Our Service Pledge for Breast Cancer

Our hospital 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 (INSERT NUMBER) you will see a list of improvement goals – parts of the service that we are striving 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 on (INSERT DETAILS).
As a patient at our breast unit, you have a right to expect the following standards during your treatments

**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 (excluding radiotherapy) will be carried out at this 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.
- We will keep you up to date about any delays at the clinic and reassure you if you have any concerns whilst waiting. Your name will be clearly called.
- You will have all your consultations in comfortable settings where your privacy is respected.
- You can talk to a breast care nurse in private in the Quiet room. If you wish, you can go immediately after receiving your diagnosis.
- You will need to undress to your waist at your appointments. You will be provided with a gown or a sheet. If you wish, you can bring your own dressing gown to the breast unit instead of wearing a hospital gown.
● You will be given information about how to get to the breast unit, including car parking facilities and advice on how to reclaim travel costs.

● You will have the right to decline visits or examinations by students or trainees. Before we introduce a student or trainee, we will explain why they are present and give you the option to decline.

● You can choose which hospital you want to deliver your care, using information on the availability of services and what you can expect from them.
Waiting times and the appointment process

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

● If you are given an urgent referral by your GP, you will have an appointment with a breast cancer specialist within two weeks. From December 2009, everyone referred by their GP to a breast specialist will be seen within two weeks.

● You will receive your test results in person no more than five working days following your tests. They will be clearly explained.

● To be diagnosed using a triple assessment of tests – clinical examination, imaging (mammogram and/or ultrasound) and biopsy as appropriate.

● All your tests will be performed during your first visit.

● You will begin your first treatment within 31 days of your diagnosis. By 2010, 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. They 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 your doctor and breast care nurse in charge of your care and we will provide a photo board in the waiting room that you can refer to.
- 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 specialist breast care nurse or doctor with a breast care nurse present.
- Your initial diagnosis is not always straightforward and may be revised, but the reasons for any revisions will be explained.
- All members of the breast care team will be trained 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.
You will be as involved as you want to be in making decisions on 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 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 nurse is the first port of call for information and support. You can telephone her at any time, 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 given written information about your diagnosis, including a record of test results and copy of your treatment plan that you can take away and refer to throughout your treatment. This will be in easily understandable language and can be updated as your treatment progresses.
● By the end of 2009, we will provide all patients with a written information prescription – a list of information tailored to you that combines both national and local information.

● 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 be able to choose whether or not you receive copies of letters sent to your GP about your treatment.

● You will be able to discuss family history and breast cancer 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 approach our Patient Advice and Liaison Services (PALS). You can also use our complaints procedure which is 01256 486 766 or pals@bnhft.nhs.uk.

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
- Social support
- Spiritual support
- Cultural support
- Local patient self-help groups
- Financial support, including social security benefits
- Returning to work
- Complementary therapies
- Lymphoedema and physiotherapy
- Occupational therapy
- 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 psychological or psychiatric 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 kept informed about which bed you will be staying in and when it will be available.
- 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 in 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.
- 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 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.

- 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.
- 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 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 consequences 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.

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

- 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.
● 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) on 01256 486 766 or at pals@bnhft.nhs.uk.

If you wish to make a formal complaint, please contact the Chief Executive of Basingstoke and North Hampshire NHS Foundation Trust in the first instance and then 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. For each improvement goal, we have developed an action plan outlining how we are going to achieve it and a date by when.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Our Service Improvement Goal</th>
<th>How and when we will achieve it</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To improve information provided to patients</td>
<td>This is a short term goal that we will achieve by:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>● Informing patients of delays in clinic via a white board in the waiting area (August 2009)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>● Ensuring a receptionist is present at every clinic (September 2009)</td>
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<td>● Offering all patients a copy of their GP letter (September 2009)</td>
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<td>● Developing a photo board with members of staff (October 2009)</td>
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<tr>
<td>To improve our patient waiting area</td>
<td>This is a short term goal we will achieve by re-organising the waiting area to allow for more space and clear displays of information (August 2009)</td>
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</table>
Our Service Improvement Goal

How and when we will achieve it

To make follow up appointments at point of patient discharge

This is a short term goal which will be achieved by ensuring that the letter notifying patients of their surgery date will also include the date of their follow-up appointment (August 2009)

To develop a ‘tick-list’ discharge process and provide a copy to all patients

This is a medium term goal which will be achieved by staff working together to develop a check list of the discharge process a copy of which will be provided to patients prior to discharge (December 2009)

To ensure single sex accommodation

This is a long-term goal which will be achieved by ensuring that wards have clearly sign-posted male and female toilets and that the topic of single sex accommodation stays at the forefront of the Trusts agenda when discussing future plans.
Breakthrough Breast Cancer

Breakthrough Breast Cancer is a pioneering charity dedicated to the prevention, treatment and ultimate eradication of breast cancer. We fight on three fronts; research, campaigning and education. 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. The result will save lives and change futures – by removing the fear of breast cancer for good.

How Breakthrough can help you

CAN

Breakthrough’s Campaigns & Advocacy Network (CAN) take 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 is 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 or to join more visit breakthrough.org.uk/CAN, call 020 7025 2485 or email advocacy@breakthrough.org.uk.