A practical guide to living with and after cancer

WE ARE MACMILLAN. CANCER SUPPORT

PLANNING YOUR CARE AND SUPPORT

Having a holistic needs assessment

Being diagnosed with cancer can affect many areas of your life. This is why you may be offered a holistic needs assessment (HNA).

This assessment identifies concerns you may have – physical, emotional, practical, financial and spiritual. You will discuss these with your health or social care professional and make a care plan to address your care and support needs.

This leaflet covers:

- what a HNA is
- what issues you may wish to discuss
- how to prepare for the discussion
- what your care plan will include and who it will be shared with.

> ‘The assessment has been fantastic. If I’ve had problems, we can have a look at them in detail and if I need further support, I can get it.’
>
> **Tracy**

What is a HNA?

A HNA gives you a chance to think about your concerns and discuss possible solutions.

It usually has three parts:

- a simple set of questions or check list to identify any concerns you may have
- a discussion with your health or social care professional
- the development of a written care plan.

The questions may be answered on paper or electronically and will take around ten minutes to complete.

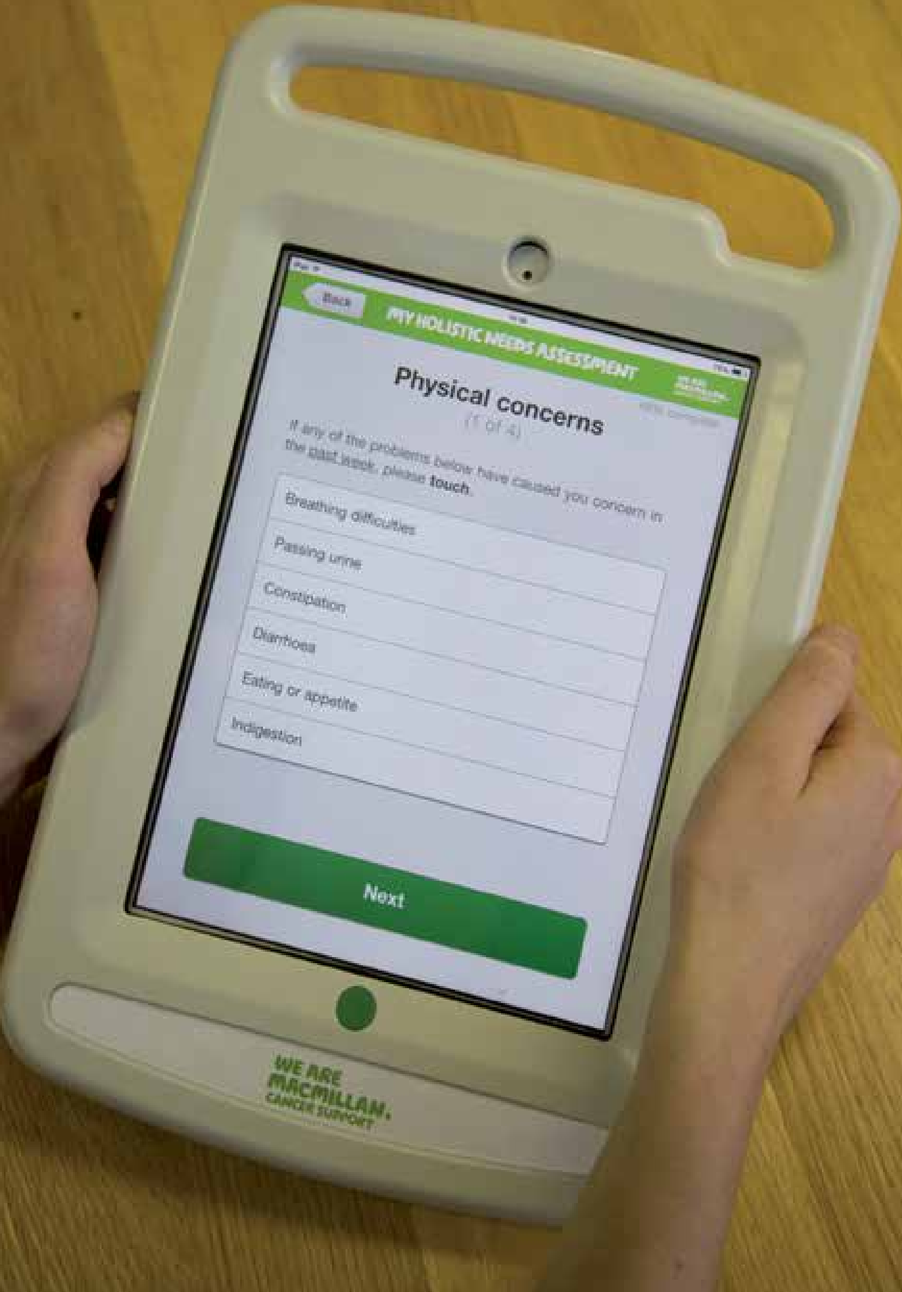
You will then meet with your health or social care professional to discuss the issues you have and think of possible solutions. Together you will agree on a plan of action to address your concerns.

