

Referral criteria for admission to the inpatient unit at St John's Hospice

St John's Hospice inpatient unit provides Specialist Palliative Care for adults aged 18 and over whom have an advanced progressive life-limiting condition, with associated complex needs which cannot be managed effectively in other settings, requiring assessment, management and support by the multidisciplinary palliative care team. This will be delivered in collaboration with our hospital, primary health care colleagues and other community health and social care services.

Referral criteria for inpatient care

Referral can be made for one or more of the following reasons:

- Complex symptom management which may include physical, psychological, spiritual or social needs.
- Care of the dying patient.

The hospice inpatient unit is unable to provide services for patients whose:

- Conditions are stable; do not require specialist palliative care input and whose needs are mainly social in nature;
- Current clinical problems are not related to their life-shortening condition;
- Clinical needs would be best met in the acute setting e.g. neutropenic sepsis.

The hospice is unable to accept patients for indefinite care and this should be made clear to the patient and family when referral for admission is being discussed. Most patients will be admitted for a period of assessment; length of stay will be dependent on complexity of need and with the exception of patients who are admitted for care in the last days of life, discharge planning commences on admission. Average length of stay is 12 days.

St John's Hospice acknowledges the importance of advance care planning, recognising that patient have preferences regarding their preferred place of care/death. We are required to prioritise access to all our services according to the complexity of need and therefore, unfortunately, we may not be able to fulfil all requests.

How to refer for inpatient care

The purpose of the hospice referral form is to ensure that we have the relevant information upon which to base our assessment of a patient's need for Specialist Palliative Care, and to prioritise accordingly. It is important that as much information is given as possible, as incomplete forms may result in a delay to the referral being processed.

The referral form can be found on our website at www.sjhospice.org.uk/how-to-refer/ If you are faxing a referral, please ring the hospice to check it has arrived.

Referrals for admission are reviewed on a daily basis (Monday – Friday excluding bank holidays), and admission arranged dependent on priority, bed availability and staffing. This will be communicated directly to the referrer who will be asked to arrange transfer to the hospice. Currently the ability to admit patients out of hours is limited. To request an admission out of hours the referrer must contact the nurse in charge who will liaise with the on-call doctor to determine the appropriateness of the request. The acceptance of admission will depend on clinical need, bed availability, medical and nursing cover.

The hospice will endeavour to signpost the referrer to other services in the community able to support the patient until admission can be arranged. Symptom control advice is available from the Hospice on the number below.

Patients who lack capacity

If a patient lacks the capacity to make a decision about admission to the Hospice and there is no relevant Lasting Power of Attorney or Court Appointed Deputy, the decision to admit must be made in their best interests in accordance with the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and the accompanying Code of Practice. This may necessitate a Best Interests meeting and may require the involvement of an Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA). Please attach copies of your assessment of capacity and best interests' documentation including any IMCA report to the referral for admission.

Transfer of patients to the hospice

Planned admissions will normally occur between 9am - 3pm Monday to Friday excluding bank holidays. Wherever possible we will endeavour to give a days' notice of bed availability.

It is the referrers' responsibility to:

- Ensure the patient is fit to travel to the hospice. It may not be appropriate to transfer patients who are actively dying.
- Arrange suitable transport.
- Ensure that the patient and family understand that admission is not for indefinite care and that the length of stay will be determined by the patient's needs.
- Inform the patient/carer of the admission arrangements.
- Ensure current medication, District Nurse files, DNA CPR forms and any other applicable documentation accompanies patients being admitted to the hospice.

Should you wish for further clarification as to whether your patient will meet our criteria for admission or you wish to discuss anything further please contact the inpatient unit on 01524 382538.