OUR SERVICE PLEDGE

Breakthrough Breast Cancer
Weston House,
246 High Holborn,
London, WC1V 7EX

Breakthrough Breast Cancer is a charity registered in England & Wales (No. 1062636) and Scotland (No.SC039058)

breakthrough.org.uk

BREAST SERVICES & CARE
OUR PLEDGE TO YOU
"The Mermaid Team is delighted and honoured to be involved with the Breakthrough Breast Cancer Service Pledge initiative. It is an opportunity to improve the quality of care for patients with breast cancer. We will continue to strive for an ever improving service, by listening and responding to the individual needs and concerns of our patients. We hope that the Pledge will serve to reassure patients of an aim to always provide a first class, gold standard service in all aspects of breast cancer care.”

Josephine Brand, Clinical Nurse Specialist

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**Publications**

You may also want to read Breakthrough’s publication *The Best Treatment: Your guide to breast cancer treatment* for more detailed information about drugs, treatments and procedures.

The guide sets out how early breast cancer should be diagnosed and treated based on the latest available evidence. It combines research and recommendations from professional national guidelines, waiting time standards and the experience of people with breast cancer.

Guides are available for England & Wales and for Scotland and can be downloaded on the Breakthrough website, or ordered by calling the freephone information line below.

**Secondary Breast Cancer**

Information on how secondary breast cancer should be diagnosed and treated is available from Breast Cancer Care’s *Standards of care for people with secondary breast cancer: Taking Action*. To obtain a copy of the standards and find out what you can do, please visit breastcancercare.org.uk/standardsofcare

**Contact us**

If you would like further information, a copy of the Service Pledge booklet or would like to become involved with the Service Pledge project, please contact servicepledge@breakthrough.org.uk or call the information line number below.

For other enquiries, please call the Breakthrough information line on freephone 08080 100 200 or visit breakthrough.org.uk
Our Service Pledge for Breast Cancer

The Royal Cornwall Hospital NHS Trust has worked with Breakthrough Breast Cancer to produce a local Service Pledge for Breast Cancer. The idea behind the Service Pledge is to ensure that all our patients know what to expect from their breast service.

This Service Pledge sets out standards of service that you can expect to receive from us. It also includes ways in which you can help us to deliver this service. On page 16 you will see a list of improvement goals – parts of the service that we are working to improve.

The Service Pledge has been produced in partnership with our patients, who kindly took part in a survey and interviews to tell us their views on the service.

We are always interested in hearing about your experiences as a patient. For more information about how you can get involved in developing the breast service, please contact your breast care nurse.

The Mermaid Centre
The Royal Cornwall Hospital Trust
Truro
TR1 3LJ
T: 01872 252 881
As a patient at our breast unit, you have a right to expect the following standards during your treatment.

**Our breast unit**

The standards below describe the environment at our breast unit and the way we organise our service here.

- All your tests and treatments will be carried out at this hospital or at St. Michael’s Hospital.

- All your appointments will be pre-planned at every stage of your treatment. Where possible you will be given a choice of appointments.

- There will be enough space for you to be accompanied by a friend or relative on visits to the breast unit, including enough room for you both to be seated in the waiting room. However, relatives are not permitted to be present during x-rays or core biopsy procedures.

- We will keep you up to date about any delays at the clinic and reassure you if you have any concerns while waiting. Your name will be clearly called.

- You will have all your consultations in a comfortable setting where your privacy is respected.

- You can talk to a breast care nurse in private. If you wish, you can go to a designated room immediately after receiving your diagnosis.
- You may need to undress at your appointments. If you wish, you can bring your own dressing gown to the breast unit instead of wearing a hospital gown.

- You will be given detailed information about how to get to the breast unit, including car parking facilities and, if you are entitled, advice on how to reclaim travel costs.

- We will introduce any students or trainees to you, including an explanation of why they are present. You will be given the option to decline their involvement in your care, if you so wish.
Waiting times and the appointment process

The standards below list how long you can expect to wait for tests and treatments.