This is then written down as your care plan. You will receive a copy of this plan to take away.

1. **Fill in the check list**
2. **Discuss answers with a health or social care professional**
3. **Create a plan together**

Benefits of having a HNA:

- You can get information and support with any symptoms or concerns you may have.
- It can help you to prioritise your most important concerns.
- Your health or social care professional can refer you to other services, if this would help.
- It can help you to plan ahead, from diagnosis through to treatment and life after treatment.



Physical concerns

(1 of 4)

If any of the problems below have caused you concern in the past week, please **touch**.

When does the assessment happen?

You may be offered an assessment around the time of your diagnosis, during treatment or after treatment has ended. If this is not offered, you can ask for it. Because your needs may change, you can ask for an assessment at any time if you feel it would help.

You may have a separate appointment for the assessment, or it may take place at the same time as other appointments you're having.

You may be sent the check list of questions in advance or you may you be asked to fill one out in the waiting room before you meet with your health or social care professional.

Your health or social care professional can tell you how long the assessment will probably take before it starts. You may feel they should not discuss some concerns because there is not enough time or that their concerns are not important enough. But the assessment should take as long as you need to talk about your main concerns.

Who do I have the assessment with?

You should complete the checklist of concerns. Help will be available if you need it. Your answers will then be discussed with a health or social care professional who has specialist knowledge about your care – usually your key worker. This will often be your clinical nurse specialist (CNS) or assessment officer.

Whoever you speak to should have the skills and experience to help identify and deal with your concerns. They should have up-to-date knowledge of local and national services, and know how to refer you to specialist services if you need them.

Let your health or social care professional know if you would like a family member or friend with you when the discussion takes place. If you have a carer, they may come with you and you may also discuss their concerns. However, the assessment is mainly designed to focus on your needs and concerns. You can also ask for an interpreter if you need one.

JARGON BUSTER

Key worker
Your main contact for information and advice about your treatment – usually your clinical nurse specialist (CNS).

Carer
Someone who provides unpaid support to you, which you could not manage without.

Where will the assessment take place?

The discussion should be held in a private and comfortable setting. If it is with a health care professional, it will usually take place where you usually have your treatment or care, for example at the hospital or health centre. If it is with a social care professional, it may take place in a range of locations, including your home. The discussion may also happen over the telephone. You should tell your key worker what you would prefer.

What the discussion may cover

These are your concerns, so it's up to you what is discussed. The discussion may include concerns such as:

- physical symptoms (such as weight loss, problems with appetite or eating, and tiredness)
- treatment issues (such as side effects, fertility, and the risks and benefits of treatment)
- emotional concerns (such as worries about the future and relationships)
- sexual concerns (such as erectile dysfunction or loss of sex drive)
- family matters (such as talking about the cancer and worries about genetic risk to other family members)
- job, money or housing worries (such as balancing work and treatment, and benefits or financial advice)
- practical issues (such as sorting out housework and where to get equipment that can help)
- spirituality (such as your faith or beliefs, and any impact this may have on your treatment).

The suggestions on pages 10–11 may also help you to decide what you would like to discuss.

We have booklets, leaflets and fact sheets about the physical, emotional, practical and financial effects of cancer and about what may help. Call **0808 808 00 00** for free copies.

