

Paediatric Oncology Shared Care Unit (POSCU)

Information for patients, parents and carers

This leaflet explains the services we provide for children with cancer and for their families. It is not intended to replace the discussion between you and your doctor or nurse, but it may act as a starting point for this discussion. If you have any queries or concerns, or you would like anything explained more fully, please speak with a member of our team.

What is shared care?

Children with cancer receive care from a variety of health professionals in a range of settings. This includes specialised paediatric oncology centres such as Principal Treatment Centres (PTCs), Paediatric Oncology Shared Care Units (POSCUs) and Children's Community Nursing Teams (CCNT). These make up the 'shared care' system.

The shared care system enables your child to receive some of their care closer to home or at home, when appropriate.

King's College Hospital provides a POSCU service to children with cancer who live locally. Your child's care will be shared with one of the PTCs: Royal Marsden Hospital, Great Ormond Street Hospital or University College London Hospital.

The PTC will lead on cancer treatment decisions and overall coordination of care. King's College Hospital POSCU, as your local hospital, will be where you go when your child is unwell or needs supportive care. We can also give some planned chemotherapy. We aim to provide holistic support for your child and your family.

Where are we?

Our POSCU is based on the third floor of the Cheyne Wing at King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill. The main inpatient ward for children being treated for cancer is Toni & Guy ward. This – and the Philip Isaacs day treatment unit – are next to each other. We sometimes care for children on the other paediatric wards: Princess Elizabeth, Rays of Sunshine, Thomas Cook and Lion. There are isolation spaces and cubicles for children and young people with cancer who are admitted for day case or inpatient treatment.

What does the POSCU do?

The POSCU has a multidisciplinary team (MDT) made up of different health professionals who work together to look after your child. We work closely with the PTCs to provide some of your child's treatment and care locally, such as:

- giving some types of chemotherapy
- red cell and platelet transfusions (blood product support)
- treating febrile neutropenia and other acute illness
- treatment and support for other complications of cancer therapy, including nutritional support, physiotherapy and help with psychological difficulties.

The POSCU Team

Paediatric Oncology and Haematology Consultants	Our consultants oversee inpatient care and make decisions about your child's treatment if they are admitted to King's. They take turns to cover the wards and work closely with the general paediatric team. They also have an overview of outpatients under the POSCU team, arranging investigations, prescribing and coordinating care.
Clinical Nurse Specialists (CNSs)	Our CNS (Clinical Nurse Specialist) team provide a specialist nursing service for children and young people with cancer. They help you and your child to get involved in – and make decisions about – their care. CNSs assess your child's health and nursing needs, they receive and make referrals, order diagnostic tests and coordinate multidisciplinary meetings. The CNSs will schedule and give chemotherapy; they will contact you regularly to adjust the doses of oral chemotherapy if your child needs this.
Advanced Clinical Practitioner (ACP)	Our ACP is a highly skilled and experienced nurse who works closely with both the CNS team and doctors. The ACP will most often be the clinician to assess your child clinically to ensure they are well enough to receive chemotherapy. They can independently prescribe medications and blood products.
Psychologist	Our psychologist is available should your child or family member need them. They can help your child to understand and manage their feelings, thoughts, experiences and behaviours. They can support your child and you to cope with some of the difficulties that can come from having cancer and/or its treatment.
Physiotherapist	A physiotherapist can help to manage the side effects caused by treatment. They will assess your child to check for any potential problems and give them a tailored set of exercises and movements to encourage their physical wellbeing and help them to have the best quality of life during their treatment.
Dietitian	Cancer and its treatments, such as chemotherapy and radiotherapy, can affect the amount and types of food your child is able to eat. Our dietitian will work with both you and your child to develop a personalised plan to ensure they remain as well-nourished as possible throughout their cancer journey. This support helps them continue to grow and develop, and improves their overall health outcome.

