

Supportive and palliative care service

Patient information sheet

What is supportive and palliative care?

Supportive and palliative care supports patients who have long term conditions, life threatening illnesses, or are experiencing distress related to their health. The goal is to support patients and families to achieve and focus on improving quality of life.

Who are they?

The team consists of a palliative care consultant, a specialist registrar, specialist nurses and a team secretary. The team works closely with other members of staff in the hospital such as psychological services, chaplaincy service, occupational therapists etc.

What do they do?

Physical problems can be addressed, together with other aspects of a patient's life that are affected by the uncertainty of incurable disease, such as:

- Nausea
- Pain
- Insomnia
- Breathlessness

As well as physical symptoms, the team also works with spiritual, social, financial and psychological issues: this is described as 'holistic care'.

The team also

- Provides support when people are making choices for future care
- Helps with complex discharge planning and accessing services for home or hospice care
- Offers psychological and emotional support for patients and families
- Provides a source of information and advice

The team works in all areas of the hospital, offering support and advice. They talk directly with patients and carers and discuss aspects of care and management with the patient's own medical team.

Patients' and / or carers' needs can be assessed during an inpatient stay, an outpatient visit or by telephone. After discharge, if further support is needed, the team will attempt to arrange appropriate care from the patient's local specialist palliative care services.

The team recognises the importance of addressing all of the issues affecting a patient's quality of life and therefore, discusses patients referred to them at a weekly multidisciplinary meeting.

Considerable time is also spent discussing patients with their hospital team, negotiating how best to support all involved. Outside the hospital, the team liaises with other healthcare professionals who may support the care of Royal Papworth Hospital patients, for example GPs, heart failure nurses and respiratory nurse specialists.

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Large print copies and alternative language versions of this leaflet can be made available on request.

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How can I or my family be referred?

Any healthcare professional involved in your care can make a referral to the supportive and palliative care team.

We may discuss your referral with your consultant or medical team before you are seen or contacted.

If more information is needed, please contact a member of staff or the supportive and palliative care team direct:

Key contacts

Team secretary

01223 638747

Switchboard

01223 638000

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