

A bedside guide for patients



WELCOME

Welcome to Queen Victoria Hospital. We aim to make your stay as comfortable and anxiety-free as possible.

This booklet provides some general information about the services and facilities at the hospital.

The clinical staff who care for you will give you more information about your particular circumstances and the treatment you are having.

There is more information about the hospital on our website – www.qvh.nhs.uk – perhaps for your relatives or friends to look at.

We hope you find this information useful. If you have any questions or concerns, please ask a member of staff who will be pleased to help.



Richard Tyler
Chief Executive



Amanda Parker
Director of Nursing &
Quality

If you would like a copy of this information in another format or language, please ask a member of the ward staff to contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01342 414355.

A telephone interpretation service is available at all times and the manager for the area can support you in accessing this service. Where other interpreting is required, such as Makaton, sign language or Braille, this can be arranged by the ward manager.

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1. GENERAL INFORMATION

About QVH

Queen Victoria Hospital is a specialist NHS hospital providing life-changing reconstructive surgery, burns care and rehabilitation services for people across the South of England.

Our world-leading clinical teams also treat common conditions of the hands, eyes, skin and teeth for the people of East Grinstead and the surrounding area. In addition we provide a minor injuries unit, expert therapies and a sleep service.

We are a centre of excellence, with an international reputation for pioneering advanced techniques and treatments. Everything we do is informed by our passion for providing the highest quality care, the best clinical outcomes and a safe and positive patient experience.

We have a track record of success in official ratings, awards and surveys. We achieved the highest score in the country for how well patients rate their experience of being in hospital in the 2012 national NHS inpatient survey.

We pride ourselves in the quality and individual level of care that we provide for every patient. We always value feedback and comments about your quality of care – see section 7 from page 18.

As an NHS foundation trust, QVH remains fully part of the NHS and retains its values including the provision of free care based on need, not ability to pay. We are locally accountable, making decisions in the interests of our patients and the community. QVH has a public membership of about 9,000 people in Kent, Surrey and Sussex. The members elect a council of governors. If you would be interested in becoming a member, please see page 20.

Our heritage

QVH is proud of its history and heritage.

The origins of our hospital date back to 1863 when the East Grinstead Cottage Hospital was founded. Following a number of incarnations as a small community hospital, the Queen Victoria Hospital, as it became known by the 1930s, moved to its current site in 1936.

In 1939 a surgeon named Archibald McIndoe started work at the hospital. Less than 10 years later, New-Zealand born McIndoe was knighted in recognition of his pioneering plastic surgery techniques and holistic approach to the treatment of allied aircrew during World War II. These young men, who became known as the 'Guinea Pigs', had been badly burned or crushed in their planes, many during the Battle of Britain.

McIndoe's legacy lives on to this day as QVH remains the regional centre for specialist plastic and reconstructive surgery and rehabilitation.

Wards

We have two adult wards, Margaret Duncombe and Ross Tilley, and a children's ward known as 'Peanut Ward'.

Our burns centre cares for burned patients, people with extensive skin loss (through various causes) and people who have undergone major reconstructive surgery. The unit includes an intensive care unit, rehabilitation facilities and an emergency burns assessment centre.

Most of our wards are made up of separate bays which are designated for either male or female patients with dedicated single-sex washing and toilet facilities nearby. Only the recovery ward has

mixed sex accommodation since a higher level of observation and nursing is required. Every effort is taken to maintain patients' privacy and dignity in this area.

If you require a map of the hospital site, please ask a member of staff or visit our website.

Children's ward

Peanut Ward is for our young patients up to the age of 16. It was recently refurbished and all children now have individual rooms.

We understand that having a child in hospital is a worrying time for parents and other family members. Our highly qualified team works hard to create a relaxed and friendly atmosphere for children and their carers throughout their stay. We have a play specialist, a well-equipped playroom and an outdoor play area.

Visitors are welcome at all times on Peanut ward (at the discretion of the nurse in charge) and we encourage family members to get involved in care. We offer facilities for one parent to stay with every child and a separate parents' area where you may prepare your own food and drink.

Siblings are welcome on Peanut Ward but remain the responsibility of their parent or guardian at all times. However, siblings cannot go into operating theatres or recovery areas so please ensure you arrange for another parent or guardian to look after them if you are accompanying a child to surgery.

Please ask for the Peanut Ward booklet for more information.

Car parking

Parking on the hospital site is pay and display. The charges are displayed in the car parks and on our website.

