

Who is your Cancer Clinical Nurse Specialist and Cancer Support Worker?

While we are caring for you, you will have a main point of contact. This is usually your clinical nurse specialist (CNS). You will normally meet your CNS at the time of your diagnosis or during the time leading up to the diagnosis; they will provide you with their contact details. They will take a key role in supporting your care and are an important member of the multidisciplinary team (MDT) caring for you.

The multidisciplinary team is a team of health professionals who will deliver your cancer treatment and support. They have many different areas of expertise and work together to diagnose and develop personalised treatment plans for people with cancer. They will recommend the most appropriate treatment for you, based on the best evidence available.

Roles of each Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) member include:

MDT Lead

The MDT lead is an appointed member of the MDT. It is their responsibility to lead the meetings and discuss any issues which may affect the target date for treatment.

Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS)

A CNS acts as the patient voice in the MDT; they support patients to make informed decisions regarding their ongoing care and treatment.

Clinician

The clinician (doctor or surgeon) in charge of your treatment will present your case at the MDT. They will discuss your individual needs and medical history with the group to determine the best treatment plan for you.

Oncologist

An oncologist will review each case and assess whether a patient would benefit from chemotherapy and/or radiotherapy and /or immunotherapy and/or endocrine therapy.

Radiologist

A radiologist presents and interprets imaging such as MRIs, CTs and PET scans. They can tell the team crucial information such as the size and precise location of the cancer.

Histopathologist

A histopathologist examines biopsies and surgical specimens in order to give a definitive diagnosis of cancer and identify its type.

MDT Co-ordinator

An MDT co-ordinator ensures your test results are available and, where appropriate, sends information to other treatment centres to help co-ordinate your care.

The role of the Clinical Nurse Specialist is to:

- ensure you and the people close to you have access to information and advice about your diagnosis and treatment.
- help you to make sense of a large amount of unfamiliar information, and support your decision-making about your care, treatment and follow-up arrangements.
- offer you and those close to you practical and emotional support throughout your illness.
- offer you access to clinical advice, and discuss any concerns you may have about treatments, investigations, surgery, recovery and life after treatment.
- advocate on your behalf at the MDT meeting, where your investigations are discussed and recommendations on treatments are made.
- put you in touch with different services, both within the hospital and the community, to support your care needs.
- guide you through complex systems, help you get access to benefits, finances, grants, free prescriptions and support you with family issues.

When you first meet with your CNS

You may meet your CNS at your first appointment or after you have been diagnosed. They will explain your test and treatment options and support you and your family. They will also give you written information about the type of cancer you have, your treatment options and other sources of information and support.

Alongside your CNS, you may be supported by a cancer support worker (CSW). The CSW works closely with the CNS and the cancer team to support people who have just been given a cancer diagnosis, or who are currently going through treatment, as well as patients who are living with or beyond cancer.

The role of the Cancer Support Worker:

The role of the CSW is different from a CNS, who help guide you through the clinical aspects of your care. A CSW will offer more practical support, such as signposting to other helpful services and making enquires on your behalf, to make your experience through treatment and beyond as smooth as possible.

This can include signposting you to help and support such as:

- Who your cancer specialists are
- Where to get help with financial concerns
- Advice on transport options
- Links to community services and voluntary organisations
- Emotional wellbeing
- Providing a Holistic Needs Assessment to help you identify any thoughts or concerns you have and not just your medical needs.

Information for Patients

Contact the cancer team

If you have any questions about your appointments or treatment, please contact the team. Your CNS will give you their contact details.

Support and Advice

The Cancer Information and Support Service is available to offer information, support and advice for anyone who has been affected by cancer at any stage.

They can signpost to clinical teams, counselling, complementary therapy, self-management courses, benefits, and local and national support groups and services

They are located on all four hospital sites and can be contacted during the hours Monday to Friday from 9am until 4pm.

To speak to a member of the team call on the site numbers below or email the team at CancerInfo@uhb.nhs.uk

The Cancer Information and Support Service locations are:

Cancer Information and Support Service

Cancer Centre
Ground Floor
Heritage building
Queen Elizabeth Hospital - 0121 371 3537/3539

Cancer Information and Support Service

Haematology and Oncology Day Unit
Ground Floor
Sheldon Unit
Good Hope Hospital - 0121 424 2000 Ext 59095

Cancer Information and Support Service

Ground Floor Waiting Room
MIDRU
Birmingham Heartlands Hospital – 07557 681905

Cancer Information and Support Service

Oncology and Haematology Day Unit
Ground Floor
Solihull Hospital – 0121 424 2000 Ext 54387

Macmillan Cancer Support National Number

0808 808 0000 8am-8pm, seven days a week
<http://www.macmillan.org.uk>

If you require this information in another format, such as a different language, large print, braille or audio version please ask a member of staff or email patientexperience@uhb.nhs.uk.