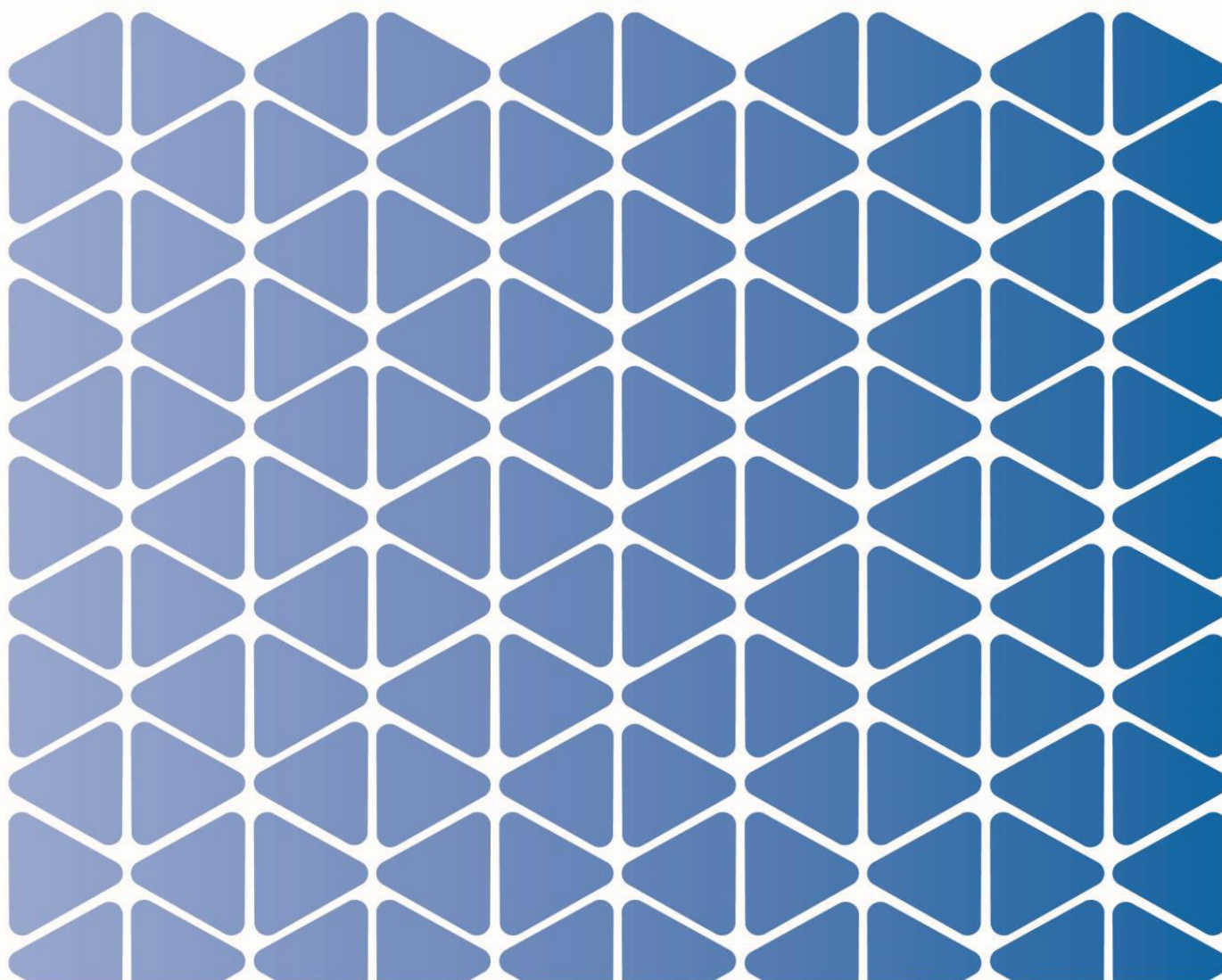




PATIENT INFORMATION

# RADIOOTHERAPY TREATMENT AT THE WORCESTERSHIRE ONCOLOGY CENTRE





## Worcestershire Oncology Centre

Improving cancer services in Worcestershire

### Introduction:

As part of your treatment plan, your consultant has recommended a course of radiotherapy. The purpose of this booklet is to provide you with information about radiotherapy, our department and its staff.

