

Social work at GOSH – how we can help: information for families

This leaflet explains how the Social Work Service at Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH) works, who they are and how they can help you. The Social Work Service includes social workers and family support officers, providing a direct service to children and families. We work closely with the GOSH Citizens' Advice Bureau to ensure families receive information about benefits and housing plus a range of other information.

Our social workers are funded by GOSH and the GOSH Children's Charity and CLIC Sargent. We are based and managed at GOSH in partnership with Camden Children Services.

We work in multi-disciplinary teams, attached to and working closely with wards and departments. Our aim is to ensure that families are well-supported recognising that hospital admission and treatment can be stressful and have a significant impact on family life.

As part of our role, we:

- Assess the impact of illness on a child and family, and provide emotional and practical support for the whole family. As part of this we take account of the impact on carers and identify any young carers who may need support;
- Advocate on a child or family's behalf with teams at GOSH and in the community and provide consultation and advice;
- Organise complex discharge plans where psychosocial needs are included;

- Work with teams at GOSH and other local authorities in the identification and response to child protection and safeguarding concerns;
- Provide formal and informal teaching within the hospital;
- CLIC Sargent social workers support all children and their families with a cancer diagnosis and undergoing chemotherapy treatment.

Our legal responsibility

All social workers work within a legal framework as laid out in the Children Acts of 1989 and 2004 and the Children and Families Act 2014. This means we will liaise closely with agencies in the community to ensure that children receive appropriate care.

Social workers carry out assessments of children in need and also carry out their legal duty to investigate in order to safeguard children at risk of harm.



How we can help

Our aim is to make things less stressful for you and your child while you are at GOSH. We can:

- Talk to you and your child if you are worried
- Provide support, advice and guidance to help you cope with day-to-day issues
- Speak to other hospital staff on your behalf
- Talk to community services about arranging help at home for when your child leaves hospital
- Support your other children if they are worried about their brother or sister who is ill
- Support your child in coping with their illness
- Talk to staff both at GOSH and in your local area so that everyone understands your child's needs
- Identify children at risk of harm and work to protect them

Our commitment to you

While we work with you and your family, we will always try to respond to your child's needs in a way that respects individual and cultural differences.

We will always try to understand and respect your views about your child's welfare and take these into account when working with you. We will arrange for an interpreter if you and/or your child need one.

If you have any comments or concerns about any aspect of the service you receive, please contact the Social Work Service.

Access to our records

We do keep a record of our assessment and any discussions with you and other people involved in your child's care. This ensures that the information we have is up to date and accurate. All records are held on children's medical records. If you would like to know more about these records, please ask us.

Information sharing

The child's record enables us to share information across the medical teams to ensure that they have a good understanding of your child and family's needs. Please let us know if you have any additional information that you would like us to share with the wider team for the benefit of your child's care.

Contacting the Social Work Service

You can either drop in or call to make an appointment with a Social Worker. Hours of work are Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm.

We are based in the Social Work department on the link corridor between the Variety Club Building (VCB) and the Southwood Building.

Call us on 020 7829 8896

Visit our webpages for further information at www.gosh.nhs.uk/parents-and-visitors/clinical-support-services/social-work

A duty social worker is available during office hours, but out of hours or in an emergency, please contact the Clinical Site Practitioner on 020 7405 9200 bleep 0313.

