS team arrive at your child’s local hospital, there will be a full handover from your child’s medical team. After further assessment, the STRS team will make a plan of action for stabilising and transporting your child, and they will then be safely transported to the agreed PICU. Our ambulances are specially designed for the safe transfer of critically ill children. On certain occasions an air ambulance may be utilised for this transfer.
The ambulance insurance allows one parent to travel in the back of the ambulance, if space allows. Unfortunately in some cases you will not be able to accompany your child and the STRS team will be able to advise you on the best way to travel to the PICU. Our aim is to provide a safe transfer to the PICU for you and your child.

If you are driving, please do not follow the ambulance too closely as this is not safe and may result in an accident.

**Travelling with your child**

**Your child’s safety**
All children being transferred will be accompanied by a minimum of two members of the STRS team. Extra staff may be present for observational or training purposes.

**Alarms**
During transfer, your child will be receiving ‘intensive care on the move’. They will be attached to a monitor which gives constant readings of their heart rate, blood pressure and oxygen levels. Alarms are set so that small fluctuations in your child’s condition can be detected quickly. Occasionally other factors such as uneven roads can trigger the alarms, so please be aware that the alarms will probably go off several times during the journey.

**Treatment during transport**
Most children will have a tube in their nose or mouth which is attached to a ventilator (breathing machine) to help with their breathing. Most children will have several intravenous cannulas (drips) through which they will receive medicine to sedate them (make them feel sleepy) and provide pain relief, as well as treat their specific condition if required. During the journey, your child may require extra drugs or intravenous fluids. This is normal and does not necessarily indicate a deterioration in your child’s condition.

The medical team may ask for the ambulance to stop if they need to assess your child or get out of their seats. This allows them to check your child safely and without the noise of the engine or vibration of the vehicle. The team will try to keep you updated on your journey. Our priority is caring for your child, so please be aware that if urgent treatment is required, the team may need to focus solely on your child and will provide an explanation later.
Please remain seated with your seat belt on
It is a requirement of the ambulance insurance that parents must travel in the back of the ambulance. You must also remain in your seat with your seat belt on at all times when the ambulance is moving.

Travel sickness
The ambulance will travel fast and will use blue lights and sirens at times to help move through the traffic. As a result of this, the journey can appear quite bumpy. If you normally suffer from travel sickness, you may find this is made worse during the journey. Please inform the team if you feel sick and they can provide you with a vomit bag.

Luggage
Space is very limited in the ambulance so you can only bring one piece of luggage. This must be secured in the vehicle throughout the journey. This is to comply with the regulations for emergency ambulances and to prevent injury from loose luggage moving around in the back of the ambulance.

Phone charger and snacks
The ambulance has a phone charger for most phones on board, so please let the team know if you wish to use it. We also carry a small supply of snacks and drinks on board.

We are here to help you and your child so please speak with the team in the ambulance if you have any questions or concerns.
Evelina London Children’s Hospital (ELCH)

Evelina London Children’s Hospital is next to St Thomas’ Hospital. You can access ELCH via St Thomas’ main entrance or via Lambeth Palace Road. The PICU is located on the second floor of the ELCH. The PICU is a 19-bed unit, which cares for children from birth to 16 years, with conditions affecting all body systems including cardiac, respiratory, renal, metabolic and neurology.

Accommodation

Parents’ accommodation is available if you wish to stay. This will either be within the hospital on the first floor or at the Ronald McDonald House, Lambeth Palace Road. Siblings are welcome to stay in the Ronald McDonald accommodation.

Visiting

Parents may visit at any time during their child’s stay but we ask that visitors are limited to two people per bed. Friends and family may visit between 9am-8pm. The unit has a parents’ room which has a play area and kitchen facilities. Within the Evelina and St Thomas’ hospital there are shops, restaurants, cafes, a cash machine and a pharmacy.

