

Patient information

Information for parents and carers

Welcome to the Children's Assessment Unit (CAU)

To reduce the spread of infection, we are currently restricting visitors to our hospital. This includes our CAU. Only one parent or carer should accompany their baby / child. Please do not bring siblings, other family or friends.

Parents / carers are asked to wear a face mask at all times whilst they are in CAU. If you do not have one these can be provided on arrival.

What to expect

CAU cares for unwell children from birth up until their 16th birthday who are referred for medical assessment by a GP, the Emergency Department (ED), midwife or health visitor and children who have a special arrangement in place called 'open access'.

When you arrive on CAU the Ward Clerk or member of the nursing staff will check we have up to date information about your child, e.g. address, telephone number and who has parental responsibility. When you have 'checked in' with the staff member will normally ask you to sit in a waiting room unless directed otherwise. Your baby/child will not usually be allocated a bed unless a decision is made to admit them to Ward F1, the children's inpatient ward.

If you have been asked to wait in a specific area / seat it is important that you and your baby / child stay in that area unless asked to move areas by a member of staff. This is to observe our social distancing and infection prevention guidelines and to keep you and your baby / child as safe as we possibly can during your visit.

Within 15 minutes of arrival we aim to carry out a full set of observations on your child including temperature, heart rate, respiratory rate and oxygen saturation levels.

Most babies / children are also weighed and have their height taken.

Depending on our assessment of your baby / child's condition we may ask you to start treatments/investigations for example obtain a urine sample or give your child fluids. They will then be seen by a medical professional normally within one hour of arrival. Babies and children are seen according to their clinical need not in order of arrival time.

Our medical team consists of junior doctors, consultant paediatricians, children's advanced nurse practitioners and physicians associates. We also have students in all specialties.

After your baby / child is assessed

When your baby / child has been seen by the medical team, your baby / child will be discharged home as soon as it is safe to do so. If your baby / child needs a period of observation or they need to stay overnight, then they will be admitted to Ward F1.

You can expect your child to be reviewed at regular intervals during their stay to ensure they are receiving the optimum treatment for their condition.

CAU opening times and visiting

CAU is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

We currently do not allow any visiting on CAU.

To prevent the spread of infection we ask that after you have 'checked in' you refrain from coming / going unless absolutely necessary so please remember to bring everything with you that you may need. You are politely reminded that West Suffolk Hospital grounds are a no smoking site.

Food and drink

Children being assessed and their parent / carer in CAU will be offered a cold meal (sandwich) at mealtimes. If you would like a hot drink, please ask a member of staff who will make one for you. There is currently no visitor access to the Time Out restaurant. If possible, please bring snacks with you for you and your baby / child. Water and squash are always provided. Please bring any formula milk your baby

may require with you, as we only keep a very limited supply which does not include follow-on or stage 2 milks.

Toys

To reduce the spread of infection we currently have a very limited resource of washable toys available so if possible, please bring your baby / child's favorite toy with them including any comforter / dummy that will help ease their stay with us.

Going home

When your baby / child is discharged, we will supply any medicines you need to take with you. Please note we do not routinely supply paracetamol or ibuprofen for discharge and would expect you to supply your own if your baby / child requires these when you get home. If you would prefer to go home and come back to collect your baby / child's medications, please let us know. Alternatively, if you have a car on site and would prefer to wait in the car for your medications to be prepared that is also usually possible.

Further advice

If you are worried or need advice you can call the following departments who can best advise you on what to do:

- If you have been given 'Open Access' please call the number on the form you were given
- Your own GP / GP out of hours
- NHS 111