Your Oncology Consultant will have explained your radiotherapy treatment procedure with you along with any associated side effects. These side effects will also be listed on your Radiotherapy Consent Form. This booklet is designed to be read alongside your radiotherapy consent form.

***Please ensure that you bring your copy of your consent form with you to your CT planning appointment.***

### What is radiotherapy?

Radiotherapy is the treatment of cancer and a few other non-malignant conditions using high energy x-rays. It may be given on its own, or it may be used alongside other treatments such as surgery, chemotherapy, immunotherapy or hormone therapy. Radiotherapy treatment is given by machines called Linear Accelerators. Everyone's treatment is different and planned individually.

### How does it work?

Radiotherapy causes changes in both normal and cancer cells. Cancer cells are more sensitive to radiotherapy than normal cells so more of them are damaged beyond repair. The normal cells are better able to repair themselves and so their damage is mainly temporary although some can be longer term. This is the reason why radiotherapy has some side effects.

### How often is it given?

The treatment is usually given as a series of outpatient appointments (sometimes known as fractions) usually over 5 days a week, although can be given once a week or every other day. Occasionally radiotherapy may be given more than once a day or

over the weekend. Radiotherapy can be anything from one treatment to a course of treatment lasting 6-7 weeks.

### **Quality Control and Safety Measures in Place**

All radiotherapy departments are governed by legislation for the safe use of radiation. We must ensure that measures and controls are in place so that patients are treated in a safe environment as per the Ionising Radiation Regulations (IRR) 2017.

As per the 2013 BSS EU Directive, all patients will receive an explanation about the radiation dose they will receive.

The radiotherapy department has been specifically designed and constructed so that the radiation used is contained within the treatment rooms. Patients will not be radioactive following radiotherapy treatment, and it is perfectly safe for patients receiving radiotherapy to carry out normal day to day activities.

The Ionising Radiation (Medical Exposure) Regulations 2018 are designed to ensure patient safety. The department has established a framework of general procedures, protocols and quality assurance programmes to ensure the safe referral, planning and treatment of patients requiring radiotherapy.

The Worcestershire Oncology Centre operates a Quality Management System complying with the requirements of ISO 9001:2015 for the delivery of radiotherapy services. The department is subject to continual review and assessment by the British Standard Institute (BSI).

### **Local Rules and Systems of Work**

All staff working in the radiotherapy department work safely within the guidance of the Local Rules document. Systems of work are in place to allow staff to follow processes to ensure the correct safety checks are performed daily.

Due to these Local Rules, relatives and carers are not allowed in the room with you whilst your treatment is being planned or given.

### **Treatment planning**

The process of planning Radiotherapy is complex and all radiotherapy prescriptions need to be planned and checked carefully. Many checks will be made on your treatment plan before your treatment commences. Treatment planning is used to:

- Identify the exact area of your body to be treated.
- Help your consultant and radiographers work out the best position for you to lie in for your treatment.

- Make sure the treatment will be accurate and specific for you.

This may involve one, or more visits to the department before your treatment starts.

Usually, your consultant, planning team and radiographers require 2-3 weeks to prepare your treatment plan. On occasions, you may receive treatment on the same day as your CT scan. Your consultant will discuss this with you should this be an option, although this is usually only for emergency radiotherapy.

If your treatment is given on the same day as your CT planning scan, you will be in the department for several hours. Please ensure that you bring any medication and food with you as appropriate.

Radiotherapy planning usually takes place in the CT scanner, as in the picture below, which uses x-rays to gain information about the area to be treated.



You will be asked to lie in a position that enables treatment to be delivered, which is reproducible and comfortable. You need to be able to stay in this position for the required length of time. Please tell the radiographers if you have any concerns or discomfort. We may need to take photos and measurements to ensure that we can get you in same position each time for treatment.

During the scan, the couch will move in and out of the centre of the scanner for a few minutes. Nothing will touch or hurt you and you will not feel anything. The CT scan usually takes around 10 minutes to complete; but please be prepared to be in the department for up to 1 hour during this visit.

When making your appointments our staff will inform you if you need to follow any special instructions for eating and drinking for your planning scan and daily treatments. Otherwise, please continue to eat and drink as normal.

### **Tattoo Marks**

You may need to have permanent tattoo marks on your skin for the treatment. These marks are used to place you in the correct position for each treatment visit and are about the size of a full stop.

### **Contrast Medium**

You may need a contrast medium to help the radiographers, your consultant and the physics team to see your organs more clearly on the CT scan.