By tube

Westminster – District, Circle, Jubilee lines, 10 minute walk. Waterloo – Bakerloo, Jubilee, Waterloo and City and Northern lines, 15 minute walk. Lambeth North – Bakerloo line, 15 minute walk.

By bus

Nos. 12, 53, 148, 159, 211 and 453 stop at Westminster Bridge Rd; Nos. 77, 507 and N44 stop at Lambeth Palace Road; Nos.3, 344 and C10 stop at Lambeth Road - 15 min walk; Nos. 76, 341, 381, RV1 stop at York Rd; Nos. 12, N44, 53, 148, N155, N159, N381 and 453 stop at Westminster Bridge Road at night.

By train

Waterloo, Waterloo East, Victoria and Charing Cross are the nearest train stations.

By car

The car park is pay on foot and has limited spaces. The machine takes cash and bank cards. You should pay at the machine before you return to your car, so you have an exit ticket. Charges are displayed at the entrance.

Remember the hospital is located within the London Congestion Charge zone. See page 24 for more information on how to pay.
For PICU: From main reception, walk towards the back of the building, following the wheelchair signs. Pass through the double doors and take the 'big' lift up to the second floor.
St George’s Hospital (SGH)

St George’s Hospital has a 10-bed general Paediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU), and a four bed step down ward. It cares for children from birth to 16 years and the PICU specialises in general surgery, urology, ear, nose and throat neurosurgery, orthopaedics, plastic surgery, oncology, infectious diseases, endocrinology, neurology, gastroenterology and general paediatric intensive care.

Accommodation

The parents’ room is situated at the entrance to the PICU where there is a lounge area, with a kitchen and toilet facilities. There is a range of overnight accommodation including rooms on and near to the PICU and at Ronald McDonald House. The Ronald McDonald House has eight en-suite rooms, kitchen, dining and laundry room, and a garden area. It is situated within the hospital grounds, adjacent to the main car park and allocation is based on distance from the hospital.

Visiting

Parents may visit at any time during their child’s stay. Family and friends can visit up until 8pm. Bedside visitors are limited to two people per bed at any one time. St George’s is a large teaching hospital and has a variety of shops, restaurants, cafes, a pharmacy and cash machines.

By tube

Tooting Broadway – Northern line, 10 minute walk. You should enter the hospital via Hoyle Road (off Tooting High Street) through a gate in Effort Street.

By bus

Various buses stop at St George’s Hospital, including Nos. 493, 155, 264, 280, G1.

By car

There is one car park within the entrance on Blackshaw Road. The charges are displayed in the car park and are to be paid on exiting. Car park vouchers are available - one per family at £10 per week. Please ask the nurse looking after your child for more information.

St George’s Hospital is not within the London Congestion Charge zone.
The St George’s PICU is on the first floor of the Lanesborough Wing.
King’s College Hospital (KCH)

The Thomas Cook Children’s Critical Care Centre is at King’s College Hospital. It cares for children from birth to 16 years who require high dependency or intensive care for neurosurgery, trauma, liver and general disorders. There are 16 beds (eight high dependency and eight intensive care), including two cubicles. King’s College Hospital is situated along Denmark Hill and Bessemer Road. The centre is on the third floor, Cheyne Wing in the Variety Club Children’s Hospital.

Accommodation
Every effort will be made to accommodate you if you wish to stay with your child during their admission. This will either be in one of the three parents’ rooms near to PICU or at Ronald McDonald House a short walk away.

Visiting
Parents can visit at any time during their child’s stay. Family and friends can visit between 10am-8pm. Children under five should not be brought into the PICU. We ask that visitors are limited to two people per bed at any one time. The unit has a parents’ room and kitchen facilities. Within King’s College Hospital there are a variety of shops, restaurants, cafes and a cash machine.

By tube and bus
Brixton – Victoria line, then bus route 35 or 45. Oval – Northern line, then bus 185. Elephant and Castle – Bakerloo line or Northern line (Bank branch), then bus routes 35, 40, 45, 68, 176 or 468.

