

Eliminating Mixed Sex Accommodation

Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust

This leaflet has been designed to give you important information about your admission to hospital, and to answer any queries that you may have.



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Information for patients and visitors

Delivering Single Sex Accommodation

Every patient has the right to receive high quality care that is safe, effective and respects their privacy and dignity. The Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust is committed to providing every patient with the same sex accommodation, because it helps safeguard their privacy and dignity when they are often at their most vulnerable.

The Trust is fully compliant with single sex accommodation requirements. We continually monitor all areas of compliance.

Sharing with members of the opposite sex will only happen by exceptional need (for example where patients need specialist equipment or treatment). Even in such circumstances it is our stated intent to minimise the chance of this occurring.

Operational guidance has been produced to help staff know about the requirements of single sex accommodation. This document also outlines procedures to be followed when a potential breach of compliance occurs.

The Trust is committed to dignified care. We will continue to provide this and will work to ensure that patients are treated with dignity and respect at all times.

What does this mean for patients?

The room where your bed is will only have patients of the same sex as you.

Your toilet and bathroom facilities will be just for your gender, and where possible, will be close to your bed area.

It is possible that there will be both men and women patients in your ward but they will not share your sleeping area. You may have to cross a ward corridor to reach your

bathroom, but you will not have to walk through opposite sex areas.

You may have to share some communal space, such as waiting rooms, day rooms or dining rooms and it is very likely that you will see both men and women patients as you move around the hospital (e.g. on your way to x-ray or to the operating theatre).

It is probable that visitors of the opposite gender will come into the room where your bed is, and this may include patients visiting each other.

To protect your privacy and dignity if you require assistance with your own personal hygiene needs, visitors and relatives will be asked to leave the immediate clinical environment.

It is almost certain that both male and female nurses, doctors and other staff will come into your bed area.

If you need help to use the toilet or take a bath (e.g. you need a hoist or special bath) then you may be taken to a unisex bathroom used by both men and women, but a member of staff will be with you, and other patients will not be in the bathroom at the same time.

The NHS will not turn patients away just because a “same sex” bed is not immediately available.

What is mixed-sex accommodation?

Mixed-sex accommodation is where patients of the opposite sex have to share sleeping accommodation, toilet or washing facilities.



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What is same-sex accommodation?

Same sex accommodation means:

- A ward that is occupied only by men or only by women, and has its own toilet and washing facilities
- Single rooms with same-sex toilet and washing facilities (preferably en-suite)
- Multi-bed bays or rooms occupied solely by men or by women, with their own same-sex toilet and washing facilities

You shouldn't have to pass through opposite-sex accommodation, toilets or washing facilities to gain access to your own facilities or to access other hospital services.

What if I am placed in mixed sex accommodation?

If men and women have to be put in the same accommodation, they will be separated as soon as possible and until that time, staff will take extra care to safeguard privacy, particularly in sleeping and sanitary areas.

You, your relatives and your carers will be informed why the situation has occurred, what is being done to address it and who is dealing with it. You should be told when it is likely to be resolved.

If you find yourself in this situation, you are able to make a complaint. Please speak to a member of staff and they will help you.

Can I still expect the same-sex accommodation during a pandemic?

There are no exemptions from the need to provide high standards of privacy and dignity. This applies to all areas, regardless of the admission route (planned or emergency admission) or the local pressure on beds.

However, there will be some exceptional circumstances in which providing timely, effective care for the patient will take priority over providing same-sex accommodation.

The NHS will never turn someone away because a bed in same-sex accommodation is not available.

What about units for children and young people?

The need to ensure high standards of privacy and dignity applies to all areas of the hospital, including children's and young people's units.

However, lots of children and young people will be more concerned about sharing with people of their own age than about whether they're sharing with members of the opposite sex.

Children and young people should always be given the choice and instances of mixed-sex accommodation should be in the best interests of all the patients sharing.

Toilet and washing facilities for children and young people do not need to be the same-sex, as long as they accommodate only one patient at a time and can be locked by the patient (with an external override for emergency use only). Shared toilet and washing facilities should be same sex.

What should I expect in a young adult unit?

Young adult units provide specialized care for adults ages 16-25. Standards of privacy and dignity apply for this age group as for children and young people above.



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Why can't we just have same-sex wards?

Patients often benefit from being treated in the same area as other patients with similar clinical condition, so that they can be treated by the appropriate specialist staff. This means that wards are often arranged by specialty rather than gender.

However, men and women can still be segregated if they are placed in separate bays within the ward. This allows patients to preserve their privacy and dignity, while accessing the highest standards of care.