This can be given orally, injected into a vein, or both. You will be told if you need the contrast and will be given information about it.

If you have had contrast before and have had any kind of reaction to it, please let your consultant or the radiographer know.

### **Mould Room**

If your consultant has referred you for radiotherapy to the head and neck region, it is likely that you will require a personalised mask to wear for your treatment planning and daily treatment. This will be made in the mould room and is normally done on the same day as your CT planning scan.

A personalised mask may also be required to treat some skin cancers. Your consultant will inform you if this is required.

Your consultant will have given you a separate leaflet detailing the mould room process.

### **Pacemakers**

***Radiation can affect pacemakers and similar devices. It is important that you inform your consultant, a member of their team and a radiographer before your first treatment or CT scan if you have a pacemaker or similar device.***

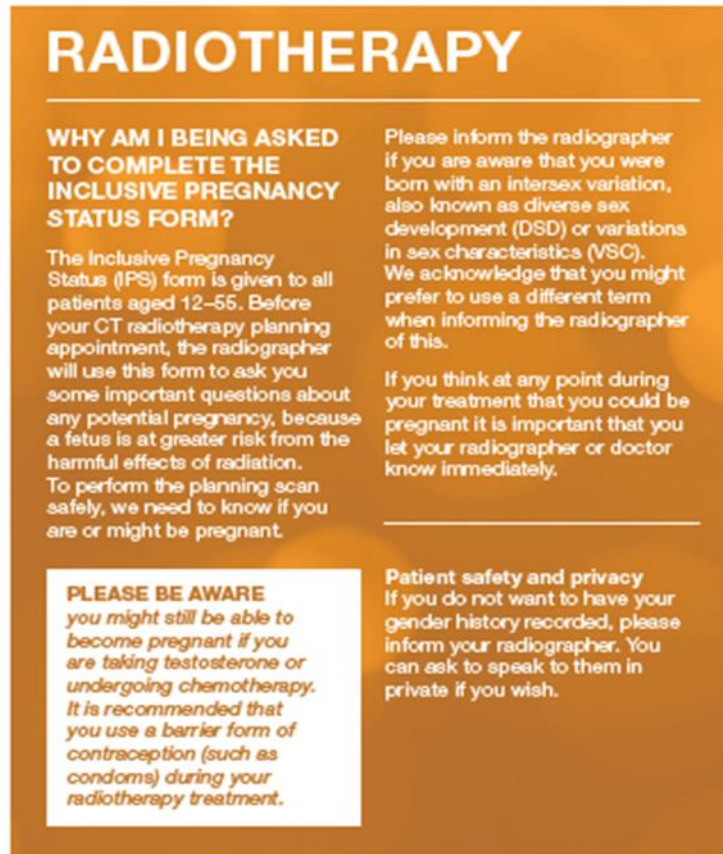
Please ensure that you carry your Pacemaker ID card from cardiology with you at all times. The Radiographer team will need to see this.

### **Pregnancy**

There is a significant risk to an unborn baby from radiotherapy. If you are, or become, pregnant at any time before or during your treatment, you must inform a member of



staff as soon as possible. We strongly advise avoiding becoming pregnant during, or for a period of 6 – 12 months after you complete your treatment.



## RADIOTHERAPY

### WHY AM I BEING ASKED TO COMPLETE THE INCLUSIVE PREGNANCY STATUS FORM?

The Inclusive Pregnancy Status (IPS) form is given to all patients aged 12–55. Before your CT radiotherapy planning appointment, the radiographer will use this form to ask you some important questions about any potential pregnancy, because a fetus is at greater risk from the harmful effects of radiation. To perform the planning scan safely, we need to know if you are or might be pregnant.

Please inform the radiographer if you are aware that you were born with an intersex variation, also known as diverse sex development (DSD) or variations in sex characteristics (VSC). We acknowledge that you might prefer to use a different term when informing the radiographer of this.

If you think at any point during your treatment that you could be pregnant it is important that you let your radiographer or doctor know immediately.

**PLEASE BE AWARE**  
*you might still be able to become pregnant if you are taking testosterone or undergoing chemotherapy. It is recommended that you use a barrier form of contraception (such as condoms) during your radiotherapy treatment.*

**Patient safety and privacy**  
If you do not want to have your gender history recorded, please inform your radiographer. You can ask to speak to them in private if you wish.



