

# ASSESSMENT AND CARE PLANNING FOR PEOPLE WITH CANCER

WE ARE  
**MACMILLAN.**  
CANCER SUPPORT



Macmillan and Cancerbackup have merged.  
Together we provide free, high quality information for all.



# Contents

|   |   |
|---|---|
| About Assessment and care planning for people with cancer | 2 |
| What to expect from the appointment                       | 3 |
| Where and how the appointment takes place                 | 4 |
| Preparing for your appointment                            | 5 |
| How your information is used                              | 6 |
| What happens next?  | 7 |
| How we can help you                                       | 9 |

# **About Assessment and care planning for people with cancer**

**Being diagnosed with cancer can be a shock and it may be difficult to know what to expect in the months ahead. But there's much more to cancer than the diagnosis and treatment.**

Cancer can affect every part of your life, and every person living with cancer has their own individual as well as medical needs.

That's why you may be offered an assessment and care planning appointment with a health professional. This is a discussion to find out as much as possible about your individual concerns, and to put together a care plan to give you the help you need. The appointment may also be called a holistic needs assessment (HNA).

The appointment is a conversation between you and a health professional focusing on your concerns. It's an opportunity to raise your personal issues and worries, and is arranged alongside the regular review of your medical care. Although it's not designed to assess the needs of carers, their concerns may also be looked at during the discussion.

You'll be offered an assessment and care planning meeting around the time of your diagnosis. Because your day-to-day needs may change, you'll also be offered an appointment

during treatment and after it finishes. Your health professional may suggest a discussion at other times. You can refuse an appointment or request one at another time if you feel it would help.

## What to expect from the appointment

Assessment and care planning meetings aim to find out more about your individual needs, from diagnosis, through treatment, and after treatment. Speaking to a health professional can help you look at different areas of your life to see where help can be offered, and it's a chance for you to get information, support and a referral to other services if appropriate.

It can also be an opportunity to talk about any symptoms you may have and to ask about specific help.

The discussion should cover:

- **physical effects** (eg weight loss, problems with appetite, tiredness)
- **emotional concerns** (eg worries about the future, relationships)
- **family matters** (eg talking to your family and friends about your cancer, worries about genetic risk)
- **job and/or money worries** (eg balancing work and treatment, benefits or financial advice)

- **treatment issues** (eg concerns about side effects, fertility, risks and benefits of treatment)
- **practical issues** (eg sorting out housework, healthy eating, where to get equipment that can help)
- **spirituality** (eg your faith or religion and any impact this may have on your treatment).

Any issues raised during the conversation should be recorded in a care plan, and you should be given a copy.

## Where and how the appointment takes place

You are likely to have this appointment with a health professional who has a role in coordinating your care (your key worker). This will often be your clinical nurse specialist (CNS), but whoever you speak to will have the skills and experience to help identify and deal with your concerns. They will have up-to-date knowledge of local and national services and they will know how to refer you to appropriate specialist services if you need them.

You will usually have your appointment in the place where you have your treatment or care, such as at the hospital. It's always held in a private and comfortable setting, and will happen at a pace that suits you. Your health professional will give you an idea of how long the appointment will take before it starts. The priority is to find out enough detail for a care plan to put the right support in place for you.

# Preparing for your appointment

**'At times I really needed to talk to someone and finding the right person was hard. I wanted to talk to someone who understood where I was coming from, and who wouldn't have any agenda.'**

You may wish to prepare in advance by making notes and thinking of questions you'd like to ask. This will help you make the best use of your appointment. A self-assessment form may be offered to help you focus on any issues that may be affecting you. You may be sent this in advance, or you may be asked to fill it out before you meet with your health professional.

Some things you might want to think about before your appointment are:

- Are you having any physical symptoms or side effects from your cancer or treatment?
- Is anything bothering you about your relationships with family or friends that could be related to your cancer?
- Would you like to know more about local services, support groups or helplines?
- Do you need advice on things like diet, exercise or stopping smoking?

- Are you confused by anything that is happening with your treatment, or is there anything you would like explained to you?
- Do you need help with things like finances or work?
- Are you worried about what the future might bring?