Specialist Pharmacist	Our specialist pharmacist is regularly involved in multidisciplinary ward rounds. They provide advice on medication to help the ward team discharge patients safely and efficiently. You can also ask them for advice on how to use a drug. They work with the clinical team to check chemotherapy drugs to ensure your child gets the correct dose as well as monitoring their blood counts.
Social Worker	Our social worker will provide you and your child with information, advice, signposting, advocacy and wellbeing support. They can help you to claim benefits (Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payment (16+)), apply for grants and deal with housing difficulties. They work together with the social workers at Young Lives vs Cancer and local authorities.
Family Support Worker	Our family support worker offers practical and emotional assistance to ease and address any non-medical concerns. They can offer a listening ear during chemotherapy and hospital admissions, advise on transport and wellbeing, and direct you to charities who can provide support.
Health Play Specialists	Our health play specialists are healthcare professionals who play a vital role in assessing your child and supporting them using therapeutic play techniques. They aim to ensure that your child's experience when they visit the hospital or have a procedure is as positive and anxiety-free as possible.
Patient Navigator and Patient Pathway Coordinator	Our patient navigator is a central point of contact for your child throughout their treatment. They coordinate your child's care and assist with appointments, holiday referrals and inquiries about the MyChart App. They also facilitate MDT meetings and provide the team with admin support. The patient pathway coordinator also provides administrative support and cover for the team.
Hospital Schoolroom	King's Schoolroom is a safe, supportive, friendly environment where your child can keep up with their schoolwork and fit learning around their medical needs. They can have lessons as part of a group or individually and can be taught either in the schoolroom or on the ward. The school staff work closely with King's therapy and medical teams and can liaise with your child's school if needed.
Community Nurses	Community nurses work closely with hospital and community services to ensure your child gets the all-round care they need. They are all paediatric nurses with specialised training or experience in caring for and supporting children and families at home.

When should I call the POSCU?

If you are ever worried about your child's health, please contact the POSCU team. Contact us if:

- your child has a temperature of 38°C and above
- your child feels unwell without a temperature
- you have any concerns or questions about your child's treatment
- you need any additional support for your child or family.

POSCU CNS Team (9am - 5pm Monday to Friday): **020 3299 4391**

Toni and Guy Ward (all other times): **020 3299 3102** or via switchboard **020 3299 9000**

What should I do in an emergency?

If your child is very unwell, call 999. Otherwise call the CNS team or Toni and Guy ward to arrange an urgent review.

Prescriptions

If you need a repeat prescription for your child, please try to let us know at least five working days in advance. All medication prescriptions should be collected from King's Outpatient Pharmacy on Denmark Hill (between King's Dental Institute and the Faraday Building).

MyChart

Our MyChart app and website lets you securely access parts of your health record with us, giving you more control over your care. Visit www.kch.nhs.uk/mychart to find out more.

Sharing your information

King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust has partnered with Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust through the King's Health Partners Academic Health Sciences Centre. We are working together to give our patients the best possible care, so you might find we invite you for appointments at Guy's or St Thomas' hospitals. King's College Hospital and Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trusts share an electronic patient record system, which means information about your health record can be accessed safely and securely by health and care staff at both Trusts. For more information visit www.kch.nhs.uk.

Care provided by students

We provide clinical training where our students get practical experience by treating patients. Please tell your doctor or nurse if you do not want students to be involved in your care. Your treatment will not be affected by your decision.

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) offers support, information and assistance to patients, relatives and visitors. They can also provide help and advice if you have a concern or complaint that staff have not been able to resolve for you. They can pass on praise or thanks to our teams. The PALS office is on the ground floor of the Hambleton Wing, near the main entrance on Bessemer Road - staff will be happy to direct you.

PALS at King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill, London SE5 9RS

Tel: **020 3299 4618**

Email: kings.pals@nhs.net

If you would like the information in this leaflet in a different language or format, please contact our Interpreting and Accessible Communication Support on 020 3299 4618 or email kings.access@nhs.net