

Moving to South Thames cleft adult services

This leaflet explains more about moving from children's services to adult services. If you have any further questions, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.

What is the process?

Moving from children's to adult services is an important time in your life. This move will happen gradually, which is why we call it a 'transition process'.

At some stage between the ages of 15-18, you will begin the transition from being considered a child or young adult patient, to being an adult patient. The transition to adult services can be a worry for some patients and parents. We want to help you feel confident living with your cleft condition and to make sure that you have all the information that you need. We will work with you to make sure that you know all about this and will support you in becoming more independent and help you to be able to manage decisions about your care.

Will I still see the same team at my appointments?

Yes. In the South Thames Cleft Service your care continues to be provided by the same members of the team. The only difference will be if you need an operation as you will be treated at Guy's hospital and will stay on an adult ward. You can still have visitors on the ward but they can't stay overnight with you.

Can my parents/carers still come to my appointments?

Yes. You are welcome to bring your parents or anyone else that you think will help support you during your appointments. Once you are over 18, your appointment letters will be sent to you rather than your parents and the Cleft Team will only be able to discuss your medical information (including your appointments) with you.

If you ever find it difficult to understand or cope with any aspects of your treatment, our Clinical Psychology team would be glad to support you (see our leaflet **South Thames Cleft Service**). The psychology team are usually in clinic with the rest of the team but would be happy to meet with you separately too.

Questions you might want to ask

We expect that you will have questions about moving to adult services and about your cleft and how it will affect you in the future. We will see you when you are 15 to talk about these things and answer your questions. We will see you again when you are 20 to discuss these again as they may have changed as you will be older and will have moved to adult services.

These are some of things you might want to ask questions about;

- changes to your nose, lips, teeth, bite or profile
- how to improve scars
- ways to improve your speech
- problems between your mouth and your nose
- feelings about being born with a cleft
- leaving the service
- the genetics of cleft conditions and planning for a family in the future.

Is there anything that won't be done for me in the adult service?

The only thing that we can't do is continue to provide you with all of your dental care. As an adult, we can only provide you with dental care in the site of your cleft.

You will need to look after your retainers. Patients who stop wearing their retainers often find their teeth move. It is important to keep wearing your retainers at night. If they break you will need to ask your dentist to refer you to a private orthodontist to replace them.

What happens when I am discharged from the service?

We will discharge you once you have turned 20 or a little earlier, with your permission, if you have completed all of your treatment. You can always be referred back to see us in the future. You just need to ask your GP or dentist to refer you to us again.

Will I have to pay travel costs to come to appointments?

If you are receiving a particular type of benefit you may be entitled to claim some or full costs of travelling to and from your hospital appointments. We will assist you to find out if you are eligible to claim travel costs.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about transitioning to adult service, please contact a member of the South Thames Cleft on, **t: 020 7188 1321**, Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit **w: www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets**

Pharmacy Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline. **t: 020 7188 8748**, Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS) **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk

t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints) **e:** complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language and accessible support services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch. **t:** 020 7188 8815 **e:** languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

NHS 111

This service offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

t: 111 **w:** www.111.nhs.uk

NHS website

This website gives information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you take control of your health and wellbeing. **w:** www.nhs.uk

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