



# The MKWay

Our values and the fundamentals  
of care in practice





## A message from our CEO

A warm welcome and thank you for taking the time to read this vital guide on how we put our values and fundamentals of care into practice here at MKUH.

I'm sure you are all familiar with our MKWay values, known as the four c's:

- We**CARE**
- We**COMMUNICATE**
- We**COLLABORATE**
- We**CONTRIBUTE**

They were developed by you, the people who make this organisation a fantastic place to work and a safe, caring environment for all our patients and visitors.

This guide has been created to remind you all about the most important elements of what we do, and acts as a reminder to ensure we all work within these parameters during every shift.

Much of what is covered here can be called the fundamentals of care, because if we get these essentials right, they provide the foundation for everything that we do to ensure our patients and their families receive consistently high-quality, safe care.

Yours sincerely

**Professor Joe Harrison**  
**Chief Executive**

# The MKWay

## Our Purpose

We are here to provide safe, effective care and a positive experience of hospital services for the people of Milton Keynes and surrounding areas, serving one of the fastest growing populations in the country.

## Our Vision

We aim to be an outstanding acute hospital at the heart of a health and care system, working effectively for all users.

## Our Strategy

We will achieve our vision through five key priorities which will help us to be an effective part of a health and care system that works well together.



## Our Objectives

Underpinning our strategy are the objectives that describe what we aim to deliver. We have 10 strategic objectives, three of which are central to providing excellent care:

- Improving patient safety
- Improving patient experience
- Improving clinical effectiveness

## The remaining seven are:

- Providing access to timely care
- Working with partners in MK to improve health and care
- Increasing access to clinical and research trials
- Spending money in the best way to look after our patients
- Recruiting the best staff to care for our patients
- Expanding and improving our estate
- Investing in the future of the hospital

## Our Values

These values have been established through collaboration with many staff groups to reflect what the organisation stands for and how we expect our teams to behave. These values inform and influence the way every one of us does our job every day.

### WeCARE

We deliver safe, effective and high-quality care for every patient. We treat everyone who uses our services, and their families, friends, and carers, with dignity, respect, and compassion; and we treat each other as we would wish to be treated ourselves.



### WeCOMMUNICATE

We say #hellomynameis; we keep patients informed, involved, and engaged in their treatment and care; and each other informed about what's happening in our hospital. We know we can speak up to make sure our hospital is safe and our patients are well cared for.



### WeCOLLABORATE

We are #TeamMKUH. We work together and with GPs, primary care, community care, social care, mental health providers, and other hospitals to deliver great care and services for people in Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, and beyond.



### WeCONTRIBUTE

We develop goals and objectives in support of the hospital's vision and strategy. We are willing to play our part to make our hospital the best it can be. We acknowledge and share good practice and we learn from others so that we keep improving the care and services we provide.



# Key fundamental standards of care

The fundamental standards are the standards which we must achieve for every single patient.

## Person-centered care



All patients must have care or treatment that is tailored to them, based on an assessment of their needs and preferences.

This should take into account a patient's capacity and ability to consent. They should also be involved in the planning, management, and review of their care and treatment.

## Safety



Patients must be given safe care and treatment and must not be put at risk of harm that can be avoided. This means that:

- Any risks to health and safety must be assessed during any care or treatment.
- Staff must have the qualifications, competence, skills and experience to keep patients safe.

## Duty of candour - being open and transparent

Staff have a professional and legal duty to be open and honest with patients and their families when something goes wrong with their treatment or care. Especially if it causes, or has the potential to cause, harm or distress:

- Should something go wrong, patients must be told what has happened, provided support, and apologised to.
- Saying sorry is always the right thing to do, as it acknowledges that something could have gone better.
- Individuals should receive an apology in person - saying sorry is not admitting fault or liability.



## Dignity and respect

Patients must be treated with dignity and respect at all times while receiving care and treatment. This includes making sure that:

- Patients have privacy when they need and want it.
- We see patients as individuals and understand that everyone has different needs.

