

## The Multi-Disciplinary Team for adults

*To ensure that you receive the best possible care, it is now a national recommendation of NICE (the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence) that all patients are discussed and treated by dedicated specialists. This multi-disciplinary team (MDT) will work together to create your individually tailored treatment plan.*

*The MDT consists of a variety of specialists. This fact sheet contains an outline of the roles of some of the professionals who may be part of your MDT. It is important that you know who is supporting you, so that you can have the best understanding of your MDT.*

### *In this fact sheet:*

- An overview of the health professionals who would typically work with you as a brain tumour patient and a brief summary of what they do.
- An outline of some additional health professionals who may work with you following your diagnosis.

### General Practitioner (GP)

Although not technically part of the MDT, your GP (or family doctor) may be the first person you seek medical advice from when you experience symptoms of any kind. If your GP suspects you may have a brain tumour, they will refer you for a brain scan (see 'Scans' factsheet) and for a consultation with a more specialist health professional. If your GP does not think you have a brain tumour, but you are concerned that you might have, please raise this with them. You may also ask for a second professional opinion from another doctor if you wish. Your GP will be able to help you with this.

### Neurologist

A neurologist specialises in medical, non-surgical problems relating to the brain, spinal cord and nerves in the body. You may be referred to a neurologist for your initial diagnosis.

The neurologist will ask check your general health and your nervous system (called a neurological examination). This involves looking at your vision, hearing, alertness, muscle strength, co-ordination, and reflexes. They will also look at the back of your eyes to see if there is any swelling of the 'optic disc' - a sign of raised pressure inside the skull, which could be a sign of a brain tumour. They may also send you for a scan.

### Neurosurgeon

Following a scan, if a tumour is suspected and your tumour can be operated on, you will be referred to a neurosurgeon. The neurosurgeon may carry out a biopsy (removal of a small piece of the tumour) so that the tumour can be analysed and diagnosed.

They may be able to fully or partially remove the tumour (debulking) and a biopsy will also be taken at this time. You can expect to see your neurosurgeon before and after surgery and for follow-up appointments in outpatient clinics.

### Neuropathologist

A neuropathologist diagnoses diseases of the central nervous system (brain and spinal cord) by looking at a sample of brain tissue ('biopsy') under a microscope. From carrying out this examination, the neuropathologist is able to give a diagnosis of

the type and grade of the brain tumour. This will affect the type of treatment that may be offered following surgery.

### Clinical nurse specialist (CNS)

A clinical nurse specialist (sometimes called a neuro-oncology nurse) acts as a point of contact between you, your family and the rest of the MDT. **For this reason, they are often called key workers.**

Your CNS will be able to help with any questions or concerns you may have about your treatment as they can liaise with all members of the MDT on your behalf.

Your CNS can offer specialist advice, information and support to you and your family from diagnosis onwards and refer you to other services if you need them e.g. fatigue management, seizure management, psychological issues, benefits.

### Neuro-oncologist/Clinical oncologist

In the UK, an oncologist is a healthcare professional who specialises in the non-surgical management of patients who have tumours. They undergo training in the management of all types of tumour, but increasingly concentrate on treating two or three types. Non-surgical management of tumours involves radiotherapy, chemotherapy or both.

There are different types of oncologists who you may hear of, or meet, as part of your treatment. They work closely with other members of the MDT to plan and co-ordinate your treatment.

Clinical oncologists are the most common non-surgical speciality involved in treating brain tumours. They specialise in both radiotherapy and chemotherapy. (They are sometimes referred to as 'radiotherapists').

Medical oncologists specialise in chemotherapy only.

Neuro-oncologists are oncologists who specialise in the non-surgical treatment of tumours of the brain and spinal cord. In the UK, most neuro-oncologists are also clinical oncologists.

## Neuroradiologist

A neuroradiologist is a doctor who specialises in the use of imaging, such as X-rays and scans, to diagnose tumours of the brain and spine.

## Radiographer

Radiographers are not doctors, but they are highly trained health professionals. There are two types of radiographer - diagnostic radiographer and therapeutic radiographer.

The diagnostic radiographer uses a range of imaging technology to produce the images of the brain that are used to aid diagnosis by the neuroradiologist.