- If you are referred by your GP, you will have an appointment with a breast cancer specialist within two weeks.
- You will receive your test results in person. They will be clearly explained.
- You will be diagnosed using a triple assessment of tests – clinical examination, imaging (mammogram and/or ultrasound) and a biopsy as appropriate.
- You will begin your first treatment within 31 days of your diagnosis and you will not have to wait longer than 31 days for any treatment, including radiotherapy, as long as you are fit for treatment.
- You will receive results from your surgery within two weeks. This wait is to allow accurate laboratory results and discussions between the breast cancer specialists in order to present you with an effective treatment plan. Your results will be clearly explained in person.
- All waiting times will be clearly explained to you, with information about the reason for the wait and reassurance that this will not affect the success of your treatment.
Communication and consultations

These standards describe our commitment to treating all patients as individuals, with an emphasis on clear explanations and a willingness to listen to your views.

- You will be treated with dignity and respect throughout your care and treatment.
- All staff treating you will introduce themselves and their role in your care. You will be given the name of the doctor and breast care nurse in charge of your care.
- You can bring a relative or friend to all your consultations – the letter informing you of your first appointment will make this clear.
- You can bring a note pad or tape recorder to all of your consultations – the letter informing you of your first appointment will make this clear.
- Your diagnosis will be communicated in person by a doctor or breast imager with a breast care nurse present.
- Your initial diagnosis is not always straightforward and may be revised, but the reasons for any revisions to your treatment plan will be explained.
- All members of the breast care team receive training in communication and counselling skills. We will communicate with you clearly and sensitively in language and terms you understand. We will ensure that you are given time to ask questions and discuss answers and explanations.
WHAT TO EXPECT

- You will be as involved as you want to be in making decisions about your care and treatment. We will clearly explain any choices that are available to you and ensure that you have the time, information and support you need in order to make your decision.

- You will be allocated a named breast care nurse who you can contact at any time during working hours for information and support.

- All procedures will be explained by a member of staff before they are carried out, with time for you to ask any questions.

- You can withdraw from any treatment at any time and your choice will always be respected.

Information and support

Providing information and support is a vital part of our service. These standards describe what we offer to you, your family and friends.

- Your breast care nursing team is the first port of call for information and support. You can telephone them at any time during working hours, including after your treatment is finished.

- Your family can also receive information and support throughout your diagnosis and treatment. They are welcome to accompany you to appointments, if you wish, and to be involved in discussions. We will ensure they have easy access to local information, advice and support.
- You will be sent a letter containing information about your diagnosis, including a record of your consultation which includes your results and treatment plan that you can take away and refer to throughout your treatment. This will be in language that is easy to understand and can be updated as your treatment progresses.

- You will be provided with appropriate written information tailored to you each time a new aspect of your treatment and care is discussed.

- You will receive information that suits your needs (for example, in Braille, audio tape or in your chosen language).

- You will be given a list of reliable websites that you can search for information about your condition and treatment.

- Before any treatment you will receive information about anticipated benefits, potential risks and side effects.

- You will receive copies of letters sent to your GP about your treatment.

- You will be able to discuss family history and breast cancer risk with your breast care nurse.
You will have the opportunity to take part in a clinical trial if appropriate. We will explain the purposes and risks of the trial to enable you to make an informed decision about whether or not to take part.

If you have a concern you can either raise it with a member of the breast team or call our Patient Advice and Liaison Services (PALS) on 01872 252 793 or email pals.service@rcht.cornwall.nhs.uk. You can also use our complaints procedure.