Staff in the department will confirm with patients of child bearing age if there is any possibility that they may be pregnant prior to your CT scan and again, on the first day of your treatment.

If we are unaware of the possibility of pregnancy due to you being unidentified/ undeclared as a trans male, or where you have not consented to the sharing of your gender identity or child bearing potential, please be assured that we are an inclusive department. We will respect your privacy, dignity and confidentiality if you inform us of the possibility or risk of pregnancy.

You as the patient have the sole responsibility for safeguarding your unborn baby.

For advice on contraception please speak to your consultant or G.P. Radiotherapy treatment will not make you radioactive. There is no need to avoid contact with pregnant people or children whilst having radiotherapy treatment.

## Smoking

It is strongly recommended that you **stop smoking** completely whilst undergoing Radiotherapy. Smoking can make treatment side effects more severe, the treatment harder to tolerate and less effective.

For help to stop smoking, call the National smoke free Helpline on 0300 123 1044.

## FIRST DAY OF TREATMENT

On your first day of treatment, a radiographer will explain the treatment process in detail with you and reconfirm your consent to treatment. The radiographers will discuss any treatment related side effects with you. This is also a good opportunity to ask any questions that you may have.



## Treatment

Your treatment duration will vary depending on the area being treated. Most of the time will be spent getting you into the same position that you were scanned in.

- You will be asked to remove clothing that covers the area being treated. You may be asked to change into a gown prior to your treatment and the radiographers will use a cover, where possible, to maintain your dignity
- You will lie on the couch in same position that was recorded during your CT treatment planning.
- Using the tattoos/marks as a guide, the radiographers will move the couch and treatment machine into position. The radiographers may have to adjust your position on the treatment couch to align your tattoos.
- If you have had a mask made in the mould room, you will wear this to have your treatment each day.
- For some of our treatment techniques, parts of the machine may rest against your skin. You may feel some pressure but this should not cause discomfort.
- Once you are in the correct position the radiographers will leave the treatment room to switch on the machine.
- During your treatment, the radiographers will monitor you carefully via CCTV. These images are not recorded.
- We often need to take images prior to your daily treatment to confirm that you are in the correct position and that your treatment is set-up as planned.
- It is important that you lie as still as possible during the treatment and that you continue to breath as normal.
- You may be in the treatment room longer on the first day of your treatment due to additional checks by the radiographers.
- The machine makes a buzzing noise when on, but there is nothing to see or feel. The radiographers will tell you when your treatment is complete and it is ok for you to move.

