



Social Work

**Help, Support and Advice
for you, your family
and carers**

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Index

Welcome to the Douglas Macmillan Hospice	1
The Social Work Team	2
The service we offer	3
Social work in palliative care	4
How can we help?	5
Simply someone to talk to	5
Building confidence	5
Helping families to communicate	6
Children and Young People	6
Support for Carers	6
Community Care Packages	7
Planning for your future care	8
How to gain access to one of our Social Workers	10
Have we done what we aimed to do?	11
What to do if you are unhappy with any aspect of our service	11
Appeal	12
Regulations	12
Our patient and carers opinion questionnaire	13
Our Forum	13
The Hospice Complies with the Data Protection Act	14
Access to Your Own Health Records	14
Smoking	14
Booklets available from the Douglas Macmillan Hospice	15
Further Information	16



Welcome

This booklet contains a brief description of all the services provided by our Social Workers. Social Workers are based in the Hospice and will see you there or will visit at home.

With the information contained in this booklet, we hope that we will answer many of your initial questions. Please ask a member of staff for one of our other booklets should you require more detailed information on any other service that we provide.

This booklet is for you and your family. Please let us have your comments on any changes that you think we should make to improve the contents and design.

The Social Work Team

The Douglas Macmillan Hospice has a team of Social Workers, who are very experienced and have specialised knowledge of palliative care. Our Social Workers are part of the multi-disciplinary team, which cares for each individual patient and their family. They work closely with the Day Hospice doctors and nurses on the In-Patient Unit, our specialist community nurses, the Occupational Therapist and the Physiotherapist.

We realise that strain can be put on patients and their families by the effects of long-term illness. In this booklet, we will describe some of the ways in which our Social Workers may be able to help.

The service we offer

Having an illness can have an impact on many other areas of your life. We have listed below examples of the ways in which we may be able to guide and support you.

- Individual support and advice
- Support for family/friends/loved ones
- Practical help
- Representation/advocacy
- Liaison and referral to other organisations
- Financial/benefits advice
- Coping with change

Although no list can be exhaustive the sorts of things we can help with are:

- Working with other services to arrange care at home
- Advice and information on welfare benefits
- Advice and support with legal and financial matters
- House advice
- Arranging alternatives to hospice care e.g. nursing home, care in your own home
- Helping you to plan for your future care

Social work in palliative care

In the palliative stage of their illness, patients and their families may experience social, physical, psychological and spiritual pain.

The types of emotions and feelings experienced may include:

- Fear
- Anxiety
- Confusion
- Anger
- Disappointment
- Difficulties in talking openly
- Unable to express feelings openly.



Tensions can develop within families as they seek to cope with a new and frightening situation.

In addition, practical and financial difficulties may arise when people are unable to work or when mobility and independence are affected.

Our Social Workers are here to help if any of these concerns apply to you or your carers.

How can we help?

Simply someone to talk to

Sensitive, skilled listening and talking are very important in palliative care. Patients and their families may feel relieved if they are given the opportunity to express their anxieties and concerns. We will provide a safe place in which to express these feelings in a supportive and understanding way.

By talking things through, we hope to help the individual to recognise their own inner strength and their ability to cope.

Building confidence

Initially, patients receiving palliative care may feel overwhelmed and unable to make decisions. Our experience has shown that many patients will find an inner strength and worth if they set themselves realistic goals. Our Social Workers are able to help this process by encouraging the patient to break down each problem into something that is manageable. Using this approach, we will encourage patients to make their own decisions and choices.

Helping families to communicate

It is sometimes difficult to talk about important issues. Our Social Workers can help the family to understand and respect each other. The Social Worker will encourage everyone to express their own feelings and emotions in a supportive and safe environment.

Children and Young People

Children and young people are particularly sensitive to the changes that take place when a member of the family becomes seriously ill. There is a natural tendency for families to protect them from the truth. Unfortunately, this often leaves children feeling isolated and uninformed.

Our Social Workers can offer suggestions, advice and support for parents about how to answer the questions raised by their children. Social Workers have a range of items to help parents talk to their children.

Support for carers

Support for carers is available on a one-to-one basis to give advice and information but also to explore some of the concerns and feelings you may have.

Community Care Packages

Many patients will wish to stay in their own homes for as long as possible. To enable them to achieve this, support can be provided through a Community Care Package after initial assessment. Our social workers will advocate on behalf of patients and their families. We will co-ordinate, guide and support you through the process of obtaining the appropriate care package and

- Advising on financial arrangements.
- Acting as the co-ordinator when Care in the Community is relevant.
- Obtaining help with personal care at home.
- Helping patients to understand the level of care that they may need.
- Liaising with other professionals to obtain relevant services and equipment. e.g. Occupational Therapist and Physiotherapist.
- Assisting with the application for any grants for special needs when required.

Social workers will assist the patients and their families by making contact with the appropriate agencies and working with them to provide the appropriate services for you as quickly as possible.

Planning for your future care

You may want to take the opportunity to think about what living with a serious illness might mean to you, your partner or your relatives, particularly if you become unable to make decisions for yourself. You may wish to record what your preferences and wishes for future care and treatment might be or you may simply choose to do nothing at all.

One way of making people aware of your wishes is by a process of advanced care planning. This is a process of discussion between you and those who care for you, for example nurses, doctors, care home manager, or family members. Not everyone will want to engage in such a conversation and that is fine.