There is a wide variety of support available for breast cancer patients. We will discuss your information and support needs with you and provide you with tailored information about the services available, including:

- Psychological support
- Local patient self-help groups
- Financial information, including where to access social security benefits
- Returning to work
- Lymphoedema and physiotherapy, if required
- Healthy eating
- Exercise
- Post-surgery underwear and swimwear
- Prostheses
- Hair care services

Some people who have had a breast cancer diagnosis develop anxiety and depression. We will ensure that this is properly identified and treated. You will be offered counselling from your breast care nurse and if appropriate, referred to specialist services.
Surgery, staying on a ward and discharge

For many breast cancer patients the first treatment is surgery. The standards below describe what you can expect when you are admitted for surgery at our hospital.

- You will be greeted on arrival and may start your admission in the admissions lounge. You will be kept informed about which ward you will be staying on; this will be a same sex bay or ward.
- You will be given a secure place to store your belongings.
- You will be treated in a clean and safe environment.
- You will stay on one ward, sharing a sleeping area, toilets and shower facilities with other patients of the same sex before and after surgery.
- All examinations will be carried out in a way that respects your dignity and need for privacy.
- You will be given healthy meals and, if needed, assistance with eating.
- We will do everything we can to ensure that you have a peaceful night’s rest.
- A doctor or nurse will clearly tell you when you can leave hospital. This will be based on your individual circumstances.
- We will aim to provide individualised peri-operative care. This will include an opportunity for you to discuss your anaesthetic with your anaesthetist, before your operation. Using techniques best suited to your surgery, we will strive to achieve a comfortable and pain free recovery.
You will be given written information on wound care, advice on exercise and information on dealing with the after-effects of surgery, including guidance on when to seek help.

Before you are discharged the hospital staff will ensure that there is adequate support in place for you at home and in your community. You will be told who you can contact for advice and help at any time of the day or night.

You will have access to nurses working in the community who are trained in caring for breast surgery patients and who can refer you, where necessary, back to the breast team at the hospital.

Reconstructive surgery

Breast cancer patients may wish to have reconstructive surgery or wear a prosthesis. The standards below describe how this aspect of our service is organised with an emphasis on enabling you to make an informed decision.

If appropriate, your surgeon will discuss breast reconstruction with you. You will have the opportunity to discuss different types of surgery and the risks, benefits and long-term implications.

You will be given adequate time to make an informed decision, supported by a trained specialist nurse and a further appointment if needed.

Where appropriate, you will be offered the opportunity to have immediate breast reconstruction.

You will receive comprehensive written information and the opportunity to see a realistic portrayal of surgical results.
If you would like to, you can meet someone who has had reconstructive surgery.

If you are being fitted with a prosthesis, this will be carried out in a private room with a trained member of staff. You will have a choice of prostheses.

**Your care outside the breast unit**

We want to ensure that our breast cancer patients are supported at all times, both during and after treatment. The standards below describe our links with services outside the breast unit and who you should contact at any time.

- Your GP will be informed of your diagnosis within 24 hours and we will ensure they are kept updated on your treatment.

- After treatment, we will work with you to develop a written follow-up care plan to ensure that your health continues to be monitored and that you have access to any support you might need. You will be given information on the long-term side effects of breast cancer treatment, how to remain breast aware and how to contact the breast unit should you have any concerns or worries in the future.

- We have an ‘open access’ policy which means that GPs and other healthcare professionals can refer you back to our team without delay if they deem it necessary.
You will have enough time during follow-up appointments to discuss any fears, anxieties or questions. You can always contact your breast care nurse outside follow-up appointments for support and advice.

- You will have access to trained community health and social care workers as and when needed.

- You will have access to a specialist lymphoedema service if needed at any point after your treatment.

**Working together**

You can help us to deliver our breast service. Please read the standards below to find out how.

- You will have the opportunity to voice your views about the breast service in order to help us improve it. We will achieve this with questionnaires, regular communication with patients and with evaluation forms in the Mermaid Unit waiting area.

- Keep all appointments or, if you have to cancel, tell us as soon as possible so we can give the appointment to someone else.

- Be patient and understand that you may have to wait for your appointment if those in front of you need more time with the consultant.

