

# St Christopher's

Coming to  
St Christopher's  
Hospice as an  
inpatient

**INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS,  
CARERS AND FAMILIES**

This leaflet explains what you can expect as an inpatient at St Christopher's. We hope to answer your concerns by concentrating on the most commonly asked questions. If you have any more questions please ask your doctor or nurse.

## 1 Why do people come to the inpatient unit?

Patients come into the inpatient unit for a variety of reasons. You may need help to control difficult symptoms such as pain or breathlessness, with emotional and family support, or terminal care.

## 2 What if English is not my first language?

We have access to an interpreting service, and encourage you and your family to use it to make it easier for you to tell us what you need and how we can help you. Please ask the Admissions Office or one of the nurses to arrange it.

## 3 How long can I expect to remain an inpatient?

This varies from patient to patient.

St Christopher's is not a long stay unit. If you come to us as an inpatient, we will review your care regularly. Sometimes patients still need nursing care, but not the high level of specialist care that the hospice provides. If this happens we will, in consultation with you and your family or main carer, arrange for you to be transferred to a care home, or return to your own home with appropriate support.

## 4 What is the inpatient unit like?

The inpatient unit has a mixture of single rooms, with their own bathrooms, and four-bedded bays. These are arranged in four bright wards, one on each floor of the main building. You will be allocated a single room or bed in a bay according to your nursing needs, preference and bed availability. Each bed has a TV, and arrangements can be made to use the internet.

The wards are staffed by specialist nurses, who work as part of a multi-professional team. If you wish, you will be able to take part in creative activities even if you cannot leave your bed, as staff will visit you. You can participate in these activities alone or with others: music therapy, complementary therapies, digital art, painting, pottery and more.

## 5 What about meals?

You can order food at any time between 8am and 7pm every day. In addition breakfast is served every day from 8am and a 'Chef's Special' lunch menu from 12pm. You can have hot and soft drinks and snacks at any time, and alcoholic drinks are available for patients before lunch and your evening meal. We have a varied and changing menu, but we are happy to accommodate any particular preferences whenever possible. If you are on a special diet, please tell us so that we can prepare a meal that suits you. We work closely with a dietician, who can also advise you.

## 6 Can I smoke?

The hospice is a no smoking building. Patients who smoke may do so in a designated area in the garden. This also applies to e-cigarettes.

## 7 What do I need to bring?

Please bring in with you the medicines that you are taking and if possible your most recent GP repeat prescription request. This helps us to make sure that we have an up to date view of your medicines and means that once they have been checked you should be able to continue to take them on the ward.

We have a pharmacy service so we will make sure that you have all the medicines that you need whilst you are an inpatient and when you go out on visits or go home. Medicines are supplied free of charge in the same way as in hospitals.

If you are taking any unusual medicines or products that are not available on prescription – for example health food supplements – we may ask you to supply these yourself. If there are any problems with your medicines, our pharmacist will be available to help.

## 8 Where can my visitors eat and relax?

The Anniversary Centre on the ground floor is a friendly and relaxing place where you and your visitors can enjoy refreshments together looking out on to the beautiful Rotary Garden. The cafe is open from 8am to 9pm.

There is also an information area in the Centre where you and your visitors can find up to date information about a number of key areas for patients and their carers coping with illness. This includes printed leaflets, access to the internet and the chance to talk to one of our trained volunteers who will be able to direct you to the information you might need.

## 9 Can we use the gardens?

The gardens are open to patients and visitors, and you can get around them in a wheelchair or a bed.

It is really important for your care that the information you give us is as full and accurate as possible.

St Christopher's Hospice in Sydenham, south east London, provides skilled and compassionate specialist care to patients with advanced cancer and other life-limiting illnesses. We deliver specialist care through teams of nurses, doctors, social workers, occupational and physiotherapists, and other professionals including arts therapists and a spiritual care team. We care for people at home through our home care service, or on the wards in the inpatient unit. Many of our home care patients attend our outpatient clinics and spend time in the Anniversary Centre at the Sydenham site or the Caritas Centre in Bromley. We also offer support to local care homes and primary care teams.

Our aim is to ensure the best quality of life for all our patients and to support their families and friends.

All our specialist palliative care and family care services are free of charge. It costs £17.9 million a year to deliver our specialist services, but only 33 per cent of our funding comes from the NHS. We must raise around £12 million from grants, legacies, the generous support of our local community, local businesses, trusts and through our shops.



## **St Christopher's Hospice**

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