



How can I get referred to a Macmillan nurse?

Macmillan nurses can provide help and support at any time after someone has been diagnosed with cancer. Usually the consultant, GP, ward sister, district nurse or clinic nurse will refer someone with cancer to a Macmillan nurse, using locally agreed guidelines. There is no charge for a Macmillan nurse.

Are Macmillan nurses available during the night/at weekends?

Macmillan nurses are not an 'emergency service' – they usually work normal office hours, although some work different hours.

Are Macmillan nurses available for people with a non-cancer diagnosis?

We focus mainly on people affected by cancer, but we are increasingly sharing experience and working with colleagues caring for people with other conditions and do provide some support for non-cancer patients.

What is the difference between Macmillan nurses and Hospice at Home and Marie Curie nurses?

Macmillan, Hospice at Home and Marie Curie all work to support people with cancer but in very different ways.

Hospice at Home and Marie Curie nurses provide practical, hands-on nursing care in patients' homes and may be available for a morning, afternoon or all night so that the family carers can rest. Some areas do not have Marie Curie nurses.

Your Macmillan Nurse is:

Fact Sheet to be reviewed January 2011

Macmillan Nurses Fact Sheet

We give expert care and support

Macmillan nurses are Clinical Nurse Specialists who provide expert information, advice and support to improve the lives of people with cancer or other progressive, life limiting conditions.

Macmillan nurses also offer support and information to families, friends, carers and local communities.

Macmillan nurses may support people when they are first diagnosed and throughout their illness. They are there to help people make informed decisions about their treatment, and guide them through the maze of different services. They also help people to cope with problems such as the side effects of treatment and other symptoms. They give advice and practical, psychological and emotional support, as well as assisting someone living with cancer to control their symptoms and pain.

Macmillan nurses work with other health and social care professionals, sharing their knowledge and skills, and helping to co-ordinate care between hospital and home.

There are currently around 3,100 Macmillan nurses, most of who work within the NHS so their services are free. Most people are referred to a Macmillan nurse by their GP, district nurse, consultant or ward sister.

Qualified and Experienced:

All Macmillan nurses are registered nurses with at least five years experience, including two or more years in cancer or palliative care (care which focuses on pain and symptom control). They also complete specialist courses in subjects such as managing pain and other symptoms, and psychological support.

Employed by the NHS:

Macmillan nurses are usually employed by the NHS. Their posts are developed in partnership with the NHS or other organisations and funded by Macmillan for a period of time, usually the first three years. After this time, the NHS or other organisation, takes on responsibility for managing and paying them. Macmillan continues to educate and support the nurses.

Macmillan nurses in the community:

Community Macmillan nurses play a vital role in helping people with cancer to stay at home with their families. They work with community health and social professionals to make sure people get the best possible physical and emotional care at every stage of their illness.

What exactly do Macmillan nurses do?

Macmillan nurses are specially trained to help people with cancer and other illnesses, their carers and families.

They provide:

information about cancer treatments and side effects

- an opportunity to discuss problems, feelings and future plans
- advice on pain and symptom control
- advice to other members of the team, for example district nurses and Hospice at Home nurses.

Their work is in addition to that of general nursing staff who provide day-to-day care to patients in hospitals and the community.