Will access to treatment be delayed due to the same-sex accommodation initiative?

The aim is to provide rapid, high-quality care in the best possible environment, without having to choose between speed and quality.

The NHS is committed to maintaining its progress in improving quality of care. On the whole, patients accept that sometimes the need to be admitted and treated will take precedence over segregation.

Will I be turned away if no same-sex accommodation is available?

No. The priority will always be to admit patients and treat them promptly. But staff will be expected to take extra care to safeguard your privacy and to move you into same-sex accommodation as quickly as possible.

Will the staff looking after me be of the same-sex as me?

You will be cared for and treated by the staff with the most appropriate skills and training, and not necessarily by someone of the

same-sex. If you have concerns, talk to the staff providing your care.

What about visitors?

During visiting hours, visitors of both sexes may be present within the ward. It is important that patients are able to spend time with friends and family while in hospital.

Is mixed-sex accommodation ok?

Most people accept that providing timely, effective patient care is sometimes more important than providing same-sex accommodation.

This may include situations where patients need urgent, highly specialized or high-tech care. When mixing occurs, it must be in the interest of all the patients affected.

How to complain about hospital accommodation

If you are unhappy with your location on a ward, report your situation to a member of staff within the ward or ask to speak to the Matron who will do their best to resolve the situation. Alternatively, you may contact the local Patients Advice and Liaison Services (PALS) or tell a family member or carer.

For general complaints about a hospital, follow the NHS complaints procedure.

What is a bay?

A bay is a sleeping area that is enclosed on three sides with solid walls. The fourth side may be open or partially closed. Bays typically consist of four to six beds each.

A hospital ward can be made up of a number of bays. This is the type of accommodation most patients will see in modern English hospitals.



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The use of curtains between bays is not acceptable as they offer little privacy and do not provide a safe and secure environment.

References

Reference sources used in the development of this leaflet:

NHS Choices

<http://www.nhs.uk/choiceinthenhs/rightsandp/edges/samesexaccommodation>

For further information, please dial the hospital switchboard and ask to speak to a Matron

Diana Princess of Wales Hospital, Grimsby
Tel: 01472 874111

Scunthorpe General Hospital
Tel: 01724 282282

Goole and District Hospital
Tel: 01405 720720

Concerns and Queries

If you have any concerns / queries about any of the services offered by the Trust, in the first instance, please speak to the person providing your care.

For Diana, Princess of Wales Hospital

Alternatively you can contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on (01472) 875403 or at the PALS office which is situated near the main entrance.

For Scunthorpe General Hospital

Alternatively you can contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on (01724) 290132 or at the PALS office which is situated on C Floor.

Alternatively you can email:
nlg-tr.PALS@nhs.net

Confidentiality

Information on NHS patients is collected in a variety of ways and for a variety of reasons (e.g. providing care and treatment, managing and planning the NHS, training and educating staff, research etc.).

Everyone working for the NHS has a legal duty to keep information about you confidential. Information will only ever be shared with people who have a genuine need for it (e.g. your GP or other professionals from whom you have been receiving care) or if the law requires it, for example, to notify a birth.

Please be assured however that anyone who receives information from us is also under a legal duty to keep it confidential.

Zero Tolerance - Violent, Threatening and Abusive Behaviour

The Trust and its staff are committed to providing high quality care to patients within the department. However, we wish to advise all patients / visitors that the following inappropriate behaviour will not be tolerated:

- Swearing
- Threatening / abusive behaviour
- Verbal / physical abuse

The Trust reserves the right to withdraw from treating patients whom are threatening / abusive / violent and ensuring the removal of those persons from the premises.

All acts of criminal violence and aggression will be notified to the Police immediately.



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Risk Management Strategy

The Trust welcomes comments and suggestions from patients and visitors that could help to reduce risk.

Perhaps you have experienced something whilst in hospital, whilst attending as an outpatient or as a visitor and you felt at risk.

Please tell a member of staff on the ward or in the department you are attending / visiting.

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Moving & Handling

The Trust operates a Minimal Lifting Policy, which in essence means patients are only ever lifted by nursing staff in an emergency situation.

Patients are always encouraged to help themselves as much as possible when mobilising, and if unable to do so, equipment may be used to assist in their safe transfer.

If you have any questions regarding moving and handling of patients within the Trust, please speak to a member of staff in the ward or department you are visiting.

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Diana Princess of Wales Hospital
Scarcho Road
Grimsby
01472 874111

Scunthorpe General Hospital
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