



UNIVERSITY OF  
Southampton

# Improving Access to Cancer Clinical Nurse Specialists and Key Workers

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**NHS**  
University Hospital  
Southampton  
NHS Foundation Trust



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Nurse Specialists and Key Workers

Evaluation report, June 2019

**NHS**  
University Hospital Southampton  
NHS Foundation Trust

**NHS**  
Wessex  
Cancer Alliance

# Background

- Access to a Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) has a positive impact on experience of cancer care, however there is a national shortage.
- Cancer nursing teams must address capacity issues in the context of advances in molecular diagnostics, genomics, treatment and technology – all factors shaping the future CNS role.
- Policy makers have recommended testing new service models incorporating the introduction of cancer key workers (AfC band 3 or above) to improve patient access to specialist nursing support.

The 2018 National Cancer Patient Experience Survey<sup>1</sup> reported 9% of respondents were not given the name of a CNS, and nearly 15% reported it was not easy to contact their CNS.

<sup>1</sup> 73,708 responses

The project introduced two full time Cancer Support Workers to the GI specialist cancer nursing team at UHSFT

## AIM

To improve the experience of patients recently diagnosed with cancer by improving access to nurse specialists and key workers.

## PRIMARY DRIVERS

Patients have timely access to a cancer nursing team responsive to their needs and concerns.

Patients are aware of how and when to contact their cancer nursing team.

Patients receive support and care appropriate to their level of need.

## SECONDARY DRIVERS

New support worker roles.

Assessment and care planning.

Information provision.

Model of supportive care delivery: needs based stratification.

## INTERVENTIONS

Appoint, induct and train 2 Cancer Support Workers.

Re-profile skill-mix, responsibilities and activities within the nursing team.

Develop patient assessment process to determine self-efficacy and degree of complexity.

Agree levels of supportive care based on degree of complexity and self-efficacy (e.g. who needs more CNS input?).

Develop patient information resource outlining supportive care "offer".



## Clinical Nurse Specialist

## Cancer Support Worker

Assessment and screening  
Collaborative care planning  
Promoting supported self-management  
Multi-agency | Multi-professional liaison  
Provision of information resources  
(online/printed)  
Referral to rehab services  
(e.g. Wesfit)

Specialist site-specific knowledge  
Complex psycho-social care of patient  
Treatment—including multimodality, genomics, immunotherapy, personalised medicine  
Investigations/ tests/ specific specialist knowledge relating to the pathway from diagnosis to discharge  
Assessment of complex specialist need  
Complex pathway management across boundaries and organisations  
Supporting complex treatment decisions  
Symptom and toxicity management  
Identification and management consequences of treatment  
Research, Education, Service development, Audit  
Clinical leadership

Interventions to support behaviour change including: Health coaching, Goal setting, MECC\*  
Identification and building links with local support services and agencies. Care navigation, signposting and referral to agencies  
Health and wellbeing advice:  
Healthy eating  
Exercise/physical activity  
Stress management  
Emotional wellbeing  
(including: signposting to "stop smoking"/ alcohol support services gyms / complementary therapists/ befriending services / support groups)  
Practical support re: finance / benefits / travel insurance, transport, housing  
Carer support  
My Medical Record

# Evaluation findings

- Introducing CSWs to the specialist nursing team resulted in a positive impact on access to: assessment and care planning; community support services; practical and financial support; and health and wellbeing advice and support.
- Following the introduction of the CSW role, patients were more likely to report they were given contact details of a key worker and that the wider healthcare team worked well together.