By train
The nearest railway stations are Denmark Hill, a five minute walk and Loughborough Junction, a 12 minute walk.

By car
Car parking close to King’s College Hospital is very limited so we would advise you to come by public transport. The hospital car park is on Bessemer Road.

King’s College Hospital is not within the London Congestion Charge zone.
PICU is located in the main block of the hospital, on the third floor of Cheyne Wing in the Variety Club Children’s Hospital. It is at the end of the long corridor, next to Mountbatten Ward.
Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH)

The PICU at Great Ormond Street Hospital is also known as Seahorse Ward. It is a 19-bed unit with eight isolation cubicles. The PICU cares for children from birth to 16 years who require intensive care and support for several specialties including general surgery, oncology, neurology, metabolic, renal, spinal surgery, ENT, respiratory, cardiology and endocrinology.

Accommodation
When your child is in PICU we offer overnight accommodation for two parents, this may incur a £10 deposit, refundable on departure. Please leave other children with relatives or friends, but if this is not possible the hospital has two houses as part of the Sick Children’s Trust. These are free but also require a £10 deposit.

Visiting
Parents are encouraged to visit as often as possible and can stay as long as they wish except during the morning ward round, which is between 8.15am-9.30am. We also request that there are only three visitors at a time, one of whom must be a parent. There is a family lounge with toys and a TV, and a parents’ lounge further along the corridor where you can make hot drinks. Children must be supervised at all times.

By tube
Russell Square – Piccadilly line. Holborn – Piccadilly and Central lines. Both are within walking distance.

By bus
Various buses come within a 15 minute walk of the hospital, including route Nos. 7, 8, 17, 19, 25, 38, 45, 46, 55, 59, 68, 91, 168, 188, 242 and 243.

By train
Euston, King’s Cross and St Pancras stations are a 15 minute walk.

By car
Parking is very limited, there are two NCP car parks near the hospital. You can obtain a parking permit in some circumstances. Disabled badge holders can park in the immediate area as long as they are in residents parking bays, parking meters and pay and display bays, and designated disabled parking bays.

Remember the hospital is located within the London Congestion Charge zone. See page 24 for more information on how to pay.
Great Ormond Street Hospital

The PICU is also known as Seahorse Ward. It is on Level 4 of the Variety Club Building.
St Mary’s Hospital (SMH)

St Mary’s Hospital has an eight-bed PICU with two high dependency beds. The unit cares for children from birth to 16 years old with life threatening conditions including severe infections such as pneumonia and meningitis, trauma, airway problems, neurological conditions and patients who have undergone surgery.

Accommodation
Accommodation for parents wishing to stay overnight whilst their child is in PICU or the High Dependency Unit (HDU) can usually be provided in a nearby hotel. The hotel room will be paid for either by the hospital or the unit charity: COSMIC. The nurse in charge will give you a voucher for each night’s stay. If a hotel room is not available, we will find you a bed within the paediatric unit so that you will have somewhere to rest. Sleeping at your child’s bedside is not permitted; this is for your child’s safety should we need to attend to them quickly.

Visiting
Parents can visit 24 hours a day and there is a parents’ sitting room with kitchen facilities to make drinks and snacks.

By tube
Paddington – Bakerloo, Circle, District and Hammersmith & City lines are within easy walking distance.

By bus
Bus Nos. 7, 15, 23, 27 and 36 all stop on Praed Street.

By train
St Mary’s Hospital is within easy walking distance of Paddington mainline railway station.

By car
On-street car parking is very limited around the St Mary’s Hospital site. Metered parking is available on Praed Street and disabled parking is available on Winsland Street.

Remember the hospital is located within the London Congestion Charge zone. See page 24 for more information on how to pay.
The PICU is located at St Mary's Hospital on the seventh floor of the Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother (QEQM) building.
The Royal Brompton is a specialist heart and lung hospital. The PICU has 16-beds including four high dependency beds. The unit specialises in the care of children from birth to 16 years with a variety of cardiac and respiratory conditions and those requiring PICU post cardiothoracic surgery.