Advanced care planning can occur at any time you choose. The wishes you express are personal to you and can be about anything to do with your future care, for example:

- How you might want any religious or spiritual beliefs you hold to be reflected in your care.
- The name of a person/people you wish to act on your behalf at a later time.
- Your choice about where you would like to be cared for, for example, home, in hospital, nursing home or hospice.

- Your thoughts on different treatments or types of care that you might be offered.
- Concerns or solutions to practical issues for example who will look after your dog should you become ill.

You may have a very specific view about a particular treatment that you do not wish to have. This can be done by making an advanced decision to refuse treatment. You are advised to discuss this with a health care professional who is fully aware of your medical history. The advance decision will only be used if at some time in the future you lose the ability to make your own decisions about your treatment.

You may wish to name someone, or more than one person, to speak on your behalf if you are not able to make decisions yourself. This person can be a close family member or friend. If in the future you are unable to make decisions for yourself, a health or social care professional would if possible consult with the person named to provide information about your wishes, feelings and values. This would help the health care professional to act in your best interests. This is not the same as legally appointing someone to make decisions under a lasting power of attorney. More information on making a lasting power of attorney is available from the Office of the Public Guardians. Professionals involved in your care and members of your family may find it helpful if your wishes and preferences are in writing with a copy given to everyone who needs to know.

Remember you can change your mind at any time.

How to gain access to one of our Social Workers

When appropriate, the nurses responsible for your care will refer you to the Social Workers. You can also make a direct approach by asking to see a Social Worker or telephoning on the main hospice phone number.

Social Workers wear identity badges. If one of our Social Workers is calling on you at home they will always make an appointment before coming to see you.

Have we done what we aimed to do?

In this booklet, we have told you about the level of service that we aim to provide. We would greatly appreciate your comments on the level of service that we have provided. It is through your comments that we are able to identify if there is some shortfall in our service.

If you have any comments, please mention them to one of the Social Workers

What to do if you are unhappy with any aspect of our service

Please let us know if you are unhappy with any aspect of our service. In the first instance, we ask you to raise your concerns with one the staff concerned with your care.

If you would prefer to write to us and make a formal complaint, please write to the Chief Executive, at the address given on the front of this booklet.

We will make every attempt to resolve any complaint within 20 working days. If you are unhappy with our response, you may request a referral to our Clinical Governance Committee.

Appeal

When we have completed our investigations, should you still feel unhappy, you may appeal to The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman at the following address:

Millbank Tower
Millbank
London
SW1P4QP

Telephone: 0121 713 8085 or 0121 713 8091

Email: centralihccomplaints@healthcarecommission.org.uk



Regulation

The hospice is regulated by the Care Quality Commission. A copy of our inspection report is available on request from our Registered Manager.

Our patient and carers opinion questionnaire

At regular intervals, we send out a questionnaire to monitor the opinions of our patients and their carers. Should you receive one of our questionnaires, it would be very helpful if you would complete the form and return it to us.

A copy of the results obtained from our most recent survey is available, on request.

Our Forum

The Douglas Macmillan Hospice has a Forum, which discusses how the hospice can best meet the needs of patients. Please let a member of staff know if you would like any information about the Patients' Forum.

The Hospice Complies with the Data Protection Act

The Douglas Macmillan Hospice (DMH) keeps information about you and the details of the care you received. It is the duty of the DMH to protect the confidentiality of your information. We use this information to monitor the quality of care provided by the DMH. In certain circumstances, we are requested to pass this information to other healthcare providers to ensure continuity of care provision.

If you wish to restrict the sharing of your care details with other healthcare professionals, please make this clear to your nurse.

Access to Your Own Health Records

You have a right of access to your own health records. There would be a cost implication should you require your notes to be photocopied. Please ask one of the staff if you require further information.

Smoking

In order to fulfill our role in the promotion of healthy living and to protect everyone from the adverse effects of passive smoking. Patients are only allowed to smoke in designated external smoking shelters. This enables the hospice to comply with current legislation to prohibit smoking in public places.

Booklets available from the Douglas Macmillan Hospice

- **General Information**
- **Welcome to the Day Hospice**
- **Welcome to the In-Patient Unit**
- **Specialist Palliative Care in the Community**
- **Hospice at Home**
- **What to do When Someone Dies at Home**
- **What to do When Someone Dies in the Hospice**
- **Social Work**
- **Spiritual Care**
- **Bereavement Support**

Further Information

If you would like further information on any healthcare services, the following may be of help.

For general enquiries relating to health services:

- Contact your GP, district nurse or another member of the primary care team.
- Telephone NHS Direct 0845 4647

If you are receiving hospital treatment:

- Contact your Hospital Doctor or Clinical Nurse Specialist

For general enquiries regarding cancer services:

- Telephone the Macmillan Cancer Support Information Line on 0845 601 6161
- Telephone the Central Outpatients Department Cancer Information and Support Centre on 01782 554 363.

For enquiries regarding hospice services in North Staffordshire:

- Telephone Douglas Macmillan Hospice on 01782 344300

You may also find the following web sites useful:

www.doh.gov.uk/cancer

www.carersuk.demon.co.uk

www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

www.crossroads.org.uk

www.macmillan.org.uk

www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk

www.cancerbackup.org.uk

www.hospiceinformation.co.uk

www.cancercaresoc.demon.co.uk

www.mariecuie.org.uk

www.cancerlink.org.uk

www.publicguardian.gov.uk