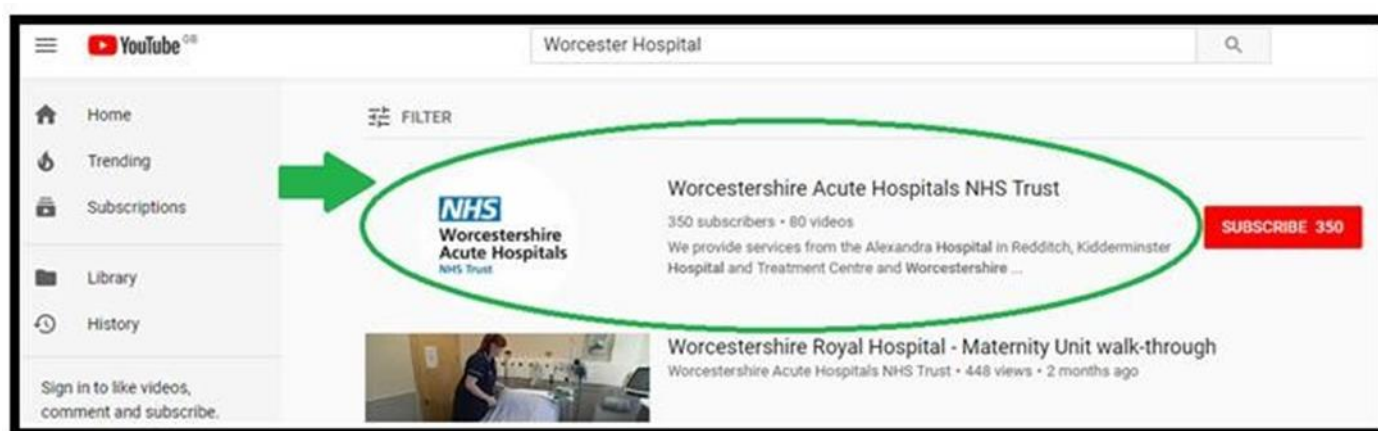


## Radiotherapy Information Videos

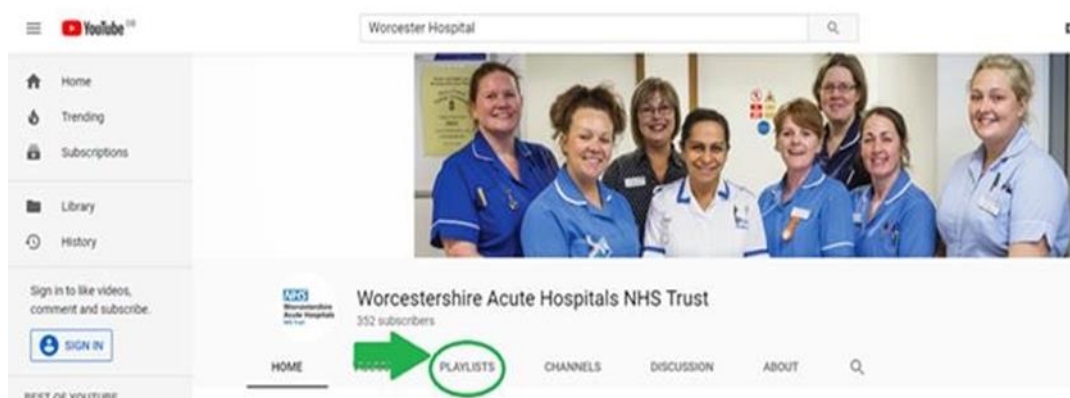
Staff working in the Worcestershire Oncology Centre have developed videos for you. There are 2 videos available to watch on YouTube which go through the pre-treatment (also known as your CT planning scan) and radiotherapy treatment.

To access these videos please access YouTube in your web browser and follow the guide below:

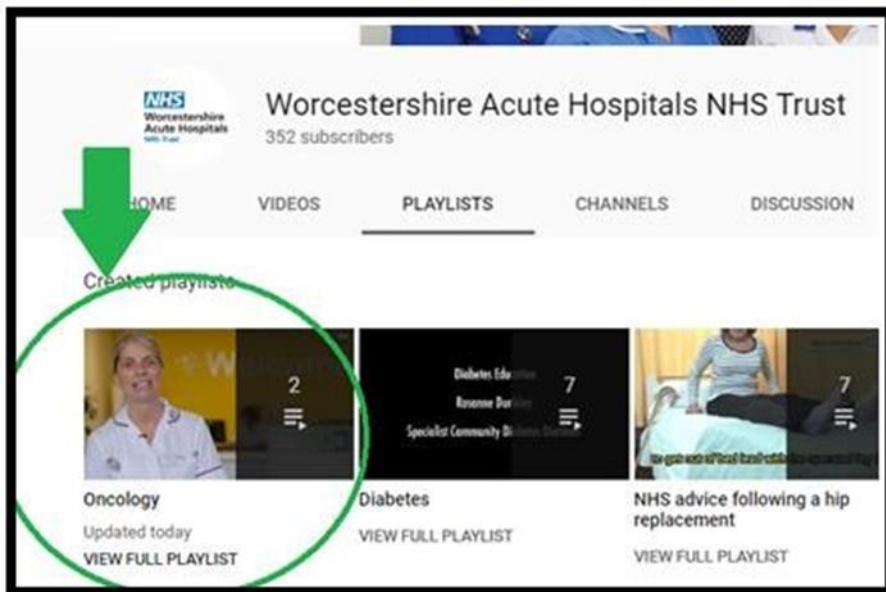
- Search for: **Worcester Hospital**
- Click on **Worcestershire Acute Hospital NHS Trust** page (as below):



- Click on Playlists:

