

*The* ROYAL MARSDEN

NHS Foundation Trust

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# The Adult Psychological Support Service

(for people aged 25 years and older)

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## **Patient Information**



**NHS**



## Introduction

Distressing thoughts and feelings are normal after cancer diagnosis and treatment; over time they usually lessen or become more manageable. However, for some people these difficult thoughts and feelings continue to be overwhelming. The **Adult Psychological Support Service** is available to offer specialist psychological support for patients in these situations. This leaflet is for people who are aged 25 years and older; if you are aged between 18 and 24 years, please read our *Young Adult Psychological Support* leaflet. (Patients who are under 18 years old can access the Paediatric Psychology Service.) This leaflet includes information on the type of issues you can get help with, who can come for help and how to access support.

## What kind of issues can I get help with?

The **Adult Psychological Support Service** is available specifically to support you with issues that have arisen because of your cancer diagnosis and treatment. These issues vary from individual to individual, but may include:

- Adjusting to the diagnosis of cancer including anxiety, low mood, and lack of self-confidence
- Finding life challenging and struggling to cope after diagnosis
- Fears associated with hospitals or treatment
- Decision making related to treatment
- Coping with treatment side effects
- Impacts on relationships
- Sexual consequences of cancer and its treatment
- Concerns about your family or children
- Worries and anxiety about cancer recurrence
- Questions about the meaning and purpose of life following diagnosis.

These are some of the topics people discuss with us, but there may be other issues you wish to talk about.

## What is the service?

The **Adult Psychological Support Service** is a small team of professionals at each hospital site of The Royal Marsden. They are qualified to help people with their psychological needs.

The service includes experienced **Counsellors**, **Psychotherapists** and **Psychologists** who have all been trained in psychological therapy (sometimes called ‘talking therapy’). They will help you express and explore your thoughts and feelings in a safe, confidential (private) environment and help you develop coping strategies.

Our staff are trained in different approaches, including counselling and art therapy, as well as more structured therapies such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT). We also have staff who are trained to work with couples, families and people with sexual difficulties.

The service also includes **Mental Health Nurses** and a **Liaison Psychiatrist**. They are available to support patients who need specialist help, including taking medication to help with mood, or accessing mental health support from outside this hospital. This could be because their distress is acute, or they need specialist care that The Royal Marsden does not provide.

**If you feel very low or distressed and think you may harm yourself, please contact:**

- your GP
- emergency services on 999
- attend Accident and Emergency
- Samaritans on Freephone 116 123

## Who can come for support?

The **Adult Psychological Support Service** is available to people who have been diagnosed or received active cancer treatment from The Royal Marsden within the last two years. The demand for our service is very high so we are unable to offer support to individuals who are no longer under the care of the hospital.

## What happens when you come for support?

Support will be provided in a number of different ways depending on what your needs are and who you see.

You may be invited to attend a telephone triage appointment to help us better understand your concerns and support needs. During this call we discuss with you what type of support is most appropriate, so that the support we provide will closely meet your needs.

If you come for psychological support as an outpatient, your first appointment will be an assessment. This will give you the opportunity to talk about your concerns in detail. This appointment usually takes 50 minutes. For some people this appointment is enough and they do not feel a need to come again. Any further appointments will be 30 to 50 minutes long, depending on who you are meeting.

We may refer you to or recommend services outside of The Royal Marsden if those services are considered more appropriate in meeting your support needs.

If you are an inpatient, your support may be provided on the ward.

## How can I be referred?

If you think that talking to somebody in the **Adult Psychological Support Service** would be helpful there are three ways that you can be referred.

1. Speak to any of the health professionals in the hospital involved in your care including nurses, radiographers, physiotherapists, dietitians, occupational therapists, speech and language therapists and doctors. They will make a referral for you.
2. Self-refer by calling the department yourself. Please contact the department on the site where you would like an appointment (contact details below.)
3. Drop into The Help Centre for PALS and Patient Information. There is an office based on both hospital sites and the staff will be able to assist you in completing a self-referral form.

The Help Centre is a drop in service, no appointment required. Both Help Centres are open Monday to Friday 10am–4.30pm.

In Chelsea, the Help Centre is on the ground floor of the Chelsea Wing, in the medical day unit. In Sutton, the Help Centre is on the ground floor, West Wing (to the left of the main entrance).

## Contact details

Patients and families can contact us directly. To do this, please contact us on the telephone numbers below between Monday and Friday during office hours: 9am–5pm. Outside of these hours, you can leave a message on our answer machine, and we will return your call.

Alternatively, please ask the doctor, nurse or healthcare professional treating you to refer you to the service.

### **Sutton:**

Compton House  
The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust  
Downs Road, Sutton, Surrey SM2 5PT

**Tel:** 020 8661 3006

### **Chelsea:**

Floor 1, Markus Unit  
The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust  
Fulham Road, London, SW3 6JJ

**Tel:** 020 7808 2777

**Email:** [Psychological.SupportAdmin@rmh.nhs.uk](mailto:Psychological.SupportAdmin@rmh.nhs.uk)

## Notes and questions



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## References

This booklet is evidence based wherever the appropriate evidence is available, and represents an accumulation of expert opinion and professional interpretation.

Details of the references used in writing this booklet are available on request from:

The Royal Marsden Help Centre  
Freephone: 0800 783 7176  
Email: [patientcentre@rmh.nhs.uk](mailto:patientcentre@rmh.nhs.uk)

No conflicts of interest were declared in the production of this booklet.

Should you require information in an alternative format, please contact The Royal Marsden Help Centre.

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[royalmarsden.org](http://royalmarsden.org)

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