Public transport

QVH is well served by local bus services, particularly routes 281 and 400. For more information ask staff or see our website. Buses and taxis connect with East Grinstead train station, which has services to London Bridge, London Victoria and East Croydon. More details can be obtained from National Rail Enquiries on 08457 484950.

Patient transport

Patients are expected to make their own arrangements to get to and from hospital, usually with help from friends and relatives.

Patients on some benefits, for example income support, may be able to claim back the cost of their travel from the hospital cashier's office. You must provide valid evidence of your appointment and your entitlement to help with transport costs. For further information, please call the cashier on 01342 414416.

Patient transport services are available for patients travelling to NHS appointments whose medical condition means they cannot get to their appointment in any other way. These services are provided on a countywide basis, depending on where you live. You should contact your relevant patient transport service provider to check your eligibility.

Where you live	Transport provider	Telephone
Sussex	Patient Transport Bureau	0300 111 2131
Kent & Medway	NSL Care Services	0843 2241 888
Surrey	Patient Transport Service	0300 200 1067

Visiting

We understand how important visits from friends and family are to our patients. It is also important that patients are able to rest and that our staff have time to carry out assessments and give treatment.

Most of our wards have fixed visiting times (see below) and we ask that friends and relatives respect these. Visiting outside these times to accommodate specific circumstances, for example long journeys, may be arranged at the discretion of the ward manager.

The hospital has a protected meal time policy to ensure patients are able to eat without interruption and don't miss meals. This means that visiting is not allowed between 12pm and 1pm and 5pm and 6pm, unless you are a patient's carer and will be helping them with eating. Remember other patients may wish to rest or sleep during visiting hours, so please show them consideration.

Ward	Telephone number	Visiting times
Burns centre	01342 414440	2pm - 5pm and 6pm - 8pm
Intensive care unit	01342 414176	Open visiting (nurse's discretion)
Margaret Duncombe Ward	01342 414450	2pm - 5pm and 6pm - 8pm
Peanut Ward	01342 414469	Open visiting (nurse's discretion)
Ross Tilley Ward	01342 414451	2pm - 5pm and 6pm - 8pm

Reducing the risk of infections

For the safety of our patients, it is important that visitors do not come to the hospital if they have been unwell in the last 48 hours, especially with a cold, diarrhoea or vomiting. They must wait until they have been clear of symptoms for at least 48 hours before visiting.

On our burns ward, where patients are especially susceptible to infections, a maximum of two visitors are allowed at the bedside at any one time.

In all our wards, we ask visitors not to sit on the patient's bed. Please do not bring babies or young children onto wards because hospitals can be unsafe for them, except in areas where children are patients.

We would like to thank all visitors for their help to reduce the risk of infections. More information on how we minimise the risk of infections is on page 14.

Flowers

It is lovely to receive flowers when in hospital. To help us reduce the risk of infection and keep bedside areas safe and tidy, we ask that floral bouquets are provided in oasis, or in pots. The number of flowers by your bedside may be limited due to space.

Some bugs and germs that are often found in flowers and their water can be an infection risk to patients with significantly weakened immune systems. For this reason we do not allow flowers in the intensive care centre, the burns centre or in certain areas of Ross Tilley ward.

Your friends and relatives could consider other gifts such as fruit or magazines.

Smoke-free

QVH is a smoke-free environment, both inside and outside our hospital buildings. Patients undergoing reconstructive surgery are at particular risk from the effects of smoking because nicotine causes the arteries to constrict reducing blood flow to all parts of the body. Reduced blood flow can negatively affect the healing of transplanted tissue or a reconstructed site. If you would like help to stop smoking please speak to your nurse or doctor.

Confidentiality

We take your confidentiality very seriously. While you are under our care, we will record information about you to support your treatment. We will only disclose information about you to other professionals who need it to help care for you. All our staff have a confidentiality clause in their contracts, and we comply with appropriate legislation and guidance including the Data Protection Act 1998, the NHS Care Record Guarantee and Department of Health's Confidentiality Code of Practice. In certain situations we are required by law to report information to certain authorities, but this information is only provided after formal authorisation has been given by a health professional.

The Data Protection Act 1998 allows you to have access to your health records. This is a formal process that has to be arranged by your consultant following a written request.

Letting people know

If you agree, we will keep your family, carers and friends informed about your progress. It would be helpful if one nominated person rang the ward and then passed news to other friends and relatives. Please ask this person to ring after 9.30am, by which time the doctors will have completed their ward rounds.

Our staff will need contact details for a relative in case of an emergency. If your relative has a 'number withheld' block on their home telephone to prevent unwanted callers who withhold their number, staff calling from the hospital will not be able to contact them. In these circumstances, please agree alternative arrangements with staff for contacting your relative.

