

Role of the Haematology Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS)

A patient information leaflet about your key worker

Other formats

If you need this information in another format such as audio CD, Braille, large print, high contrast, British Sign Language or translated into another language, please contact the PALS desk on 01271 314090 or at ndht.pals@nhs.net.

How a CNS can help

Clinical nurse specialists (CNS) are here to support patients and their families and to give information. They will be your key worker and point of contact throughout your treatment. They can help with and signpost to psychological, spiritual, financial and social support, if you require it.

They are here to provide information and advice to you and your family in all aspects of your disease, treatment and care. If and when appropriate, they may refer you to other health professionals or external organisations.

Your disease and treatment

Your CNS is there to support you, working with your consultant and the medical team to provide information about your disease and the treatment options available. If you are unsure about anything, please ask. All questions are important.

Your CNS will provide you with written information on your disease and treatment but this information can also be accessed online. If you would prefer to access online information, please contact your CNS who will be happy to help.

Deciding your treatment

In line with national guidelines, decisions on the best way to treat your disease should involve a range of knowledgeable professionals meeting together to discuss treatment options. This is called a multi-disciplinary team (MDT) meeting.

Your case will be discussed, if necessary, by regional haematologists with an interest in your disease. There will be expert review of your diagnosis by specialist haematology pathologists and radiologists. When all this information has been gathered, which can sometimes take time, there will be a joint discussion of your case to determine your best treatment options.

A CNS attends all MDT meetings to represent the patient's views and to feed back the discussion to you if you want them to.

If you have any concerns or questions regarding your current or potential treatment, do not hesitate to contact your CNS.

Psychological support

Psychological distress is a natural response to being diagnosed with a serious illness. People can respond to this distress in different ways. They may get support from family and friends or from other sources such as nurses and doctors.

However, some patients find this isn't enough and would benefit from professional support from a counsellor. This can be arranged if needed.

Social support

People affected by illness can have a variety of needs in terms of social support, ranging from practical help at home through to local care services. This can be arranged through the hospital or by your GP, whichever is most appropriate.

The following charities are an excellent source of information and can also provide details about local support groups that may be available.

- Lymphoma Association (www.lymphomas.org.uk; 0808 808 5555)
- Myeloma UK (www.myeloma.org.uk; 0800 980 3332)
- Leukaemia Care (www.leukaemiacare.org.uk; 0808 801 0444)
- Macmillan Cancer Support (www.macmillan.org.uk; 0808 808 0000)

Financial advice

Money is often a major concern for people facing illness. Your CNS can help by giving you contact information about financial entitlements that may be available. They can also help with form filling if needed. It is best to think about this early on in your treatment.

For free and impartial advice and support, call the Kay Kendall Leukaemia Fund on 01752 507711.

Spiritual support

The hospital provides a chaplaincy service which can be accessed at any time. As well as the main religious denominations, the chaplaincy team is able to provide contact details for less well-known ones.

However, spirituality is not necessarily confined to formal religion and unsettling questions such as "why is this happening to me?" and "how will I cope?" often arise. It may be that counselling might be of benefit and your CNS can provide information about how to organise this.

Support group

There is a support group for patients and relatives of anyone diagnosed with a haematology cancer. These are held quarterly at the Fern Center at North Devon District Hospital. Please ask the CNS for the date of the next meeting.

Contact information

A CNS is available from 8.30am to 4pm, Monday to Friday excluding bank holidays.

A message can be left on **01271 314043**, a **CNS will get back to you as soon as possible however this may be the next working day**. You can also call the switchboard on **01271 322577** and ask for the haematology CNS to be bleeped on **203**.

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call 01271 314090 or email ndht.pals@nhs.net. You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

Have your say

Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust aims to provide high quality services. However, please tell us when something could be improved. If you have a comment or compliment about a service or treatment, please raise your comments with a member of staff or the PALS team in the first instance.

'Care Opinion' comments forms are on all wards or online at www.careopinion.org.uk.

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