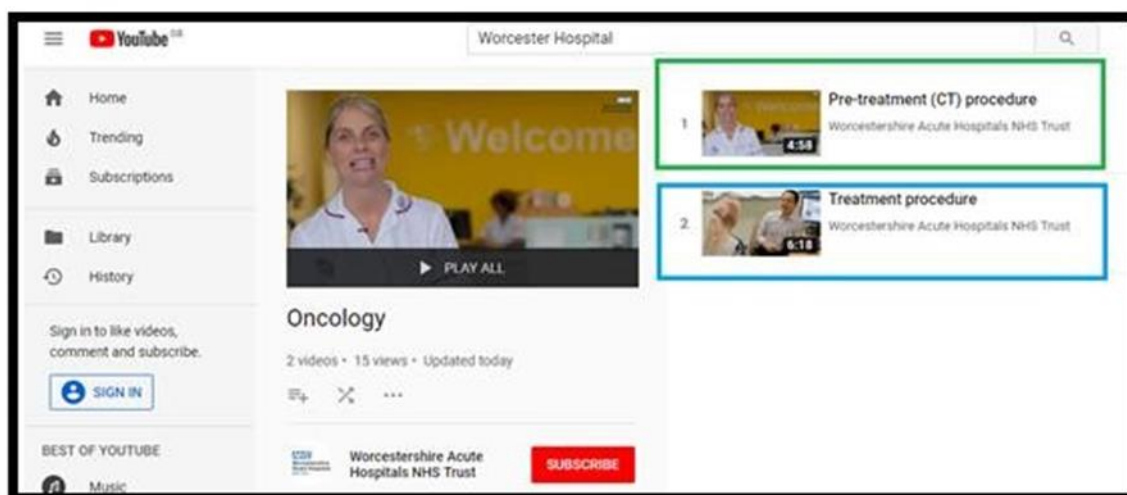


- Then select “View full playlist” under Oncology:



Before attending your CT planning appointment, please set aside some time to review the 1st video named “**Pre-treatment (CT) procedure**”.

Take the opportunity to write down any questions you might have following the video. When you attend for your scan, you will meet with a radiographer prior to entering the scanning room. They will explain the procedure in person and happily go through any questions you have.



On completion of your CT scanning, there is a second video available to watch which goes through what to expect during radiotherapy treatment. This is called “**Treatment procedure**”.

As before, please take the time to watch the video and take note of any questions you wish to ask. A radiographer will meet with you on arrival to your 1st treatment

appointment and talk through all the steps, giving you ample time ask any queries my might have.

### **Common Side effects**

Radiotherapy treatment can cause some side effects which may accumulate over the course of your treatment. Any side effects will depend on the area being treated. You will be given an information sheet specific to your treatment area with this booklet and your consent form.

### **Treatment reviews**

At some point during your treatment you will be booked in for a 'treatment review'. This review can be with the Macmillan Review Radiographer, a consultant or one of their team, a clinical nurse specialist and/or other members of your specialist team. The purpose of this review is not to look at the progress of your treatment; but to discuss and give advice on the management of any side effects you may be experiencing.

### **Staff**

Please be aware that staff of all genders may treat you in the department. All staff are trained to carry out their work with sensitivity and regard to the dignity of the patient. If you have any concerns about receiving care from any member of the team, please discuss this with a member of staff before your treatment commences.

Worcestershire Acute NHS Hospitals Trust participates in the training of medical students, radiographers and work experience students. Patients will be informed when students are in clinical areas and given the opportunity to say if they would prefer them not to be present.

**Consultants** (Oncologists) have overall responsibility for your treatment. Occasionally, you may see another consultant or member of the team working under the direction of your own consultant.

**Therapeutic Radiographers'** duties include accurately calculating and delivering high energy radiation to the precise area of the body as prescribed by your Consultant and also giving information about radiotherapy treatment. They are responsible for the daily care of patients on treatment.

During your treatment, please discuss **any** worries or concerns that you may have with your radiographers. If required, they will arrange for you to see a Consultant or other member of the oncology team.

If at any time you feel that you have worries or concerns that may not have been dealt with to your satisfaction or that you wish to discuss further with a senior member of staff, please ask to see the **Radiotherapy Service Manager**.

**Macmillan Review Radiographers** are therapeutic radiographers who have had additional training to help provide information and support to patients, relatives and carers. You will have the opportunity to see and speak to them during your treatment. This appointment will either be a face to face review, or a telephone conversation. They may also contact you after your treatment has finished to see how you are managing with any treatment side effects.

**Physicists and Physics Technicians** provide a comprehensive service ensuring that the radiation dose received by patients is delivered as accurately as possible and that the treatment machines conform to national standards.