The direct dial number for each ward is listed under the visiting section of this booklet. If writing to you in hospital, relatives and friends should use the full address (found on the last page of this guide), along with the name of your ward. Letters will be brought to you on the ward.

Media interest

Sometimes the nature of a patient's injuries or treatment generates interest from the media. In order to protect the privacy of these patients we may agree a password with relatives that must be given before any information about the patient is disclosed over the telephone or in person. It is then the choice of the patient (if conscious) or next of kin (if the patient is sedated) to decide who is allowed the password. Visitors will also be expected to give the password before being allowed to visit the patient.

Our communications team can give further advice and support to patients and their relatives on handling media interest.

Equality and diversity

QVH has a legal duty not to discriminate. This duty applies to the way we treat our patients, staff and members and we take it seriously. We believe that equality legislation gives us opportunities to improve the quality of QVH care, employment and membership regardless of race, gender, sexuality, disability, age or religious belief.

We work hard to ensure that our patients, their carers and our staff share an environment in which everyone feels respected, valued and empowered. If you have any queries or concerns regarding equality and diversity issues, please contact the Deputy Director of Nursing on 01342 414326.

Your rights and responsibilities

Patient rights and responsibilities are set out in the NHS Constitution. This brings together in one place what staff, patients and the public can expect from the NHS. To read it, visit www.nhs.uk/choiceinthenhs/rightsandpledges or ask PALS for a copy (see page 18).

2. ON THE WARD

While in hospital you will be under the care of a consultant (named on your admission letter) and his or her medical team. Your nurses will organise your day-to-day care and the ward sister co-ordinates the ward activities.

The inpatient leaflet you received with your admission letter (if applicable), listed the items you need to bring with you into hospital. If you arrived without chance to pack, ward staff may be able to provide essentials and some items are available to buy in the Spitfire restaurant. If you need another copy of the inpatient leaflet, please ask a member of staff.

A ward round is carried out regularly by doctors, but you will not necessarily see your consultant every day. If you or your family wish to see a doctor, please tell the nursing staff.

Please do not leave your ward without telling a member of the ward staff.

Your privacy and dignity is a key consideration in the care that we provide. If you have any concerns or comments, please speak to your nurse.

Who's who

A wide variety of healthcare professionals may be involved in your care in the hospital, including various nurses, doctors, therapists, healthcare assistants, pharmacists, theatre staff, dental assistants, porters, domestics and administrative staff. Each member of staff wears a name badge at all times.

The role or grade of each member of staff is indicated by the colour and style of their uniform and by their identity badge. Badges have a photograph, name and job title.

To help you identify different types of staff, pictures of most uniforms are displayed on banners and posters around the hospital.

General ward routine

The table on the following page gives you an idea of the usual routine on our wards. The timings are approximate and may differ depending on the needs of patients, the timings of planned treatments and operations and any emergencies that arise.

Dressing and washing

If you need help with getting changed or washed, please ask your nurse.

Medical information

If you are worried about your condition or are in pain or discomfort, please let the staff on the ward know. If you would like to know more about your treatment, the doctors and nursing staff responsible for your care will be happy to discuss it with you.

General ward routine	
07:00 - 07:30	Morning drug rounds
07:30 - 08:00	Breakfast is served
08:00 - 09:30	Doctors' ward rounds
	Staff make beds if you are mobile
09.30 - 10.00	Staff handover
	Nurses may ask you to have a wash and will assist you if needed. Dressing changes may also take place. A morning drink will be offered at this time.
10:00 - 12:00	Discharge time for patients going home
	If you are going home, you will be asked to move to the discharge lounge while waiting for your transport - please read the 'Planning for Discharge' leaflet on the ward
12:00 - 14:00	Drug rounds and intravenous antibiotics given
12:00 - 13:00	Lunch is served (protected meal time)
13:30 - 14:30	Drinks are served
14:00 - 17:00	Visiting time
17:00 - 18:00	Supper is served (protected meal time)
	Drinks are served
17:00 - 18:00	Drug rounds and intravenous antibiotics given
18:00 - 20:00	Visiting time
19:30 - 20:00	Handover to night staff
20:00	End of visiting time and visitors asked to leave
22:00 - 00:00	Drug rounds and staff help patients settle down for the night

Consent to treatment

We need your written consent before we can operate or carry out some other procedures. Your doctor will explain the benefits and risks of treatment, and any alternative treatment options. You will then be asked to sign a consent form, and offered a copy to keep if you wish. If you are unsure about any aspect of the treatment proposed, please ask as many questions as you like. If you are having an anaesthetic, further information will be given to you about this part of the operation or procedure. Some minor procedures do not require formal consent, but staff will explain the risks, benefits and alternatives before asking for your verbal consent.

