

St Christopher's

Social work
and welfare at
St Christopher's

**INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS,
CARERS AND FAMILIES**

The social workers and welfare officers employed by St Christopher's provide expert support and advice to St Christopher's patients and their families, and they can either visit you at home or see you in the Anniversary Centre at St Christopher's, or meet you somewhere else if you prefer.

Social work

Why might I want to see a social worker?

When someone is seriously ill, the whole family is affected. All the normal routines and ways of doing things have to change, and this can be very difficult for everyone.

St Christopher's Social Work Team has specialist knowledge about the sort of issues that can come up for patients and families in your situation.

They will be able to work with you and your family in a flexible way to accommodate your needs, taking account of what helps you to cope.

I have just been referred to home care/the hospice

This may have come as a shock, and you may feel upset, angry, or frightened about what has happened with your illness and treatment. Some people can become anxious or depressed. Talking through these feelings with someone outside your family and friends can sometimes strengthen your resilience. The social workers may be able to help practically and emotionally.

I don't know where to start

Social workers can advise about what help is available for you locally, make contact with other agencies such as your local council, and arrange for you to meet the specialist welfare team if needed.

What about my family?

The social workers are here to help your family as well. You or your partner may be finding it hard to adjust to the different ways you have to do things when someone is seriously ill, and to the effects the different treatments may be having on your life,

intimacy and relationships. Sometimes it can feel that the illness has taken over everything, and you may just want to get your life back.

You may have children or young people in your family who also need to know what is happening, and it may be hard to work out when to talk to them and how to do it. Although you are the experts on your children, social workers have experience of supporting children in this kind of situation, and can help you to work out how to have these conversations, or meet with young people in a local café for example.

I'm the carer, what help is there for me?

Many carers find that taking care of someone is an important and fulfilling time in their lives, but it can also be very draining, and many carers feel that they are near the end of their tether at times. It can be helpful to talk things through, and the social work team may be able to help with practical ideas as well.

Who will be there for my family when I am no longer around?

The St Christopher's Bereavement Service is available for any of the people you are close to, friends as well as family members and children.

Welfare

How can the Welfare Team help?

Living with a serious illness can affect every aspect of your life. The Welfare Team can help with some of the financial and practical issues that may arise.

You may have worries about unpaid bills, extra expenses or a reduced income. You and your carers may be entitled to extra benefits because of your illness. The Welfare Team can provide advice and support to you and your family about the benefits you may be entitled to. They can also help with grant applications, dealing with debts and pension and insurance applications.

The Welfare Team can help on housing issues including homelessness, support for transfers or dealing with repairs.

Other help available from the Welfare Team includes advice on making a Will or Power of Attorney, advice on employment issues and help with applying for practical things such as disabled parking permits.

How do I get in touch?

Speak to your home care or ward nurse, or a member of staff in the Anniversary Centre and they will arrange for the social worker or welfare officer to contact you.

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

If you would like this information in a different format, such as audio tape, braille or large print, or in another language, please speak to the Communications Team on **020 8768 4500** or email **communications@stchristophers.org.uk**

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