These are only suggestions, and not all of them may be relevant to you. It is your appointment, and you should feel comfortable to discuss anything that concerns you.

Let your health professional know if you'd like a family member or friend with you, if you need an interpreter, or if you have any worries about the appointment itself.

## How your information is used

All the information you give will be treated with care and confidence in the same way your medical team treats any other information they have about you.

The information may be passed on to specialist support services for specific reasons, but only with your permission. Health professionals will only share as much information as people need to know for their role in your care. You will have the chance to talk about this alongside deciding whether or not to be referred to other services.

# What happens next?

**'It was very helpful to have a copy of the plan. We go back to it and look at it. We have not kept it to ourselves. We have three sons and have shown it to them so that they can understand what is going on.'**

Once you have finished the appointment, any needs or issues should then be recorded in a care plan. Your care plan should set out any concerns you brought up at the appointment, as well as anything that is already being done to help, or services you are using. It will also describe any suggestions that were made to you, or referrals to services that may be appropriate for you. A referral may be to another NHS service, or to other local services run by other organisations.

Your care plan aims to make sure that the right steps are put in place to help you. You should be given a copy after the appointment, and you can also request another copy at any time.

If you'd like to discuss this information, call the Macmillan Support Line free on **0808 808 00 00**, Monday–Friday, 9am–8pm. If you're hard of hearing you can use textphone 0808 808 0121, or Text Relay. For non English speakers interpreters are available. Alternatively, visit **macmillan.org.uk**



# How we can help you

## Macmillan Cancer Support

89 Albert Embankment,  
London SE1 7UQ

**General enquiries**  
020 7840 7840

**Questions about living  
with cancer?** Call free  
on **0808 808 00 00**  
(Mon–Fri, 9am–8pm)  
Alternatively, visit  
**macmillan.org.uk**

**Hard of hearing?**  
Use textphone 0808 808  
0121, or Text Relay.

**Non English speaker?**  
Interpreters available.

Macmillan Cancer Support improves the lives of people affected by cancer. We are a source of support: providing practical, medical, emotional and financial help. We are a force for change: listening to people affected by cancer and working together to improve cancer care locally and nationally.

We have a wide range of services and activities that might be of help and interest.

## Clear, reliable information

We provide expert, up-to-date information about cancer – the different types, tests and treatments, and living with the condition.

We can help you by phone, email, via our website and publications, or in person. And our information is free to all – people with cancer, families and friends, as well as professionals.

Just call and speak to one of our cancer support specialists. Or visit one of our information and support centres – based in hospitals, libraries and mobile centres – and speak with someone face-to-face.

## Need out-of-hours support?

Our phone service is open Monday–Friday, 9am–8pm. At any time of day, you can find a lot of information on our website, **macmillan.org.uk**, or join our online community at **macmillan.org.uk/community**. For medical attention out of hours, please contact your GP for their 'out-of-hours' service.

The following organisations can offer immediate information and support:

**NHS Direct** 0845 4647  
[www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)

**NHS Scotland**  
0845 24 24 24  
[www.nhs24.com](http://www.nhs24.com)

**Samaritans** 0845 790 9090  
[www.samaritans.org.uk](http://www.samaritans.org.uk)

## Someone to talk to

When you, or someone close to you, has cancer, it can be difficult sometimes to talk about how you're feeling. You can call our cancer

support specialists to talk about how you feel and what's worrying you.

Alternatively, we can help you find support in your local area, so you can speak face-to-face with people who understand what you're going through.

## Professional help

Our Macmillan nurses, doctors and other health and social care professionals offer expert treatment and care. They help individuals and families deal with cancer from diagnosis onwards, until people decide they no longer need this help.

You can ask your GP, hospital consultant, district nurse or hospital ward sister if there are any Macmillan professionals available in your area, or call us.

## Support for each other

No one knows more about the impact cancer has on a person's life than those who have been affected by the

disease themselves. That's why we help to bring people with cancer and carers together in their communities and online.