You have a right to withdraw from treatment at any time, even after you have signed a form. It is your decision.

Cleaning routine

QVH has an excellent in-house cleaning team who help to make sure that we maintain a very high standard of cleanliness. They have a detailed schedule so that everything is cleaned as frequently as needed. This is summarised on posters and detailed in the cleaning policy, which is available on our website.

If you have any queries or concerns about cleanliness, please talk to your nurse or the domestic supervisor (extension 6602). This will help us to deal with any problem as quickly as possible.

Valuables and personal possessions

You can keep a small number of day-to-day essential items in the locker by your bed. We cannot be responsible for the security of your valuable items, so you may wish to give these to a relative or friend to take home. If you have any valuables you want to keep in hospital, you will be asked to sign a disclaimer that they are left at your own risk.

Secure lockers are available on Ross Tilley, Margaret Duncombe and our burns wards. Please ask your nurse for information about using these. Our cashier can also look after any money you wish to keep secure for the duration of your stay. Please note that this will be returned to you in the form of a cheque and not in cash. On our burns ward, money can be placed in the ward safe during your surgery for safe keeping.

Personal electronic equipment

We understand that you may want to have your mobile phone or other electronic device, such as Kindle, iPad or laptop in hospital to help you stay in touch and provide entertainment. As with other valuables (see above) we cannot be responsible for their security and you will be asked to sign to say that you understand they are at your own risk.

To protect the safety of our patients, our staff and our equipment, you may not connect any personal electronics or chargers to hospital plug sockets without them first being tested and approved by our facilities team. This can take several days to arrange. In most cases we recommend that you ask friends and relatives to charge personal electronics for you at home. However, if you are staying with us for more than a couple of days and have electronic items you would like to plug in, please ask your nurse to arrange for them to be tested.

Please respect other patients when using electronic devices, by keeping your ringtone on silent, being discreet when speaking and using headphones when listening to music, playing games or watching DVDs. To maintain the confidentiality and privacy of other patients please do not take any photographs in patient areas.

Your medicines

Your nurse will discuss your medication with you and there are regular drug rounds each day by staff wearing a green tabard.

It is very important that we know exactly what medicines you have been or are currently taking so that we can decide on the best treatment for you. Show any medicines you are taking when you come into hospital to the nurse, doctor and the pharmacist on the ward. The medicines that belong to you will be placed in the locked part of your bedside locker on Ross Tilley and Margaret Duncombe wards and in the ward medicines cabinet on our burns ward. Wherever possible the hospital will use your medicines during your stay.

When it is time for you to leave, we will give your medicines back to you if you still need them. Further supplies will be provided if necessary and the hospital will supply any new medication prescribed for you by the medical staff. You should not take home any medicines you no longer need – with your permission we will dispose of them.

Psychological therapy

Psychological therapy is an integral part of care at QVH, to help with emotional responses to hospitalisation and treatment. The psychological therapy team offers emotional support, and therapy where appropriate, to all QVH patients who request support or are referred by staff.

Being in hospital can be an anxious time. You are in a different environment away from family and friends, and you are not in control of your daily routine. After surgery you may experience some pain and discomfort or anxiety about your recovery or how your body will look when healed.

If you are in hospital as the result of an accident, you may feel emotionally affected by the experience. Your friends and relatives might also feel anxiety, fear, distress and experience poor sleep and exhaustion. They may have feelings of guilt that they were not the one injured.

These are all normal reactions. However, if they are causing you concern, the nursing staff to arrange for a member of the psychological therapy team to meet with you and discuss how best to help you manage your thoughts and feelings. They can support you while you are in hospital and, if appropriate, following your discharge.

How we provide you with information

While you are in our care, we aim to provide you with all the information you need. However, if there is something you feel you want to know, particularly before surgery, please ask. There are many patient information leaflets available about the operations and care provided at QVH. You should have been provided with information about anaesthesia, but please do not hesitate to ask for it again if required.

If you have any questions about your care and treatment, or about the hospital and how it works, please ask a member of staff, or ask to speak to our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01342 414355.

3. FOOD

Please let us know as soon as possible if you have any dietary requirements. This helps our dietician to arrange special menus for you, and the more notice we have the better. If your treatment involves a special diet related to your medical condition you will be seen by the hospital dietician. It may be necessary to restrict your diet for medical reasons.