Preparing for your discussion

To get ready for the discussion, some people make notes of any concerns or questions they have. You can add your notes in the space provided on pages 16–17.

You may want to ask yourself these questions:

- Is anything bothering you about your relationships with family or friends that could be related to the cancer?
- Are members of your family coping with knowing you have cancer?
- Would you like to know more about local services, support groups or helplines?
- Do you need advice on things like diet or stopping smoking?
- Would you like advice on how to be more physically active?
- Are you confused by anything that is happening with your treatment or follow-up care? Is there anything you would like explained to you?
- Do you need help with things like finances, work or education?
- Are you concerned about returning to work after treatment?
- Are you worried about what the future might bring?
- Do you feel your quality of life could be improved?
- Do you know what signs and symptoms to look out for in case the cancer comes back?

- Are you having any physical symptoms or side effects from the cancer or treatment?
- Do you know who to contact if you have any problems (for example, the contact details of your key worker)?

These are suggestions. Not all of them may be relevant to you. The assessment is about your personal concerns, so you can tailor the discussion to your situation.

> ‘It’s a really good prompt, especially if you have personal issues as well that you may not necessarily want to talk about. You know – if I tick that, we can talk about that.’
>
> **Tracy**

Your care plan

During the discussion, you will agree with your key worker the best ways to manage your concerns. These actions are written in a document called a care plan.

Your care plan will record:

- the main concerns talked about during the discussion
- suggestions and actions to help you manage your concerns
- services that may be able to support you
- what is already being done to help, or services you're using
- information about who to contact if you need more help
- which other health or social care professionals you have agreed to share the information with.

You should be given a copy of the care plan. You can request another copy from your health or social care professional at any time.

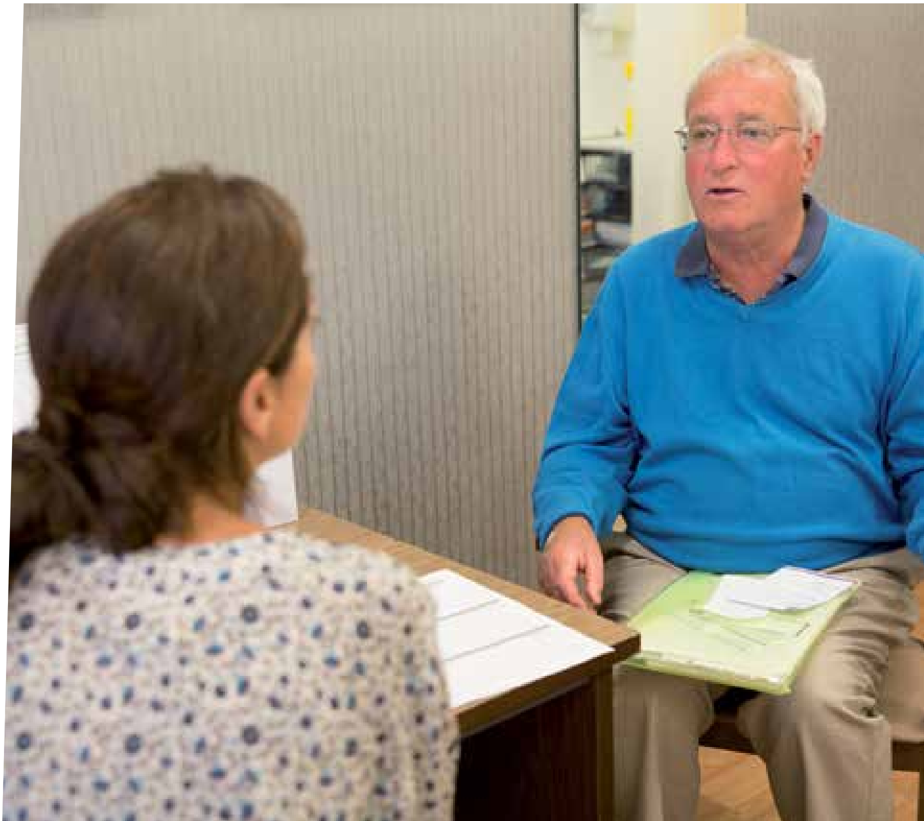
A copy of the care plan may be sent or given to:

- your GP so they know your concerns and what is planned to help with them
- other members of your healthcare team to help them plan or improve your care
- specialist support services (such as a dietitian, counsellor, benefits adviser or family support worker).

