

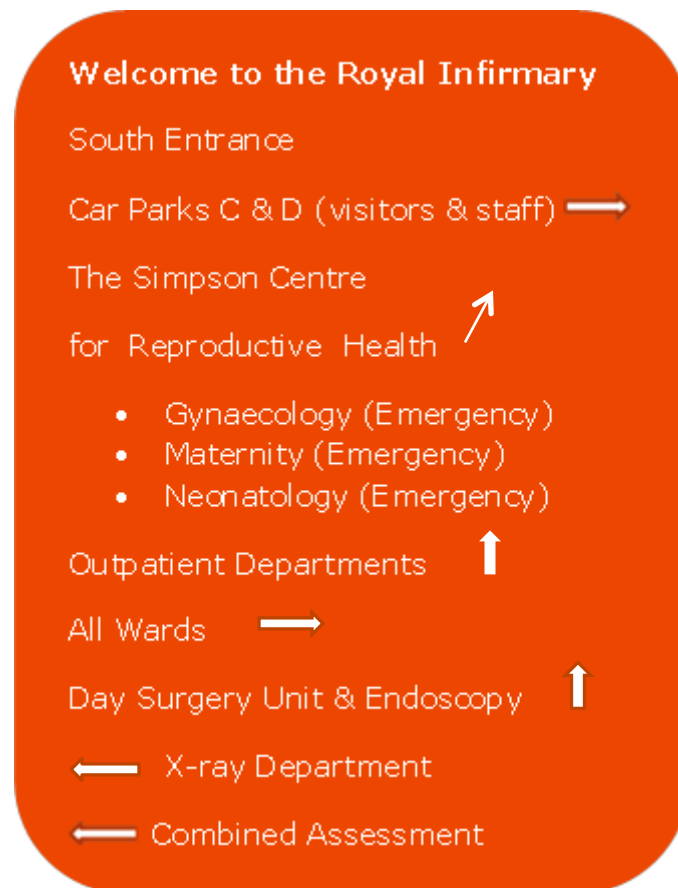
Introduction to a hospital

Jordi Pons is a fourth-year medical student from Barcelona. He has come to Britain on an elective attachment to the Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh. Dr Barron is introducing him to the hospital.

Dr Barron: The Royal Infirmary is the name of the **university hospital** for Edinburgh University. It is a **general hospital**, dealing with all types of patients and illnesses, except paediatrics. We have a **specialist hospital** for that in another part of Edinburgh, the Hospital for Sick Children. You can see some of the **departments** in our hospital on the sign. Of course, there are many others, for example the **Intensive Care Unit (ICU)**, and the **Surgical High Dependency Unit (HDU)**.

Jordi: What does ‘**outpatient**’ mean?

Dr. Barron: Outpatients are the people who come to hospital to **attend a clinic** or to **have tests** or **treatment** and then return home on the same day. **Inpatients** stay in the hospital for one or more days. The rooms where they stay are called **wards**. If a patient’s treatment requires only one day, such as a simple operation, they can be admitted to the **day surgery unit**.



Outpatients

Dr Barron: The **Accident and Emergency Department (A & E)**, also called **Casualty**, is where patients who are **acutely ill** – with a sudden, serious condition – come for assessment and treatment. Outpatients who have an appointment to see a specialist go to a clinic in one of the **Outpatient Departments (OPDs)**. They have usually been **referred** to the hospital by their GP, who writes a **referral letter** to the consultant explaining the patient’s problem.

Inpatients

Dr Barron: The inpatients in a hospital are **admitted** in one of three main ways. They may be seen in one of the outpatient clinics and admitted from there or, if there is a lot of demand for the treatment they need, as in the case of a hip replacement, they are **put on a waiting list** for admission. Alternatively, their GP may arrange the **admission** by telephone because they are acutely ill, for example with the suspected myocardial infarction. Or they are seen in the A & E Department, where the doctor **on duty** – working at that time – arranges the admission. This would happen in the case of a patient with a fractured neck or femur, for example. Larger hospitals may have an **assessment unit** where patients can be admitted temporarily while their condition is **assessed**.

Jordi: Assessed?

Dr Barron: Yes – decisions are made about their condition, and what needs to be done to help them. After treatment is completed, the patient is **discharged** back to the GP’s care.

Complete the table with words from the above text. Put a stress mark in front of the stressed syllable in each word. The first one has been done for you.

VERB	NOUN
ad'mit	
assess	
discharge	
operate	
refer	
treat	

Make word combinations using a word from each box.

acutely
assessment
on
referral
waiting

unit
letter
list
duty
ill

Which hospital departments would be most appropriate for the following patients?

- 1 a woman in diabetic coma
- 2 a patient who has just had a radical prostatectomy
- 3 a patient who is to have a skin lesion removed
- 4 a man with a foreign body in his eye
- 5 a woman with a threatened abortion

Complete the extract from an information leaflet for patients.

Information for outpatients

When you arrive at the (1) _____, please tell the receptionist who will welcome you, check your details, and direct you to the waiting area. The length of your visit will depend on the (2) _____ you're going to have. You may need to have some (3) _____, such as an X-ray, which could mean going to another (4) _____. Or you may be (5) _____ to other professionals, such as a physiotherapist or dietician. You may need to revisit the clinic. If staff at the clinic want to see you again, another appointment will be arranged for you. If you need to be (6) _____ to hospital for more treatment, either as an inpatient or for (7) _____ surgery, you will be told when this is likely to happen. If you do not need further treatment you will (8) _____ to your GP's care.

Express your idea.

How do hospitals in your country organize admissions? How would you explain the procedure to a colleague from another country?