**Accommodation**
One parent or carer can usually be accommodated free of charge in our parents’ units. These are situated on level 6 in Sydney Wing and are a five minute walk away. As your child gets better you may be asked to move accommodation, the nurse looking after your child will give you more information.

**Visiting**
You can stay with your child whenever you want with the exception of the morning ward round between 7-8am. We ask that you are present when visitors come to see your child and that visitors are limited to a maximum of two people at a time. Grandparents and supporting adults can visit between 4-6pm every day and siblings are welcome to visit on Saturdays and Sundays between 2-4pm. There is a small sitting room on the unit with a kitchen where you can make drinks and heat food.

**By tube**
South Kensington – Circle, District and Piccadilly lines. The hospital is a five to 10 minute walk.

**By bus**
Bus Nos. 14 and 345 along Fulham Road stop immediately outside the Fulham Wing. Nos. 49 and 211 stop in Sydney Street. Nos. 11, 19, 22, 211, 49 and 319 all stop along King’s Road.

**By car**
There are very limited spaces available for disabled badge holders and parents of paediatric patients in front of Sydney Street. The local authority has parking spaces for disabled drivers in Cale Street, Foulis Terrace and Dudmaston Mews.

**The Royal Brompton Hospital is not located within the London Congestion Charge zone but you may drive through it to get to the hospital. See page 24 for more information on how to pay.**
The Royal Brompton Hospital
The PICU is found on the 4th floor of the Sydney Wing.
The Royal London Hospital (RLH)

The PICU cares for children from birth to 16 years. The PICU has six beds and provides paediatric intensive care and high dependency care. The unit has a special interest and experience in paediatric trauma. The nurses and doctors will talk through every aspect of your child’s care and treatment.

Accommodation
There are two rooms available within the unit for parental use. These are provided on a temporary basis. If you require ongoing accommodation we will transfer you to Stevenson House which is located several minutes away from the hospital. Stevenson House has private family bedrooms, bathrooms, equipped kitchens, communal dining area, playroom, and shared living room and laundry facilities.

Visiting
Parents are welcome to be with their child as often as they like. All other visitors will be restricted to between 11am-7pm with no more than three adults per bed. Children over five years are able to visit but must be accompanied by an adult. Parents and visitors will be asked to leave twice a day during the ward rounds.

By tube

By bus
Bus Nos. 25, 106, 205, 253, 254 stop outside or close to the hospital on Whitechapel Road, as well as night buses N25, N106 and N253. Nos 15, 115 and D3 stop close to the hospital on Commercial Road.

By train
The nearest railway station is London Liverpool Street.

By car
There is no public parking at the hospital but there is limited metered parking on Turner Street, Ashfield Street, Varden Street and Cavell Street. Parking is free on weekdays 5:30pm-8:30am and on weekends. There are a small number of parking bays for drivers with blue badges on Raven Row Street.

The Royal London Hospital is not located within the London Congestion Charge zone but you may drive through it to get to the hospital. See page 24 for more information on how to pay.
The Royal London Hospital
The PICU is found on Level 6.
The PICU is based at Southampton General Hospital. They are currently funded for 14 beds. The PICU admits children ranging from birth to 18 years with both medical and surgical problems. The unit also specialises in cardiology, neurology, spinal and neonatal surgery.

**Accommodation**
Parents can stay in the Ronald McDonald rooms opposite the PICU, or at the Ronald McDonald House which is onsite but a short distance from the PICU. The rooms are allocated on a daily basis and siblings are welcome to stay in the Ronald McDonald. The rooms are equipped with a kitchen, television lounge, waiting room and toilets. There are also play facilities for siblings.

**Visiting**
Please let staff know if it is your first time on the unit and a member of the team will show you around. Parents are welcome to stay with their child as often as they like. We ask that visitors are limited to two people at any one time. Within the hospital there are shops, restaurants and cafes and a cash machine.