## Safeguarding from abuse



Patients must be protected from any form of abuse or improper treatment while receiving care. This includes:

- Neglect
- Degrading treatment
- Unnecessary or disproportionate restraint
- Inappropriate limits on freedom

All patients should be provided equality of access and opportunity. Some will require additional support, or may need their care approached in a different manner to ensure their individual needs are met.

Staff should know how to raise a concern, either by raising a safeguarding alert, or by speaking to the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian.

## Consent

Those you are caring for (or anybody legally acting on their behalf) must give their consent before any care or treatment is given to them:

- Information about the proposed care and treatment must be provided in a way that they can understand. This should include information about risks, complications, and any alternatives.
- This information should be provided by a member of staff with the necessary knowledge and understanding of the care and treatment. This is so that they can answer any questions to help the person to consent.

**The following sections in this document expand on how to get the basics right so that we can deliver excellent care to our patients.**

# Create the right impression

We only have one chance to make a first impression. People form an opinion in seconds. Our patients and visitors will base this impression on the appearance of the car parks as they arrive, the entrances, and the corridors.

No matter how busy you might be, taking the time to be polite and helpful – even when busy – makes a big difference. Almost all patients and visitors are a little anxious when they arrive on site.

People will also form an opinion of us and our colleagues – the appearance of our uniform, our body language, and how welcoming we are.

## Uniform

All employees must wear a visible, Trust-approved name badge stating their name and job title. A photographic identification badge must be carried/worn at all times.

Professional organisation or Trade Union and/or approved Trust or national campaigns badges may be worn. Badges or pins must not be attached to your lanyards.

In clinical areas, all staff must be bare below the elbows. However, a plain band ring or wristband of religious significance may be worn.

Staff in theatre scrubs should remove hats and face masks before leaving the area. Green coveralls should be worn over scrubs and staff should ensure they change into appropriate outdoor footwear when leaving this clinical space.

### In brief

- Ensure your area is clean, calm, and free from clutter.
- Welcome people in a professional, polite, and confident manner.
  - Treat everyone with dignity and respect.



## Maintaining a clean hospital

All NHS organisations are required to ensure that services are provided in a clean and safe environment, fit for purpose and based on national best practice. We can all contribute to making sure our hospital meets these standards. All staff are responsible for promoting a positive health and safety culture within their own areas.

It is everyone's responsibility to ensure that general areas are clean and safe for visitors, patients, and colleagues.

This may mean:

- decluttering
- ensuring that equipment is working and has been appropriately tested
- ensuring that stores are locked away and can't be tampered with

If the ward isn't clean, make sure this is escalated and it doesn't become an accepted standard.

If there are any maintenance problems, concerns, or environmental issues, make sure these are escalated so that they can be fixed as soon as possible. For example, if there are spillages that need the attention of a cleaner, please call **ext. 86697** or **bleep 1579**. For maintenance issues, contact the Estates team on **ext. 86109** or through the estates portal: **bit.ly/3GPNSfr**.

If you have rubbish that needs to be disposed of, please contact the 'Dump the Junk' service on **ext. 86035** to arrange for removal and recycling.

**Please note:** bodily fluid spillages on wards and clinical areas are not the Domestic Team's responsibility. Raw sewage and other toilet-related floods should be handled separately by Estates and the fault repaired before Domestics can clean the area.

### In brief

- The standard we walk past is the standard we accept.
  - See it, fix it.

# Practice safe staffing



Optimum levels of staffing and skill mix across all services need to be sustained around the clock to maintain good patient care and staff wellbeing. All staffing levels are displayed. Staff must be able to explain what these levels are in their area or department.

If the staffing levels, skill mix, patient capacity or dependency changes for any reason, staff should be clear about the escalation process, follow a risk-assessment (e.g. Tendable), manage, and escalate the situation if required.

All temporary staff should be inducted into the ward or department when they arrive.