### **Macmillan Cancer Information and Support Service**

There are two Macmillan Cancer Information and Support Centres at Worcestershire Royal Hospital; one is situated in Main Entrance to the hospital (Level 1) and the other between the reception and the coffee shop in the Oncology unit. The core opening hours for each Centre are 10-4, Monday to Friday.

The Centres are staffed by a health professional and a team of trained volunteers. They operate a drop-in service but we recommend ringing ahead if you are making a specific visit.

A wealth of high quality information is available on a variety of subjects including finance and treatment side effects, along with emotional support and signposting to other appropriate services or groups.

When the Centres are not open, information and support can be obtained from: Macmillan Support Line 0808 808 0000 (Monday to Friday, 9am–8pm) or at [www.macmillan.org.uk](http://www.macmillan.org.uk)

### **End of treatment information and follow up**

On completion of your radiotherapy, unless you have been informed otherwise, an appointment will be made for you to see your consultant or one of their team. This is usually several weeks after completion of your treatment.

At this appointment, your consultant will talk to you about how you have been feeling since completing treatment and may examine you. It may be too early for you to have any further scans, X-rays or tests at this stage.

Most patients will be given follow-up appointments at their local hospital when their course of radiotherapy is complete. These appointments may continue for several years. This will be done through out-patient follow up clinics with a consultant or member of the team.

If you **do not receive notification of a follow-up appointment** within three weeks of finishing radiotherapy treatment, please telephone the Worcestershire Oncology Centre Reception.

### **How long will any side-effects last?**

The short term side effects of radiotherapy usually start during treatment and may continue for a few weeks after. The side effects depend on the area treated. Your treatment consent form and patient information leaflet outline the side effects you could expect. If you did not receive a leaflet or would like another copy please contact the Macmillan Review Radiographers.

There is also a possibility of radiotherapy causing some long term side effects which can occur months, or even years, after the completion of your treatment. These are also outlined in your radiotherapy consent form and patient information leaflet.

### **When can I return to work?**

If you have been unable to work during your treatment, you may need to wait for any side effects to settle down before returning to work. Some people find it easier to return to work gradually, starting with reduced hours or duties and gradually building up.

### **Who should I contact if I am concerned about anything related to my treatment or disease?**

If you have any problems after your treatment which require medical attention, your first point of contact should be your G.P. Other useful contact numbers can be found over the page.

The following internet websites contain information that you may find useful.

[www.worcsacute.nhs.uk](http://www.worcsacute.nhs.uk)

Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust

[www.patient.co.uk](http://www.patient.co.uk)

Information fact sheets on health and disease

[www.macmillan.org.uk](http://www.macmillan.org.uk)

Macmillan Cancer Support: 0808 808 0000



[www.mariecurie.org.uk](http://www.mariecurie.org.uk)

Marie Curie Cancer Care: 0800 716 146

[www.cancerresearchuk.org](http://www.cancerresearchuk.org)

Cancer Research UK: 0808 800 4040

**Useful telephone numbers:**

**Worcestershire Oncology Centre Reception**

Queries about follow-up appointments

Monday – Friday 8.45 – 4.30pm

**01905 761400**

**Radiotherapy Booking Office:**

Queries about appointments and transport:

Monday-Friday 8.30-4.30pm

**01905 768 901**

**Cancer and Radiotherapy Information and advice**

Macmillan Review Radiographers

Monday – Friday 8.30– 4.30pm

**01905 761 420**

**Acute Oncology Service staff available:**

**Monday-Friday 9.00-5.00pm 01905 760 158.**

**This is a 24 hour helpline number for patients on treatment. After hours, this number will be manned by nursing staff to deal with any enquiries.**

## **Travelling to the Worcestershire Oncology Centre**

The Worcestershire Oncology Centre is based at Worcestershire Royal Hospital.

Please see the map at the back of this information leaflet or visit the Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust Website web site for up to date maps and directions:

### **From M5 J7**

- Leave the M5 at Junction 7 and join the A44 towards Worcester.
- Continue straight over the first roundabout and at the second roundabout turn right joining the A4440 (Swinesherd Way).
- At the second roundabout on the A4440 turn left onto the B4636.
- The hospital is located left off the next roundabout (Charles Hastings Way).

