

Cancer services

How we're here to support you

Information for patients, relatives
and carers

English version

Introduction

This leaflet is designed to inform you about the support available to you and those important to you at Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust (ICHT). It outlines how you can access our support and advice, and how our different teams work together.

Please remember that our teams are here for you throughout your care and treatment at ICHT- not just at the beginning. There is no question that is too big or small.

Support from our hospitals

Macmillan navigator service

The Macmillan navigator service is a telephone-based service for cancer patients of ICHT, and their family, friends and carers. The navigators are the first and single point of contact for any questions or queries that you may have.

Our navigator team can:

- Provide you with information about your appointments
- Point you in the right direction if you are unsure who you need to speak to
- Advise you on upcoming patient groups and events run by our Macmillan support service, and by other local charities and organisations
- Advise you on where you can access advice, help and support
- Book you in for a call-back from your clinical nurse specialist (CNS), if you have a clinical question about your cancer or care

If you would prefer to speak to us in another language, please ask the navigators for an interpreter when you call.

The Macmillan navigator service is open Monday to Friday 08.30 to 16.30 (excluding bank holidays). The service is closed for training between 14.00- 14.45 on Thursdays.

Please do not call the Navigator service if you need urgent medical attention or are in crisis - Instead call 111 or 999 for immediate advice.

Macmillan navigator service: 020 3313 0303

Clinical nurse specialist (CNS)

Your CNS is sometimes referred to as your specialist nurse, keyworker or Macmillan nurse. They work closely with the consultants, oncologists, surgeons and cancer support workers as part of the wider multidisciplinary team (MDT). You may have met your CNS when you were told you have cancer, or you may meet them at one of your first clinic appointments.

Your CNS is here to answer any clinical questions you may have, and to support you throughout your care. They can help you to understand your cancer diagnosis and the treatment options that are open to you. If you have any questions or worries between clinic appointments, it can be helpful to speak to your CNS.

Your CNS can also provide you with practical advice- such as how you can access free prescriptions as a cancer patient- and advise on the emotional support available too. If you feel your mental health has been impacted by your cancer, your CNS will be able to suggest services that may help. They may suggest support groups, apps or one-to-one listening services, or advise on a referral to a specialist team like our psycho-oncology team.

You can contact your CNS by calling the Macmillan navigator service. The navigators will take a note of your questions, and book you in for a call with your CNS, to ensure they have a dedicated time to speak with you. Most call-backs are possible within the same week.

Your CNS works as part of a team of CNSs, so you may speak with more than one CNS whilst under our care. If you are unsure who your CNS is, the navigator service can help you to find out.

Holistic Needs Assessment (HNA)

A HNA is a discussion between you and a CNS or cancer support worker, in which we hear about you as an individual. It is another opportunity for you to tell us what support you need.

The HNA is not just about the physical symptoms of cancer or the side effects of the treatment, but about *any* needs or concerns you may have. For example, you may have worries about your finances, feel differently about your body, or have questions about your faith because of your cancer. A HNA is an opportunity to discuss what is important to you and helps us ensure that we can support you in the best way.

You will usually be offered a HNA around the time of your diagnosis, and then again when you start or finish treatment. You are welcome to ask for an additional HNA and can request this via the navigator service.

Psycho-oncology team

The psycho-oncology team offers a specialist psychological care service for people affected by cancer, as well as their partners, families or carers. The team is made up of clinical psychologists and counsellors, who can provide mental health support and therapeutic input.

The team work with people experiencing cancer-related difficulties such as:

- Anxiety, panic or worry that is hard to manage
- Feeling low or depressed a lot of the time
- Difficulties making decisions about, or coping with, cancer treatments
- Relationship difficulties e.g. with a partner, in the family, or with hospital staff
- Body image or sexual difficulties

If you feel you would benefit from working with psycho-oncology, please speak with your CNS who can refer you to this service if appropriate.

Macmillan cancer information support service

The Macmillan cancer information support service at our trust offers emotional, practical and financial support and information to anyone affected by cancer.

The team are here to listen and support you, whether you have a specific question, or are unsure about what you even want to say. The team will take the time to get to know you to find out what really matters to you and get you the right cancer support.

You can access face-to-face support in one of our two centres, or speak with the team via phone or email. You don't need an appointment and you are welcome to speak to the team as many times as you need – whether it's a one-off chat or an ongoing conversation.

The service also runs a range of weekly online patient groups, which offer the chance to talk to other patients about cancer in a relaxed environment. There is no commitment to join every week – you can pop in and out as suits your schedule.

The Macmillan benefits adviser can also offer you tailored advice on additional financial support and grants which may be available.

The service is open Monday-Thursday, excluding bank holidays.

Our centres are located in:

- Charing Cross hospital, by the main lifts
- Hammersmith hospital, in the Garry Weston centre

For more information please call us on **020 3313 5170** and leave a message or email

imperial.macmillansupportservice@nhs.net

Other useful support

Maggie's west London

Maggie's is a cancer charity that provides the emotional, practical and social support to people with cancer and their family and friends. The centre combines beautiful architecture, calming spaces, a professional team of support staff and the ability to talk and share experiences with a community of people who have been through similar experiences. Maggie's centres are warm, friendly and informal places full of light and open space with a big kitchen table at the heart of the building.

Maggie's west London is located in the grounds of Charing Cross Hospital but is independent of our hospital. The centre is open Monday to Friday, 09.00-17.00. For more information please call **020 7386 1750**.

How do I make a comment about my visit?

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have. If you have any **suggestions** or **comments** about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (**PALS**) on **020 3312 7777** (10.00 – 16.00, Monday to Friday). You can also email PALS at imperial.pals@nhs.net. The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf.

Alternatively, you may wish to complain by contacting our complaints department:

Complaints department, fourth floor, Salton House, St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street
London W2 1NY

Email: ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net

Telephone: **020 3312 1337 / 1349**

Alternative formats

This leaflet can be provided on request in large print or easy read, as a sound recording, in Braille or in alternative languages.

Please email the communications team:

imperial.communications@nhs.net

Wi-fi

Wi-fi is available at our Trust. For more information visit our website: www.imperial.nhs.uk