Teams should ensure all staff are orientated into the area before starting a shift.

## **In brief**

- Ensure staffing levels are displayed.
- Ensure that you escalate when capacity or dependency changes.
- Ensure all staff are orientated when they start, including temporary staff.

# Safe and effective handover

Always ensure that the patient's information is kept confidential to protect their privacy and dignity.

There are a number of different types of handover:

- Bedside (safety) huddles
- Safety handovers
- Confidential office handovers
- MDT (multidisciplinary team) handovers including patients and relatives
- Hospital at Night
- Morning medical handovers



## eCare in handover

Best practice is to use SBAR (Situation, Background, Assessment, Recommendation) in eCARE. When staff handover a patient, a member of the nursing team should ensure that they complete the nursing handover note using SBAR on eCARE. The new ward receiving the patient will ensure that the bedboard is updated and that handover takes place while viewing the notes on eCARE.

### In brief

- Ensure confidentiality at every handover.
- Always use a recommended, documented, and formal handover approach.
  - Use recognised models (e.g. SBAR).

# eCARE

Our electronic patient record system eCARE helps us to provide safer and more effective treatment for our patients. All staff who need to view a patient's record will have received the necessary and relevant training. If you need help, you can contact the IT service desk on ext. 87000.

The following tips will help ensure the correct and safe use of eCARE:

- Remember your smartcard and sign in using your unique passcode. If you need to unlock your smartcard, call IT on ext. 87000.
- Always sign out when you have finished, and critically, do not leave your smartcard on a workstation.
- Never share your smartcard, you are responsible for all actions carried out on your smartcard.
- Work in real time and update records as you deliver the care, do not delay inputting details.
- Follow the agreed medicine administration process e.g., scan patient wristbands on every drug round to ensure correct identification.
- Ensure you send specimens to the lab correctly labelled and in designated containers.
- Allocate the patient to the right clinician by consulting the rota.
- Finalise and send the discharge summary and GP letter when discharging the patient.

## **In brief**

- Do not leave your smartcard unattended.
  - Do not share log ins or smartcards.
- Do not leave patient information displayed on a computer screen.

# Keeping documents updated and secure

Good record keeping is an integral part of good healthcare practice and a key fundamental to the provision of safe and effective care.

Good record keeping at individual, team, or organisation levels, has many key functions including:

- Helping to demonstrate accountability
- Showing how decisions on patient care were made
- Supporting effective clinical judgements and decisions
- Making continuity of care easier
- Providing documentary evidence of services delivered
- Promoting better communication and sharing of information between members of the multi-professional healthcare team

Every staff member should ensure that patient assessments – most of which are mandatory – are completed in full. These help to provide a full picture of care for the patient.

## Maintaining confidentiality

- Never discuss the people in your care in places where you might be overheard.
- Never leave records – paper or electronic – where they might be seen by unauthorised staff or members of the public.
- It is every staff member's responsibility to ensure that all documentation is kept confidential, secure, up-to-date, and available when required.

### In brief

- Ensure all assessments are completed when required.
  - Store any residual paper records or charts securely.



# Manage medicines safely

All medicines and related material must be managed correctly and safely by all staff.

Keep these must-dos in mind:

- Keep medicine cupboards and drug fridges locked.
- Medicine trolleys should be locked and secured to a wall.
- Keep CD (controlled drugs) cupboards locked.
- Store CD stationery securely.
- Store all scripts securely.
- Store IP prescription charts securely.
- Store medicine awaiting return to pharmacy securely.
- Ensure no medicines are left on worktops. They must be locked away securely.
- Ensure bedside lockers are locked and that all patients' medication is stored in the designated lockers.



## Ward teams must ensure the following:

### Fridges

- Monitor and record the maximum/minimum and current temperatures of all fridges every day.
- Monitor and record the maximum/minimum and current temperature of the medicine's storage area each day.
- Take action to address any fridges where temperatures breach below 2°C and above 8°C.
- Ensure that drugs fridges are not overstocked and that medications are not stored too close to the inside door.