### **From M5 J6**

- Leave the M5 at junction 6 and join the A4440.
- At the first roundabout take the first exit staying with the A4440.
- Continue along the A4440 until the fourth roundabout and then turn right onto the B4636, sign posted Worcestershire Royal Hospital.
- The hospital is located left off the next roundabout (Charles Hastings Way).
- If you are using satellite navigation system, the postcode you need to enter is:

**WR5 1DD**

## **Parking**

Visitor Patient Car Park 2 is the closest car park to the Oncology Centre.

This is a barrier controlled visitor's car park next to the Oncology Centre (on the left as you come in to the hospital grounds). There are also further car parks towards the front of the main hospital.

## **Pick-up/Drop Off**

There are several drop off spaces available for 20 minute drop offs outside the Oncology Centre. Please ensure you do not overstay the time limit as you may be subject to penalties.

## **Disabled Parking**

There is a disabled car park directly outside the Oncology centre; this requires you to display your blue badge and green permit.

## **Parking Charges**

Radiotherapy patients are entitled to concessionary car parking charges. Please speak to the receptionist at your first appointment. Once you have paid, you will be provided with a green permit to display in your car.

Please note: If you park in one of the barrier controlled car parks, on exit press the button by the car park barrier and a member of the facilities team will answer. Inform them that you are a radiotherapy patient and the barrier will be raised to allow you to leave the car park. You may be asked for the security number on the green permit.

**Bus Routes:** Some bus routes include the hospital with buses driving onto the site, stopping close to the main entrance for the oncology centre. For more information about bus services to Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust call the traveline on: **0871 200 22 33** or [www.traveline.info](http://www.traveline.info) or visit [www.worcestershire.gov.uk/bustimetables](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/bustimetables)

## **Transport**

You may be eligible to have hospital transport. Non-emergency patient transport is provided by E-zec Medical, please call 0300 0110 017 to book.

**The booking office is open seven days a week between 8am – 6pm.**

## **Who is the NHS non-emergency patient transport service (NEPTS) for?**

The non-emergency patient transport service is funded by the NHS for patients who, due to their mobility needs or medical condition, are unable to travel safely by other means. The service is provided by E-zec Medical Transport Services Ltd on behalf of your local NHS.

## **Other transport options**

Other options may be more appropriate for you. Please see the patient information websites below.

### **Herefordshire:**

[www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200187/transport/164/community\\_transport](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200187/transport/164/community_transport)

### **Worcestershire:**

[www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20552/transport\\_and\\_travelling](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20552/transport_and_travelling)

These websites detail community programs to assist people with local transport.

**Who decides if I am entitled to use NEPTS?**

All patients who wish to be considered for the non-emergency patient transport service (NEPTS) are required to be assessed by the E-zec Patient Transport Advice Centre against national eligibility criteria

**Please use this space to make a note of any queries or questions you may have:**





**If your symptoms or condition worsens, or if you are concerned about anything, please call your GP, 111, or 999.**

### **Patient Experience**

We know that being admitted to hospital can be a difficult and unsettling time for you and your loved ones. If you have any questions or concerns, please do speak with a member of staff on the ward or in the relevant department who will do their best to answer your questions and reassure you.

### **Feedback**

Feedback is really important and useful to us – it can tell us where we are working well and where improvements can be made. There are lots of ways you can share your experience with us including completing our Friends and Family Test – cards are available and can be posted on all wards, departments and clinics at our hospitals. We value your comments and feedback and thank you for taking the time to share this with us.

### **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

If you have any concerns or questions about your care, we advise you to talk with the nurse in charge or the department manager in the first instance as they are best placed to answer any questions or resolve concerns quickly. If the relevant member of staff is unable to help resolve your concern, you can contact the PALS Team. We offer informal help, advice or support about any aspect of hospital services & experiences.

Our PALS team will liaise with the various departments in our hospitals on your behalf, if you feel unable to do so, to resolve your problems and where appropriate refer to outside help.

If you are still unhappy you can contact the Complaints Department, who can investigate your concerns. You can make a complaint orally, electronically or in writing and we can advise and guide you through the complaints procedure.

### **How to contact PALS:**

**Telephone Patient Services: 0300 123 1732 or via email at: [wah-tr.PET@nhs.net](mailto:wah-tr.PET@nhs.net)**

### **Opening times:**

The PALS telephone lines are open Monday to Thursday from 8.30am to 4.30pm and Friday: 8.30am to 4.00pm. Please be aware that a voicemail service is in use at busy times, but messages will be returned as quickly as possible.

If you are unable to understand this leaflet, please communicate with a member of staff.