You can find out about people affected by cancer who meet in your area to support each other by calling us or by visiting [macmillan.org.uk/  
selfhelpandsupport](http://macmillan.org.uk/selfhelpandsupport)

You can also share your experiences, ask questions and get support from others by heading to our online community at [macmillan.org.  
uk/community](http://macmillan.org.uk/community)

## Financial and work-related support

Having cancer can bring extra costs such as hospital parking, travel fares and higher heating bills. Some people may have to stop working.

If you've been affected in this way, we can help. All you need to do is call our helpline and one of our specialists will tell you about the benefits and other financial help you may be entitled to.

We can also give you information about your rights as an employee, and help you find further support.

## Helping you to help yourself

People affected by cancer want to take control of their lives again and regain their independence. We help you do this by providing opportunities to learn how to manage the impact cancer can have on your life.

You can do this online through our Learn Zone – [macmillan.org.uk/learnzone](http://macmillan.org.uk/learnzone) – which offers a wide range of courses and information.

We produce booklets on specific cancers and treatments to help you manage the disease and side effects. And we provide a range of face-to-face training that offers practical advice to help you help yourself.

## Get involved

There are many ways that you, your friends or family can get involved with Macmillan and help other people affected by cancer.

### Use your experience to speak out

Share your experiences – online, in the media, with each other. Or use your experience to improve cancer care – join Macmillan Cancer Voices and get involved in opportunities that can make a real difference to people's lives.

### Campaign with us

Join one of our campaigns – help us fight discrimination, tackle inequalities and get a better deal for people affected by cancer.

## Give your time

Become a volunteer – give a bit of your time and energy to make a difference to others, and meet new friends at the same time.

### Fundraise

Raise some money – host a coffee morning, hold a street collection or organise your own sponsored event.

### Donate

Give some money – whether you give a one-off donation, set up a direct debit, donate through payroll giving or leave a legacy, we'll use every penny to help support people affected by cancer.

Find out more about all these opportunities on [be.macmillan.org.uk](http://be.macmillan.org.uk)

## **Disclaimer**

We make every effort to ensure that the information we provide is accurate but it should not be relied upon to reflect the current state of medical research, which is constantly changing. If you are concerned about your health, you should consult a doctor. Macmillan cannot accept liability for any loss or damage resulting from any inaccuracy in this information or third party information such as information on websites to which we link. We feature real life stories in all of our articles. Some photographs are of models.

## **Thanks**

This booklet has been written, revised and edited by Macmillan Cancer Support's information development nurses and editorial team. It has been approved by our medical editor, Dr Terry Priestman, Consultant Clinical Oncologist.

With thanks to Lara Barnish, Deputy Nurse Director, Pan Birmingham Cancer Network; Anita Corrigan, Nurse Director, Merseyside and Cheshire Cancer Network; Alison Hill, Nurse Director, South West London Cancer Network; Claire Morris, Lead for Clinical Pathways and Holistic Needs Assessment, National Cancer Action Team; Anne Wilkinson, National Improvement Lead – Cancer Improvement, NHS Improvement; Dr Catherine Wilson, Nurse Consultant, Survivorship Programme, Mount Vernon Cancer Centre; and the patient reviewers.

## **Sources**

*Holistic Common Assessment of Supportive and Palliative Care Needs for Adults with Cancer: Assessment Guidance.* 2007. Cancer Action Team. London

**Macmillan Cancer Support improves  
the lives of people affected by cancer.  
We provide practical, medical,  
emotional and financial support  
and push for better cancer care.**

**One in three of us will get cancer.  
Two million of us are living with it.  
We are all affected by cancer.  
We can all help. We are Macmillan.**

**General enquiries 020 7840 7840  
Questions about living with cancer?  
Call free on 0808 808 00 00  
(Mon–Fri 9am–8pm)**

**Alternatively, visit [macmillan.org.uk](http://macmillan.org.uk)  
Hard of hearing? Use textphone  
0808 808 0121, or Text Relay.  
Non English speaker? Interpreters available.**

© Macmillan Cancer Support, 2010. 1<sup>st</sup> edition MAC12957  
Macmillan Cancer Support, registered charity in England and  
Wales (261017), Scotland (SC039907) and the Isle of Man (604).

 This paper is recycled – please recycle

Next planned review in 2012

**WE ARE  
MACMILLAN.  
CANCER SUPPORT**