

Supporting you and your child after their heart condition diagnosis

Information for patients, parents and guardians

We've given you this leaflet to introduce our clinical psychologists, Cath Norman and Kate Vasey.



Cath Norman



Kate Vasey

Cath and Kate offer support for children with heart conditions and their families.

It is normal for children with heart conditions and their family members to experience a range of emotions in response to very difficult circumstances.

Finding out that you have a heart condition and having treatment for it can be distressing for a child and for their family. Children who have heart conditions may experience a number of hospital visits, operations and medical procedures, and times of separation from family members.

How we can support you

We offer emotional support to children and young people with heart conditions up to the age of 18. We also offer emotional support to

parents or caregivers, siblings and the wider family unit.

Our clinical psychologists can:

- help to prepare your child for operations, treatment and appointments, working alongside the play team
- give your family time to talk about a new diagnosis of a heart condition
- help your child adjust to living with a heart condition
- support you or your child after a traumatic event and address symptoms such as intrusive thoughts, memories or nightmares
- help with the transition to adult cardiac services
- support your family if you are staying on Ocean Ward long-term

We try to be as flexible as possible. We can either meet by your child's bedside or find somewhere more private in another space on the ward. We can also offer appointments at our main base in Wordsworth House by Ronald McDonald House.

At the first appointment

We initially offer a one-off (or assessment) appointment so that we can get to know each other, and hear about your experiences, challenges and what is helping you cope. We

will think together about how we can support you.

Confidentiality

We aim to keep what we talk about as private as possible. Occasionally, there may be times when we have to share information. We can talk through confidentiality when we meet.

Support at medical appointments

It can be helpful for a psychologist to come with you to meetings with your child's medical team as an independent, non-medical person or advocate. You can talk through any medical or technical language with them and they can help other staff to see the situation from your point of view. Please talk to a member of the Ocean Ward team if you think this would be helpful.

Support after your child goes home

If your child has a cardiac consultant here at the hospital, you are welcome to contact us at any point, during your child's stay in hospital or at any point after they have gone home.

When the adrenalin that helped you cope and stay focussed on your child during an admission has worn off, you may find that you have a chance to reflect and think about what you have been through. It is at this point that many families contact us. This support can include talking on the phone, looking into local support if needed or coming back to see us here in the child psychology department.

If we are not the right people to help you, we will work to find the most appropriate service to meet your needs.

Contact us

If you have any questions, or if you would like to arrange some time to talk with us, please ask your child's nurse or doctor when

you are on Ocean Ward or during a clinic appointment, or contact us using the contact details below:

Child clinical psychology team
Wordsworth House, Mailpoint 133
Southampton Children's Hospital
Tremona Road
Southampton
SO16 6YD

Telephone: **023 8120 4657**

Useful links

NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk

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