- Read the information we provide or ask your breast care nurse to explain it to you. If you would like any additional information please ask your breast care nurse.
- You have a right to ask for a second opinion about your diagnosis if you have any concerns.

- Ask questions about any areas of diagnosis, treatment or care you are not sure about.

- Discuss concerns with your breast care team before stopping or changing your agreed treatment plan.

- Think carefully about support you may need after your treatment and contact your local support group or breast care nurse if it would be helpful.

- It is important to be breast aware and tell your GP or breast care nurse about any unusual changes or new symptoms as soon as possible.

- Take part in surveys and provide feedback – this will help us to improve services in the breast unit.

- Discuss any complementary therapies with your breast care team, as some products may interact adversely with the medical treatment you receive.

- Inform us of any change to your personal contact details.

- If you are not happy with the service you receive, please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS).

If you wish to make a formal complaint about your care, please contact the Chief Executive of the Hospital Trust. If you are not satisfied with their response contact the Health Service Ombudsman on 0345 015 4033 or email phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk
How we are improving our service to you

We have selected the following areas for improvement following consultation with patients and staff. We have developed an action plan outlining the date and method by which we are going to achieve each improvement goal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Our Service Improvement Goal</th>
<th>How and when we will achieve it</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All newly diagnosed patients will be given the opportunity to leave the clinic via an alternative exit.</td>
<td>Breast and clinical nurses will be briefed to ensure that newly diagnosed patients are given the opportunity to leave the unit via an alternative exit. <em>This is a short-term goal to take effect immediately.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patients will be informed about clinic waiting times.</td>
<td>A white board will be provided in the reception area to let patients know about individual doctors and their wait times. <em>This is a short-term goal to take effect immediately.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patients will have access to a range of written information about their treatment and care.</td>
<td>All nurses will be provided with a crib sheet that will prompt them to go through all aspects of the patient information folder. <em>This is a short-term goal to take effect immediately.</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>An information carousel will be placed by the entrance hall and by the receptionist. It will provide written information on subjects such as free prescriptions and benefits. A Macmillan-funded</td>
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<td>Our Service Improvement Goal</td>
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<tr>
<td>All patients will receive the highest quality care when on the ward.</td>
<td>benefits advisor will also be appointed to allow patients access to greater financial information. <em>This is a short-term goal to be achieved by December 2011.</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Patients will have increased access to and support from their breast care nurse.</td>
<td>Patients will be made aware before their stay on the ward that they may be transferred to another ward during their stay. <em>This is a short-term goal to take effect immediately.</em></td>
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<td>All nurses will be briefed to ensure that patients are treated and communicated with appropriately whilst on the ward. <em>This is a short-term goal to be achieved by October 2011.</em></td>
<td>All patients will have access to secure storage facilities where they can keep their belongings while staying on the ward. <em>This is a medium-term goal to be achieved by February 2012.</em></td>
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<td>The hospital will introduce a nurse-led clinic at six months following treatment. This will allow additional psychological and emotional support for patients. This will take place on Monday and Friday afternoons. <em>This is a medium-term goal to be achieved by February 2012.</em></td>
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Breakthrough Breast Cancer

Breakthrough Breast Cancer is dedicated to improving and saving lives through finding the causes of breast cancer, enabling early detection, ensuring precise diagnosis, discovering new and better treatments and improving medical services.

We believe passionately this disease can be beaten. Our aim is to bring together the best minds and rally the support of all those whose lives have been or may one day be affected by the disease. We don’t just imagine a world free from the fear of breast cancer – we are creating it.

How Breakthrough can help you

CAN

Breakthrough’s Campaigns & Advocacy Network (CAN) takes action locally on our national campaigns to secure important improvements to prevention, diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer. Our members are changing lives and futures. It’s free to join and members receive support and training to become informed and vocal patient advocates.

This work is vital and we need people like you to make it possible. Together we can change lives.

To find out more, or to join, visit breakthrough.org.uk/CAN, call 020 7025 2485 or email advocacy@breakthrough.org.uk