The therapeutic radiographer is the person who actually administers the radiation treatment. Radiographers work with other professionals, including clinical oncologists and medical physicists, to help plan your treatment. Whilst you are receiving your radiotherapy you will see these radiographers daily.

## Medical physicist

Although you are unlikely to meet the medical physicist, they play an important role in your treatment. Working with other health professionals in the team, they help plan the doses of radiation and work out how the treatment should be staged to give normal cells time to recover before the next dose.

## Additional staff who may work with you after treatment:

### Occupational therapist

Occupational therapists can help you by giving cognitive assessments and rehabilitation (testing and, if needed, helping you with your memory, language skills, problem-solving and attention), upper limb rehabilitation, fatigue management and anxiety management (including relaxation therapy) and help with work-related difficulties.

They can also help you to manage daily activities, including dressing, cooking, eating and showering. They may suggest

certain aids or equipment around the home to make jobs easier for you, such as a hand rail to help you in and out of the bath.

### Physiotherapist

A physiotherapist helps with the recovery of your physical functioning through physical manipulation of the body and exercises. Patients with brain tumours are often referred to a physiotherapist because of difficulties with balance or muscle weakness caused by the tumour or its treatment. The physiotherapist may put together a programme for you that that includes exercises at home, the gym or in a hydrotherapy pool.

### Speech and language therapist

You may be referred to a speech and language therapist if your tumour affects an area of the brain that is involved with language. Speech and language therapists can also help with difficulties relating to eating and swallowing, which can be an effect caused by the brain tumour.

### Dietitian

A dietitian specialises in food and nutrition and can help create dietary plans to suit your individual nutritional needs, taking into consideration your medical records.

### Neuropsychologist

Neuropsychologists are concerned with the assessment and rehabilitation of people with traumatic brain injury, such as caused by brain tumours and their treatment. They use various tests such as language assessments, personality tests, problem solving evaluations and other mental and behavioural examinations to help you deal with cognitive and behavioural changes caused by the physical damage to the brain.

### Clinical psychologist

A clinical psychologist is concerned with reducing psychological and emotional distress and promoting psychological well-being. They help with difficulties such as anxiety, depression and relationship issues. They use a range of assessments and tests and can suggest counselling, therapy or advice to help you.

### Clinical psychiatrist

A clinical psychiatrist is a medically qualified doctor who has chosen to specialise in psychiatry. They help with mental disorders and are able to prescribe medication and other treatments.

## What if I have further questions?

If you require further information, any clarification of information, or wish to discuss any concerns, please contact our Support and Information Team:

Call: 0808 800 0004

(free from landlines and most mobiles:  
3, O2, Orange, T-mobile, EE, Virgin and Vodafone)

Email: [support@thebraintumourcharity.org](mailto:support@thebraintumourcharity.org)

Join our online forums at:  
[thebraintumourcharity.org/forums](http://thebraintumourcharity.org/forums)

## About us

The Brain Tumour Charity makes every effort to ensure that we provide accurate, up-to-date and unbiased facts about brain tumours. We hope that these will add to the medical advice you have already been given. Please do continue to talk to your doctor if you are worried about any medical issues.

We are the UK's pre-eminent brain tumour charity. We fund scientific and clinical research into brain tumours and offer information and support to those affected, whilst raising awareness and influencing policy.

We rely 100% on charitable donations to fund our vital work. If you would like to make a donation, or want to find out about other ways to support us including fundraising, leaving a gift in your will or giving in memory, please visit us at [thebraintumourcharity.org](http://thebraintumourcharity.org), call us on **01252 749043** or email [fundraising@thebraintumourcharity.org](mailto:fundraising@thebraintumourcharity.org)

## About this fact sheet

This fact sheet has been written and edited by The Brain Tumour Charity's Support and Information Team. The accuracy of medical information has been verified by a leading neuro-oncologist. Our fact sheets have been produced with the assistance of patient and carer representatives and up-to-date, reliable sources of evidence. If you would like a list of references for any of the fact sheets, or would like more information about how we produce them, please contact us.



# The Multidisciplinary Team

Your notes

**Saving lives through research,  
information, awareness & policy**



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