Your health or social care professional will only share the information in your care plan with your permission. They will only share as much information as people need to know for their role in your care.

Your care plan will be stored electronically or as a paper copy along with your other health records.

You can ask for a review of your care plan or a new assessment at any time.



Further information and support

Cancer is the toughest fight most of us will ever face. But you don’t have to go through it alone. The Macmillan team is with you every step of the way.

Macmillan Cancer Support
89 Albert Embankment,
London SE1 7UQ
Tel 0808 808 00 00
(Mon–Fri, 9am–8pm)

Hard of hearing?
Use textphone
0808 808 0121,
or Text Relay.

Non-English speaker?
Interpreters are available.
Alternatively, visit
macmillan.org.uk

To order any of our booklets, visit **be.macmillan.org.uk** or call us on **0808 808 00 00**.

Macmillan Cancer Voices
www.macmillan.org.uk/cancervoices
A UK-wide network that enables people who have or have had cancer, and those close to them, to speak out about their experience of cancer.

Other useful organisations

Cancer Research UK
www.cancerhelp.org.uk
Contains patient information on all types of cancer and has a clinical trials database.

Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland

www.hscni.net
The official gateway to health and social care services in Northern Ireland.

Healthtalkonline

www.healthtalkonline.org
www.youthhealthtalk.org
Both websites contain information about some cancers and have video and audio clips of people talking about their experiences of cancer and its treatments.

NHS Choices (England)

www.nhs.uk
The online 'front door' to the NHS. It's the country's biggest health website and gives all the information you need to make decisions about your health. Also has service information for England.

NHS Direct Wales

Tel 0845 4647
www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk
NHS health information site for Wales.

NHS Inform (Scotland)

Tel 111
www.nhsinform.co.uk
NHS health information site for Scotland.

Patient UK

www.patient.co.uk
Provides information about health and illnesses.

You can search for more organisations on our website at macmillan.org.uk/organisations, or call us on 0808 808 00 00.

YOUR NOTES AND QUESTIONS

Disclaimer

We make every effort to ensure that the information we provide is accurate and up to date but it should not be relied upon as a substitute for specialist professional advice tailored to your situation. So far as is permitted by law, Macmillan does not accept liability in relation to the use of any information contained in this publication, or third-party information or websites included or referred to in it.

Thanks

This leaflet has been written, revised and edited by Macmillan Cancer Support's Cancer Information Development team. It has been approved by our Chief Medical Editor, Tim Iveson, Macmillan Consultant Medical Oncologist.

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Sources

We've listed a sample of the sources used in this publication below. If you'd like further information about the sources we use, please contact us at **bookletfeedback@macmillan.org.uk**

National Cancer Survivorship Initiative. www.ncsi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/The_holistic_needs_assessment_for_people_with_cancer_A_practical_Guide_NCAT.pdf (accessed November 2014).
Macmillan Cancer Support. Introduction to eHNA and Care Planning. http://www.macmillan.org.uk/Aboutus/Healthandsocialcareprofessionals/Newsandupdates/MacVoice/Winter2014/IntroductiontoeHNAandCarePlanning.aspx (accessed November 2014).

More than one in three of us will get cancer. For most of us it will be the toughest fight we ever face. And the feelings of isolation and loneliness that so many people experience make it even harder. But you don't have to go through it alone. The Macmillan team is with you every step of the way.

We are the nurses and therapists helping you through treatment. The experts on the end of the phone. The advisers telling you which benefits you're entitled to. The volunteers giving you a hand with the everyday things. The campaigners improving cancer care. The community there for you online, any time. The supporters who make it all possible.

Together, we are all Macmillan Cancer Support.

For cancer support every step of the way,
call Macmillan on **0808 808 00 00**
(Mon–Fri, 9am–8pm) or visit **macmillan.org.uk**

Hard of hearing? Use textphone
0808 808 0121, or Text Relay.
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