

# Information for patients and carers

## Metastasis of Unknown Origin



## Introduction

You have been referred to the oncology team following the results of the investigations you have had.

Oncology means cancer.

The team consists of cancer specialist doctors and nurses who are here to provide you and your family with support and guidance throughout your cancer journey.

The investigations show that you have secondary cancer. This means that you have cancer that has spread from one part of the body, called the primary, to another part or parts of the body. Doctors refer to this as metastatic cancer.

So that we can find out what type of cancer you have and where it may have come from we may need to carry out further tests.

These could be further scans, such as a CT, MRI or PET scan, or a camera test, such as an endoscopy where the inside of your body can be examined. We may also want to obtain a biopsy.

The decision regarding which investigations you require will depend on where the cancer has been found in your body.

Before we carry out any of these further tests we will have a discussion with you about the best test options for you. You may like to have someone from your family or a close friend with you when we talk about the options.

The results of all these tests may help us identify where your primary cancer site is. If a primary cancer site is found we will liaise with the specific team relevant to you in order to create your treatment plan.

However, sometimes further tests may not be helpful and don't always tell us where the cancer has come from, and a consultant from our team will discuss this with you. This is known as Cancer of Unknown Primary.

## Multi-Disciplinary Team Meetings

A Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) is a group of experts who specialise in caring for patients with cancer, including Metastatic Cancer of Unknown Origin (MUO). The MDT works in partnership with other hospitals in order to co-ordinate your care.

### Who is at the MDT meeting?

#### Consultant clinical oncologist

This is a doctor who specialises in the non-surgical treatment of cancer. They work closely with other members of the multi-disciplinary team to plan your treatment. Your oncologist will discuss the different non-surgical options for treatment with you which could include chemotherapy (drug treatment), radiotherapy or hormone treatment. Oncologists also monitor your progress during treatment and help you deal with your cancer and its effects including symptoms relating to cancer and treatment, medical problems and emotional issues.

#### Clinical nurse specialist (CNS)

This is a nurse who specialises in the care and support of people with cancer. They will provide information to help you understand your treatment options and will support you during your treatment. They will also advise you on practical issues. The clinical nurse specialist can talk to other members of the MDT on your behalf if you wish, this person will be your key worker.

#### Consultant radiologist

This is a doctor who specialises in carrying out diagnostic tests such as CT (computerised tomography), MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) and other special scans. The radiologist is specially trained in the detection of disease through the interpretation of investigative techniques. Their work is fundamental to the management of cancer care.

## **Consultant pathologist**

This is a doctor who specialises in looking at cells under a microscope and working out the type of cancer so we know how to give further treatment if necessary.

## **MDT co-ordinator**

This person is responsible for co-ordinating your cancer pathway.

## **Palliative care specialist**

These are experienced doctors and nurses who specialise in the support and symptom management of patients with cancer. The doctors and nurse specialists are part of a team working in the hospital and in the community and are sometimes known as Macmillan nurses.

## **What happens at the MDT?**

Your case will be discussed at the MDT meeting whereby all the tests you've had done will be reviewed by the team. At this meeting, the team will use the results of the investigations that you've had to see if they can decide from where your cancer has originated. They will then discuss what treatment we can offer you, taking your holistic needs into account.

## **What happens after the MDT?**

Your specialist nurse will have discussed with you how you will find out the outcome of the MDT meeting.

## **Clinical Trials**

A clinical trial is a type of medical research and may be discussed with you as a potential option for treatment. It aims to find new and improved ways of preventing, diagnosing, treating and controlling illnesses. The

discussion does not commit you to taking part. People are involved in trials in a controlled and carefully planned way.

Often clinical trials test medicines, medical procedures or medical equipment. Sometimes they want to find out more about the psychological and social effects of illness and treatment.

You can look at the current trials for your particular tumour site by accessing the following website <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/find-a-clinical-trial>

## Your Key Worker

Your cancer Key Worker's name and contact details can be found below:

Key worker.....  
Phone number.....

They are available Monday – Friday, 08.30 - 16.30 to discuss any questions you may have. If they are not available please leave a message on their answerphone and they will call you back, but this may not be the same day.

If you feel unwell out of these hours you should contact your GP for further advice.

## Sources of further information

[www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk](http://www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk)

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

[www.accessable.co.uk](http://www.accessable.co.uk)

[www.patient.co.uk](http://www.patient.co.uk)

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All our patient information leaflets are available on our website for patients to access and download:

[www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets](http://www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets)

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If you want to stop smoking, you can also contact Smokefree Lancashire on Freephone **08081962638**

**Please ask a member of staff if you would like help in understanding this information.**

**This information can be made available in large print, audio, Braille and in other languages.**

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