

Who can I speak to if I want to know more?

Please speak to any member of ward staff if you have any questions about same sex accommodation or other aspects of privacy and dignity.

I'm unhappy about my care, what should I do?

If you are unhappy about any aspect of your care you can speak to the ward sister, nurse in charge or matron. Please don't be nervous about raising concerns - we are here to listen and respond.

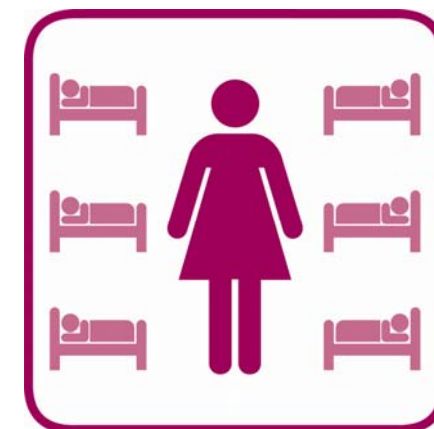
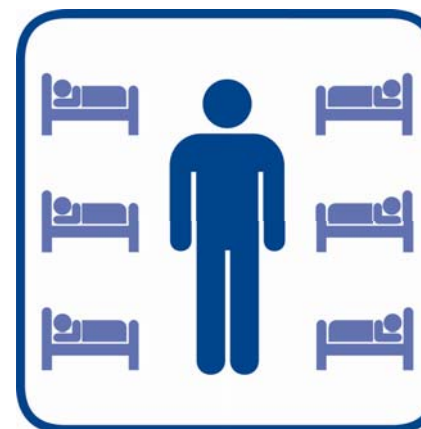
If you feel your concerns have not been resolved by ward staff then you can speak to the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) who will advise and help you.

The PALS contact number is 01234 795814 or 01234 355122, internal extensions 4624/ 4628/ 4629 or email pals@bedfordhospital.nhs.uk

Other information

This leaflet is available in different languages or formats on request.

Nursing and Patient Services Same-Sex Accommodation Your Privacy, Our Responsibility



This leaflet explains how we work to safeguard your privacy and dignity during your hospital stay by providing you with sleeping, toilet and washing facilities that you share only with patients of the same sex.

We hope you find this leaflet useful. Please ask any member of staff for further information or explanation if needed.

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What does same-sex accommodation mean?

Same-sex accommodation means only patients of the same sex (i.e. men or women) will sleep in the same bay or ward and use the same washing and toilet facilities.

Some of the hospital's wards are designated as same-sex only, which means the whole ward will contain only men or women.

In other wards men and women will be separated into bays (separate areas containing a number of beds). These bays will have their own washing and toilet facilities which will be designated as women or men only. This means, for example, that a female patient will not need to walk past a male patient bay to get to a toilet or bathroom.

Why does the hospital have same-sex accommodation?

The hospital keeps male and female patients apart to maintain the privacy and dignity of patients, which is something patients tell us is extremely important to them.

Many patients feel vulnerable while in hospital and sharing sleeping, toilet and washing facilities can make patients feel distressed or anxious.

We have invested almost £500,000 in improving patient facilities to make sure we can offer our patients same-sex accommodation and facilities.

The Government also requires all hospitals to offer same-sex accommodation and facilities to patients by April 2010. We meet all national requirements and have gone a step further by improving our signage and information on same-sex accommodation to ensure our patients understand what facilities are available and where and how to access them.

Will I always be in same-sex accommodation?

The majority of patients will always be in same-sex accommodation. However, there will be occasions when it is not possible to care for patients in a same-sex environment.

This is most likely to happen if a patient needs emergency or specialist care. In that situation clinical (medical) need will take priority over keeping the patient apart from other patients of the opposite sex. This is to make sure patients receive appropriate treatment as quickly as possible.

If you are placed in a bay with patients of the opposite sex, a nurse or doctor will explain why that has been necessary and make every effort to maintain your privacy whilst in that area. You will be moved to a same-sex area as soon as it is safe to do so.

If you feel you do not understand why you have been placed in a mixed-sex environment, or you are anxious about being in a mixed-sex area, please speak to a member of ward staff.

What you can expect during your hospital stay

1. That you will be addressed politely and respectfully, and will be called by your preferred name (please make sure you tell staff what you prefer to be called);
2. That you will be cared for in the most appropriate place according to your clinical (medical) needs;
3. That, except in times of clinical need, you will be cared for in a same-sex bay or ward;
4. That you will only share toilet and bathroom facilities with patients of the same sex;
5. That you will be listened to if you express concerns or ask questions of nursing or ward staff, and that staff will do their best to resolve those concerns;
6. That you may ask to be cared for by a nurse of the same sex and that every effort will be made to meet your request.