**By bus**
First Southampton bus No.3 goes from Southampton railway station to Southampton General Hospital. Bus enquiries: 02380 224854 or 08700 106022.

**By train**
The nearest railway station is Southampton Central railway station.
National Rail enquiries: 03457 484950

**By car**
Southampton General Hospital has a main multi-storey car park that is off Tremona Road. When parking in the car park, collect your ticket on entry and keep it with you. Please pay for your ticket before you return to your vehicle. Pay machines are located on the ground floor by the entrance to the car park, and outside the main hospital entrance. Car park discount vouchers are available for PICU families, please ask your nurse for details.
The PICU is found on Level D of the Centre block.
Addenbrooke’s Hospital

The PICU is on Level 3 which is the first floor above the ground floor (level 2). The PICU is a 13-bed ward with nine intensive treatment and four high dependency beds caring for critically sick children. Many of the patients are admitted as emergencies, or transfers from the wards at Addenbrooke’s or other hospitals. However some of the patients are planned admissions following an operation.

Accommodation
Parents can stay overnight but not at the child’s bedside or in the parents’ room. We have accommodation nearby on the hospital site and family rooms available in the Sick Children’s Trust Acorn House. The accommodation is free, enabling you to be near your child. Please ask your child’s nurse for more information about accommodation, but please do not feel that you must stay as it is important that you allow yourself time to sleep whilst your child is in PICU.

Visiting
Parents are welcome to visit their child at any time, but will be asked to leave the unit during ward rounds to maintain confidentiality. Visitors are welcome with parents’ permission but it is requested that there are only two visitors per bedside. A door entry system is provided as security. There are shops, restaurants and a bank in the hospital.

By train
Cambridge railway station is about two miles from Addenbrooke’s Hospital. From here you can take a Citi 1 or Citi 7 bus to Addenbrooke’s. There is also a taxi rank outside the station.

By bus
Nearly 60 buses an hour serve Addenbrooke’s on weekdays. For full information please use the county council website or contact Traveline Bus Information on 0871 200 2233.

By car
Parking space are available, but very limited so visitors are encouraged to come by public transport. Car parks are pay on exit. Please ensure that you have change for the ticket machines.
For PICU: From the main hospital entrance: Turn right as you enter through the revolving door, turn left and walk past the hairdresser, across the corridor to the C and D ward lifts. Take the lift to level 3. As you exit the lift, turn left, then left again and C3 is in front of you.
Further Information

London Congestion Charge
If you are driving in the centre of London please be aware that the Congestion Charge operates from 7am-6pm, Monday to Friday, excluding public holidays.
To pay the Congestion Charge or for more information ring 0343 222 2222 Monday to Friday 8am-10pm; Saturday 9am-3pm; Sunday closed; or visit www.tfl.gov.uk

Don’t forget to pay the Charge on the day of travel. You are not able to reclaim Congestion Charge.

Smoking
Please be aware that all hospitals now have a no smoking policy. Smoking is not permitted anywhere in the hospital grounds and this includes the use of e-cigarettes.

Parents’ feedback
We value any feedback about your child’s transfer by the South Thames Retrieval Service.

Please send your comments to the STRS Retrieval Co-ordinator by email: PICUSTRSRetrievalLeads@gstt.nhs.uk

This is a helpful reminder of some things you may need while in hospital, which either you or your partner/relative can bring.

☐ Money/bank card
☐ Mobile phone & charger
☐ Toothbrush & toothpaste
☐ Shampoo & conditioner
☐ Toiletries
☐ Hairbrush
☐ Clothes for yourself
☐ Underwear for your child
☐ Socks and pyjamas
☐ Nappies
☐ Dummy (if used)
☐ Your child’s favourite toy
☐ Glasses/contact lenses
☐ Medication for your child
☐ Medication for self/partner
☐ Snacks

Don’t forget.
☐ Someone to feed the pet(s)
☐ Someone to water the plants
☐ Pay the London Congestion Charge (see opposite)