### CDs

- It is a requirement that authorised signatory list for CDs are up-to-date.
- Check the CD balance and ensure that any errors or discrepancies are reported and investigated.

### Storage

- Ensure there are no expired medications in the stock cupboard.
- Ensure that IV fluids are stored correctly.
- Check that there are no loose strips of medication in the stock cupboard or WoWs.
- All administration or prescriptions errors and omissions must be reported on Radar.
- All staff who are either administering or prescribing have the appropriate knowledge and skills.

#### In brief

- All medicines should be locked away securely.
- Store medicine stationery, scripts, and prescription charts securely.
  - Report any omissions or errors on Radar.



# Reporting incidents and risks

There is a legal obligation to report all incidents, accidents, near-misses, dangerous occurrences, and workplace-acquired diseases and infections.

It is essential that incidents are reported because:

- Actions can be taken to prevent recurrence.
- Lessons can be learned and then shared across the organisation.
- Patterns and trends can be identified so that proactive action can be taken to address the issues before they arise in the future.
- Information from Radar can feed into hazard identification, risk assessment and risk management processes for the Trust.

Radar is the hospital's online system for reporting incidents. It provides a platform to report any incident which has or could have the potential to cause harm to patients, staff, visitors, or contractors. All incidents that are submitted to Radar are fully investigated.

If you haven't already done so, please make yourself aware of how to use the Radar system and report incidents.

After investigation, feedback is given to the relevant area, which can be used to discuss post-incident plans of action and lessons learned.

If you identify a risk (something that might happen rather than something that already has), record it in the Radar risk registers.

All areas should undertake proactive risk assessments, including health and safety assessments. Information and training on how to do this is available by contacting the Risk Team on ext. 85099

## In brief

- High-performing organisations have high levels of reporting and low levels of harm.
  - Ensure you know how to escalate a concern.
- Attend team meetings and read emails to receive feedback from incidents.

# Quality improvement in your area



As an organisation we have lots of reasons to celebrate success. There are many examples of staff making improvements to help patients have a better experience, a smoother pathway, or to help staff deliver safer and more effective care.

We want to demonstrate this great work to our visitors, so take some time now to think about changes that have happened in your work area that have improved a patient's journey. It might go something like this:

- The beginning – what was the problem and why was change needed?
- The middle – what did you do to resolve the problem? Who was involved and how did you make the change?
- The end – what was the result and what was the positive difference?

We have a Quality Improvement (QI) Lead who can help with any queries or support you might need. Contact [mkqi@mkuh.nhs.uk](mailto:mkqi@mkuh.nhs.uk) for support.

## In brief

- Celebrate your successes.
- Know the quality improvement story in your ward or department – what was needed, what did you do, what was the result?

# Keep learning, keep growing

Safe care depends on having a proactive and positive culture of safety based on openness and honesty. This is a culture in which concerns are listened to, incidents are investigated and reported thoroughly, and lessons are learned to continually identify good practices.

We are committed to supporting staff to look for opportunities to improve every aspect of our work. You can get involved by:

- Knowing how lessons from complaints or incidents are shared and learned from in your team.
- Ensuring you celebrate success when things are done well.
- Constantly striving to improve the way that we work.
- Ensuring staff feel empowered to carry out their role within their sphere of influence, responsibility, and competence.
- Practising a culture of openness, so that if any staff are unsure about a task, they feel confident to ask for help.
- Encouraging every member of your team to seek new learning and professional development opportunities.

## Mandatory training

It is everyone's individual responsibility to ensure that they are up-to-date with this must-do training. Many modules can now be completed online for ease of access and our Learning and Development team ensure that reminders are sent in good time.

## Appraisals

It is everyone's individual responsibility to ensure that they have an appraisal so that learning and development needs of staff can be identified.

