



World Patient Safety Day 2025

Each year, World Patient Safety Day reminds us of our shared responsibility to protect and care for those who are most vulnerable. In 2025, the focus on Safe Care for Every Newborn and Every Child could not be more vital. It speaks to the heart of why we work in healthcare security and safety: to create environments where every child can be treated, nurtured, and supported without fear of harm.

Safety as the Foundation of Care

For newborns and children, safety is not an abstract concept, it is the foundation upon which recovery, development, and trust in healthcare are built. Families bring their children into hospitals expecting compassion, excellence, and protection. Every lapse in safety, whether through preventable harm, violence, or systemic gaps, undermines that trust.

In our work, we know that security is not separate from care, it is an essential part of it. Safe wards, secure facilities, clear communication, and trained, compassionate staff are what allow healthcare teams to deliver the best possible outcomes. A child's journey through healthcare should never be overshadowed by fear, disruption, or avoidable risk.

Recent Global Incidents That Must Not Be Forgotten

Tragic events around the world have exposed the fragility of neonatal and child safety:

- France, Lille: In July 2025, a five-day-old premature infant died after being fatally injured when a six-year-old boy, roaming unsupervised in a neonatal ward, dropped her. Investigations are ongoing, but the incident has already led to urgent calls for stronger access control and supervision.
- France, Montreuil: A neonatal nurse has been charged with sexually abusing infants, filming the acts, and sharing them online. The case has shaken public trust and highlighted the need for rigorous safeguarding and staff oversight.
- India, Jhansi: In late 2024, a fire in an overcrowded NICU killed at least 18 newborns. Reports pointed to electrical faults and unsafe storage near oxygen supplies, underscoring the importance of infrastructure safety and emergency preparedness.
- United States, Virginia: A neonatal nurse in Virginia was charged with harming an infant. reinforcing the need for vigilance, safeguarding, and early intervention.
- United Kingdom, Lucy Letby case: The conviction of a neonatal nurse for the murder of seven infants remains a harrowing reminder of why transparent reporting, robust escalation pathways, and a culture that listens to concerns are non-negotiable.

These incidents are not anomalies; they are wake-up calls. They remind us that vigilance, staff accountability, and resilient safety cultures are essential everywhere children are cared for.

The UK Context: Maternity Services Under Review

Here in the UK, maternity and neonatal safety remains a pressing concern. Despite significant national efforts, progress on reducing stillbirths and neonatal deaths has stalled. A joint report by Sands and Tommy's (2025) estimated that at least 2,500 babies' lives could have been saved since 2018 had NHS safety targets been met.

In response, the government has launched a rapid national investigation into the most concerning maternity and neonatal units, alongside a broader system-wide review. The Care Quality Commission has also reported that almost half of maternity services inspected required improvement for safety, and 12% were rated inadequate. Not a single service was judged outstanding for safety.

These figures reinforce the urgency of aligning robust security and safety measures with clinical excellence, ensuring every child's right to safe care is fully realised.

Security and Clinical Teams Working Together

Patient safety is strongest when security and clinical teams collaborate. For children, safe environments are more than the absence of restraint, they are places where protection, dignity, and compassion are built into everyday care. That means:

- **De-escalation and calm** are prioritised over force, whether in an emergency department, ward, or specialist unit.
- **Trauma-informed approaches** reduce fear and help children feel safe during stressful moments such as treatment, transfer, or hospital admission.
- **Environments are both secure and child-friendly**, with spaces that reduce noise, overcrowding, and confusion while promoting comfort, play, and reassurance.
- **Families are welcomed as partners in safety**, with clear communication and visible collaboration between staff.
- **Everyday needs of children are respected**, from privacy and rest to emotional comfort so that safety measures do not overshadow care.

When security and clinical colleagues align, safety measures become part of healing rather than barriers to it. Security is not just about prevention of harm but about supporting recovery, protecting dignity, and reinforcing trust.

This World Patient Safety Day, the IAHS UK Chapter calls on all of us, across security and clinical roles, to work together to create environments where every child can receive care that is safe, kind, and reassuring.

A Shared Responsibility

The safety of every newborn and child is a responsibility that belongs to all of us, across every role and profession. It calls for the courage to challenge unsafe practice, the humility to learn from mistakes, and the determination to improve together. As the IAHS UK Chapter, we are proud to stand shoulder to shoulder with our clinical colleagues, recognising that true safety is achieved when security and healthcare work in partnership to create environments of trust and care.

This World Patient Safety Day, we recommit to the principle that safe care is not optional. It is the right of every child, and it depends on all of us, security and clinical teams alike, working together to make it real.