



York and Scarborough  
Teaching Hospitals  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Enhanced Care and Observation

Information for patients, relatives and carers

① For more information, please contact the ward staff

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# Introduction

Admission into hospital can be disorientating and distressing for some older adults, particularly those who experience memory problems. Additionally, people within all age groups may display confusion, agitation or be distressed as a result of their physical or mental health illness.

This behaviour may be out of character and may pose a risk to themselves and others around them. Following an assessment, a patient may require an increased level of observation in order to maintain their safety and minimise the risk of harm occurring whilst in Hospital.

## What is observation?

Observation is the welfare check carried out by staff on the ward. Reasons why a person may need an increased level of observation include:

Keeping confused or vulnerable people safe

To help prevent a person from harming themselves or others inadvertently or deliberately

The least restrictive method of observation will be commenced if enhanced care and observation is required and this level is identified through a risk assessment tool. This tool may highlight that a mental capacity assessment may be required which could lead to a deprivation of liberty (DOLs) order being applied for and implemented.

A DOL's is required when a patient does not have the capacity to make the decision to accept treatment and stay in hospital. This means a patient will not be free to leave the ward and may have further restrictions placed upon them that are deemed to be in their best interest. If this measure is required, this will be discussed with the patient's next of kin.

Enhanced care and observation is a supportive and positive opportunity to talk to and engage patients, whilst maintaining their safety and is not meant to be restrictive.

## **The four levels of observation**

### **1. General observation**

This is the minimal observation for all people admitted to hospital. Staff will check on a patient regularly but they don't have to be able to see them all the time. This is the most common type of observation.

### **2. Intermittent enhanced observation**

This observation is used when staff are concerned there is an element of risk, either to the patient or to others. Staff will check patients at specified intervals over the 24 hour period.

### **3. Cohort enhanced observation**

This level of observation will be used if there's a moderate risk that a patient could hurt themselves or another person at any time. Staff will keep these patients within eyesight, this may include when using toilet and bathroom facilities. This observation is likely to take place in a room with a group of other patients with similar observation needs.

### **4. Continuous enhanced observation**

This observation means that a member of staff will stay within arm's length of a patient at all times. This includes when using the toilet and bathroom facilities. This observation will be used if a patient is likely to hurt themselves or another person. If necessary, anything that could be used to cause harm will be removed from the patient.

# **What you can expect from staff**

You can expect that nurses and other staff members involved in providing patient enhanced care and observation will be caring and compassionate. They will be briefed about any specific needs or areas where particular care should be taken. If an incident does occur, such as a patient falls, then you can expect staff to inform the patient's next of kin as soon as possible, at a time that is appropriate and provide details of the incident and what has happened following it.

As a carer or member of the family, you may be asked to complete a booklet named 'What Matters To Me' which will give staff members detailed information of a patient's likes and dislikes and what is important to them. This will be used when care planning to ensure patients are treated individually and that activities, food and drink are aligned to their preferences.

Please be assured that staff will review the enhanced observation level daily and will keep the patient, family and carer updated regarding progression; whether that be a required increase in enhanced observation, or a reduction and ending to this intervention when safe to do so.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Nurse in Charge if you have any questions or concerns regarding patient enhanced care and observation.

## **Tell us what you think of this leaflet**

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact:  
please contact: Jennifer Lee, Matron, York Hospital,  
01904 721162.

## **Teaching, training and research**

Our Trust is committed to teaching, training and research to support the development of health and healthcare in our community. Healthcare students may observe consultations for this purpose. You can opt out if you do not want students to observe. We may also ask you if you would like to be involved in our research.

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

PALS offers impartial advice and assistance to patients, their relatives, friends and carers. We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email [pals@york.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@york.nhs.uk).

An answer phone is available out of hours.

# Leaflets in alternative languages or formats

Please telephone or email if you require this information in a different language or format, for example Braille, large print or audio.

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或發電

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