

Patient Entitlements

The Entitlements of cancer patients and their families

The NHS believes that patient care is based on making “**No decision about me without me**”.

The purpose of this leaflet is to support you in working together with your health care team during this challenging time by providing information that will help you to make choices about your treatment and care. It tells you about your key entitlements. If you need help finding further information for patients, don't hesitate to ask your GP, practice nurse or other member of your health care team. Remember: they are here to help you.

Entitlement 1: You can choose where you are treated

Some hospitals specialise in certain types of cancer, others provide a more general service. You can choose where you go and even change hospital for different stages of your treatment.

Your GP and the information below will help you to decide where is best for you to go for what.

Entitlement 2: Care provided by a fully staffed team of cancer experts

Hospitals have Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDTs) for cancer care. The team reviews the type of cancer you have and agrees with you the best treatment and care plan for you. The MDT is a group of specialists, including doctors, surgeons, oncologists, nurses, rehabilitation experts and pathologists – who are experts in cancer care and treatment.

Entitlement 3: A “key worker” your contact for information and support

There will be a key worker (often a clinic specialist nurse or a rehabilitation expert) to support and lead you through your treatment and care. The key worker will work with you to find out your individual needs using an assessment tool called the **Holistic Needs Assessment**. This will enable them to develop an individual care plan for you. The key worker will explain that you are entitled to **free prescriptions** when undergoing cancer treatment.

Entitlement 4: Care which meets national standards of good practice

The aim is to ensure, wherever you are treated in the country, the services you receive meet national standards for treatment and care. This follows the ‘Improving Outcomes Guidance’ (IOG) from the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE).

The performance of teams delivering cancer care is measured using a process called Peer Review to ensure the services meet these standards. All areas of care and treatment are covered by Peer Review including chemotherapy, surgery, radiotherapy, rehabilitation, counseling, and “survivorship” – that is, living with and beyond cancer. You can find out more about the Peer Review process here:

www.mycancertreatment.nhs.uk/about-us/ncpr-process/

You can find out about the IOG for your cancer type by looking at the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) website:

www.nice.org.uk/guidance

You can see how well different MDTs and hospitals perform using the ‘Find Your Treatment’ tool on My Cancer Treatment:

www.mycancertreatment.nhs.uk/find-your-treatment/.

Entitlement 5: Access to patients’ views on all aspects of NHS cancer services

Cancer teams undertake a patient survey, normally at least every two years, to see how well their service meets the needs of patients and what improvements need to be made. The 2011/2012 National Cancer Patient Experience survey results, organised by the Department of Health, results are available and five key questions chosen by the NCPR patient group are included in the report on My Cancer Treatment. You may wish to see all the results and compare them for individual MDTs and hospitals. The following website provides this information:

www.ncin.org.uk

Entitlement 6:

When a person is diagnosed with cancer, the hospital multidisciplinary team contacts your General Practitioner (GP) within 24 hours of you receiving this significant news. You are entitled to a Cancer Care Review with your GP who is able to offer on-going support and care, working alongside your hospital care team. At the moment this happens within 6 months of you receiving your cancer diagnosis but will soon happen within 3 months. More details will be included here when available.