Head, neck and thyroid clinical nurse specialists (CNS)

Claire Clark, Karen Roberts
Susan Saxby (Oncology Research/Thyroid Nurse)

The role of the clinical nurse specialist (CNS)/key worker in head and neck/thyroid cancer

We are specialist nurses working alongside a group of professionals (multi-disciplinary team – MDT) at Poole Hospital who are experts in head, neck and thyroid cancer. We provide support and information to people with a cancer diagnosis, and their families and carers. Our aim is to support you, from the point of diagnosis, throughout your investigations, treatment planning, treatment and ongoing follow-up. This is sometimes known as a “cancer journey”.

Some of the things we do

You may meet us at your outpatient appointment when you are given your diagnosis and/or treatment plan. We are able to support you at this time and ensure that you are given the relevant written information and contact numbers to take home with you. You may see one of us more than the other. This person will be your key worker but both of us will be familiar with your case if you have questions.

Meeting new people when you are under stress can be confusing so, when appropriate, we liaise with other members of the MDT (doctors, consultants, dietitians, speech and language therapists, etc.) on your behalf. We act as your advocate and we can explain the other professionals’ roles to you.

A cancer diagnosis can be very upsetting and frightening for you and those close to you. We will try to help you cope and manage the many thoughts, feelings and emotions you may have following diagnosis. You may be asked to complete a psychological assessment as part of this process. Where appropriate, and with your consent, we may be able to access specialist counselling services, both in the hospital and in the community setting. If you feel that you would benefit from talking to a former patient who has had the same or similar treatment as you are expecting, we can put you in contact with a ‘buddy’. This person would usually be a member of the HANDS cancer support group.

Where appropriate we can help with basic benefit advice and Macmillan cancer support grants, and can signpost you to other available services. Please do not feel embarrassed asking us for information.

You may have a long way to travel to the hospital for appointments and investigations. We are able to provide advice and support over the telephone, even after your treatment is completed, as sometimes patients can find it difficult to get back to living a normal life after treatment.

We try to visit you on the ward or in the chemotherapy and radiotherapy department. We will liaise with the teams there to provide a smooth pathway of care and discharge plan.

What if I have problems at home or need help?
If you are at home experiencing worrying symptoms, you can contact us Monday to Friday on 01202 442365 or 442071 for Claire and Karen, or 448232 for Susan.

Out of hours, if you have been a patient on Ward B2, you can ring 01202 442416 or 442415.

If you have had chemotherapy or radiotherapy, please ring Sandbanks or Durlston Ward via the hospital switchboard on 01202 665511.

**What are the working hours of the CNS?**

Our working hours are:

Monday, Wednesday – Friday, 8.30 am – 4.30 pm
Tuesday 8 am – 4 pm

On Tuesdays we are not in the office until approximately 1 pm as we are in the head and neck clinic until that time. However, if your message is truly urgent, please contact us via the hospital switchboard on 01202 665511 and ask for bleep 0967 or 0166 for Claire and Karen, or bleep 0201 for Susan.

The CNS answerphone is checked regularly throughout the day, so please feel free to leave your name and contact details with us. It is helpful if you are able to leave your hospital number too, as occasionally we have patients with similar or the same name.

If you would prefer to contact us by email, it is best to copy your message to the other CNSs as necessary. Our email addresses are:

- claire.clark@poole.nhs.uk
- karen.roberts@poole.nhs.uk
- susan.saxby@poole.nhs.uk

If you would like a copy of the clinic letter which is sent to your GP (regarding any of your consultations in the hospital), please ask the doctor at the end of your consultation or advise Claire, Karen or Susan.

**Other members of the head and neck team**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consultant head and neck surgeons</th>
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<td>Mr V Ilankovan</td>
<td>Miss A Evans</td>
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<td>Mr P Ramchandani</td>
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<td>Mr S Walji</td>
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<td>Mr H Cox</td>
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<td>Dr E King</td>
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<th>Consultant oncologists</th>
<th>Speech and language therapists</th>
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<td>Dr P Crellin</td>
<td>Mrs P Scott</td>
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<td>Dr J Davies</td>
<td>Mrs F Hilder</td>
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<td>Dr A Chakrabati</td>
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<th>Dietitian</th>
<th>Oncology social worker</th>
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<td>Miss C McCarney</td>
<td>Mrs C Baker</td>
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Other members of the team may be introduced to you throughout your treatment.

**Useful contacts and support**

**Head and Neck Dorset Support (HANDS)**  
(Poole Hospital NHS Foundation Trust Cancer Support Group)

For more details and meeting dates, contact CNSs. **Macmillan Cancer Support**
Supporting patients living with and beyond cancer

Tel: 0808 808 00 00 (free phone)  

**Mouth Cancer Foundation**

UK Charity, patient support, advocacy and more

Tel: 01924 950 950  
HYPERLINK "http://www.mouthcancerfoundation.org" [www.mouthcancerfoundation.org](http://www.mouthcancerfoundation.org)

**Health Information Centre**

Poole Hospital NHS Foundation Trust  
Tel: 01202 448003 (Monday – Friday)

**NHS Alcohol Advice and Information**

Tel: 0800 917 8282

**About Face**

Local head and neck cancer support charity

Tel: 01202 721021  
HYPERLINK "http://www.about-face.info" [www.about-face.info](http://www.about-face.info)

**Let’s Face It**

National Support Network

Tel: 01843 833724  
HYPERLINK "http://www.lets-face-it.org.uk" [www.lets-face-it.org.uk](http://www.lets-face-it.org.uk)

**NHS Stop Smoking Service**

Bournemouth and Poole area  
Tel: 0300 30 38 038  

Dorset area  
Tel: 0800 007 6653  
HYPERLINK "http://www.dorsetsmokestop.co.uk" [www.dorsetsmokestop.co.uk](http://www.dorsetsmokestop.co.uk)

**The National Association of Laryngectomee Clubs (NALC)**
Lower Ground Floor
152 Buckingham Palace Road
SW1W 9TR

Tel: 0207 730 8585

Changing Faces
National Charity for facial disfigurement
Tel: 0845 4500275

Thyroid Cancer Forum UK
HYPERLINK "http://www.thyroid-cancer-forum-uk.org" www.thyroid-cancer-forum-uk.org

Butterfly Thyroid Cancer Trust
Helpline Tel: 01207 545469
HYPERLINK "http://www.butterfly.org.uk" www.butterfly.org.uk

Thyroid Cancer Support Group – Wales
Tel: 0845 0092737
HYPERLINK "http://www.thyroidsupportwales.co.uk" www.thyroidsupportwales.co.uk

Poole Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)
For welfare benefits advice
Tel: 01202 670716

SMART ( Substance Misuse Assessment and Referral Team)
If you are concerned about your alcohol intake and want help to give up
Tel: 01202 735777

NHS Choices
For information prescriptions
HYPERLINK "http://www.nhs.uk/ips" www.nhs.uk/ips

Free prescriptions for patients being treated for cancer
Since April 2009 people being treated for cancer have been eligible for a five-year exemption certificate for free prescriptions (not just those relating to cancer). You can obtain an application form for your exemption certificate from your GP. Ask for an FP92A form.

Contact details
Head and neck clinical nurse specialists Tel. 01202 442365 / 442071
Oncology research/thyroid nurse Tel. 01202 448232 / bleep 0201

For further general health-related information, please ask the relevant department for an Information Prescription or contact:

The Health Information Centre
Poole Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
Longfleet Road
We can supply this information in larger print, on audiotape, or have it translated for you. Please call the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01202 448499 or the Health Information Centre on 01202 448003 for further advice.