### In brief

- Understand when things go wrong and use this as a platform to improve.
  - Ensure your mandatory training and appraisals are up-to-date.

# Expressing concerns

There are several ways in which staff can express any concerns, issues, or anything that is important to them. The hospital is committed to an open and honest culture. What you say will be looked into and you will always have access to the support you need. You can contact:

- Your line manager
- Ask Joe
- Freedom to Speak Up Guardian
- Peer 2 Peer Listeners

Make sure your team take time to catch up and share experiences or concerns.

## Freedom to Speak Up

Patients are at the heart of everything we do, and staff should feel proud to work here. There is always room for improvement and staff can help improve the quality of care and make MKUH safer by speaking up if they have concerns.

## Freedom to Speak Up Guardians:

- Work closely with the Board of Directors to ensure that the hospital becomes a more transparent place to work.
- Ensure staff feel supported and encouraged to be open and speak about their concerns.

There is a dedicated email address for staff to use to address concerns:  
**[fts@mkuh.nhs.uk](mailto:fts@mkuh.nhs.uk)**

**No matter how small the issue, do speak up.**

# PALS and Complaints

Patients must be able to raise concerns about their care and treatment and complaints must be investigated thoroughly, with action taken if problems are identified. If a patient is unhappy with their care and has a complaint that you or your colleagues are unable to resolve, help is available. The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is a service that listens to any concerns patients may have.

A member of the PALS team can visit a patient, or the patient can contact them via **PALS@mkuh.nhs.uk** or **01908 995 954**.

If patients wish to make a formal complaint, they can contact the PALS team who can advise them how to do so.

If you have any questions about the support the PALS and Complaints team can offer our patients, please contact a member of the team.



# External visits and inspections

Many authorities are required to undertake inspections and reviews at NHS hospitals. Remember, they can be announced or unannounced but, by adhering to the fundamentals of care outlined in this booklet, you can be assured that you will be ready for an inspection.

## External inspectors

All external agencies will have an ID badge. CQC inspectors also have a red lanyard. All inspectors carry warrant letters that give them the authority to enter areas and inspect. If in any doubt, ask to see both a badge and a warrant letter.

Having an inspection or review is a positive opportunity to showcase how our teams strive to deliver safe and compassionate care. Please welcome the inspectors if they arrive in your ward or area. They may request a suitable room to use as a base, which they may use to interview members of staff, patients, relatives, and carers.

Follow this simple checklist:

- Inspectors should have clear identification. If not, ask to see it.
- Make sure that hand hygiene and bare-below-the-elbows is maintained.
- Inform the inspector who oversees the area and introduce them.
- Facilitate their access to any staff, patients, or volunteers that they wish to speak to.
- Be honest and open, showcase what you do well.
- If the inspectors arrive unannounced out-of-hours, ensure that the ward manager or senior nurse also lets the site manager know.
- Remember that the care, confidentiality, and safety of the patient is always paramount.



- If you are with a patient, external agencies and inspectors must introduce themselves and ask permission to observe. If they don't, staff should explain to patients who the people are and then ask the patient's permission to be observed.
- Whatever time inspectors arrive, they will try and keep disruption to a minimum. Inspections should never impact the delivery of patient care. If they wish to speak to you, try and ensure you are available and schedule it into your working day.
- Sometimes inspectors may ask for copies of documents and patient records. There are clear rules regarding information governance and data protection which inspectors should be observing. If they request any information, please let them know that you will forward the request to Information Governance for guidance.
- Above all, remember that the care of your patients is top priority and that any inspections and reviews are in place to reinforce the importance of safe, effective care.
- When visiting theatres, all visitors will need to change into full scrubs and follow infection control measures.

If you have any specific queries about what you have read in this booklet, please contact Jean Aldous by emailing [jean.aldous@mkuh.nhs.uk](mailto:jean.aldous@mkuh.nhs.uk).

**Thank you for your professionalism and commitment  
to the patients of MKUH**