Otherwise you will be served three meals each day. You will be served a continental breakfast on the ward in the morning. There is a choice of menu for lunch and supper. Refreshments, including soft drinks, tea, coffee, biscuits and snacks, are also offered throughout the day and before you settle down for the night.

We have a protected meal time policy at QVH to help ensure you don't miss a meal and are well nourished while you're in hospital. If you do miss a meal, please ask the ward staff to contact the kitchen, who can provide a sandwich or other snack.

If you are going to have an operation, you will not be able to eat or drink for a while beforehand.

Visitors can buy hot meals and snacks from the Spitfire restaurant, which is open 7.30am-3pm, Monday-Sunday and from 8.30am-3pm on Saturdays and Sundays.

The Hurricane Café is open 10am to 8pm on weekdays, for sandwiches, snacks, fresh bean coffee and other hot and cold drinks.

Vending machines offering hot and cold drinks and snacks are situated in the main hospital corridor.

4. SAFETY

Patient identification

When you arrived at hospital a nurse will have given you a hospital identity bracelet with your name and other details on it. Please wear it all the time you are in hospital. It is an important part of our safety procedures. Members of staff will ask you to confirm your identity frequently, especially before carrying out any treatment or giving you medicines. While this can appear strange from staff who may know you, it is an important part of helping to keep you safe.

Infection prevention

We take the prevention of infection very seriously and are committed to doing everything we can to prevent hospital acquired infections (HAI). The single most important factor in reducing HAI is good hand hygiene:

- Feel free to ask any member of staff (including doctors and nurses) if they have cleaned their hands before they examine or treat you. Please be assured this will not affect your care in any way.
- We have a policy of 'bare below the elbows' during clinical contact. If any clinical staff do not have bare forearms whilst examining or treating you, please remind them or mention it to your nurse.
- Make sure you clean your own hands with soap and water after using the toilet and before meals. If you cannot leave your bed a nurse will provide you with a packet of hand wipes.
- Encourage your visitors to clean their hands either with soap and water or the alcohol gel provided at the ward entrances, before and after visiting you.

Further information on hand hygiene is available – please ask a member of staff for a leaflet. More information on how your visitors can help prevent infections is on page 6.

If you have any concerns regarding infection, please ask to speak to one of the infection prevention and control specialist nurses. Your nurse on the ward can help you contact them.

Fire alarms

Your nurse can show you where the nearest fire exit is. In the event of a fire you will hear a continuous alarm. If the fire alarm goes off, please follow the instructions of staff who will help you to a safe place. An intermittent alarm indicates there may be a fire elsewhere in the hospital. If you hear this alarm stay where you are and wait for a staff member to tell you what to do.

The fire alarm is tested briefly every Monday at 8.45am, when there is no need to take any action.

Behaviour

Everyone in our hospital has the right to common courtesy and co-operation. We will not tolerate violence or abuse towards our staff nor discrimination or harassment of any kind towards staff and patients.

Theft and malicious damage to property are criminal offences. If they occur in our hospital we will prosecute. The use of alcohol or illegal drugs is not allowed on hospital premises.

If a patient or visitor behaves in any of the ways described in this section, we may decide not to continue to care for you or allow your visitor to remain in the hospital.

5. OTHER FACILITIES

Accommodation

We do not have facilities for visitors to stay overnight at QVH other than on the Intensive Care Unit and Peanut Ward (please check arrangements with ward staff). But if your relatives and friends need to find somewhere to stay locally, information on hotels and B&Bs is available online at www.eastgrinstead.gov.uk/tourism/accommodation.php.

Chaplaincy, spiritual and pastoral care

Coming into hospital, even for a short stay, can be a difficult time. We have a team of chaplains in the hospital who are trained professionals bound by the NHS rules of confidentiality. They are available 24 hours a day, visit wards regularly and are available to listen to your hopes, fears, worries, joys - whatever is important to you - and will support you during your stay. They can offer prayers either with you or on your behalf.

If you would like to see a member of the chaplaincy team, please ask a member of staff. A representative from your own religion is always welcome.

The hospital chapel is open at all times and available to people of all faiths (or indeed no faith at all), who wish to use it for private prayer or just quiet contemplation.

A Christian service of Holy Communion is held on each Tuesday at 1pm in the Chapel. Patients who are not able to get to this service may have Holy Communion at their bedside.

Telephones

You may use your mobile phone in most areas of the hospital subject to the agreement of the ward or department manager. Please respect other patients when using your phone by keeping your ringtone on silent and being discreet when speaking. To maintain the confidentiality and privacy of other patients please do not take photographs on your phone or any other device in patient areas.

Public telephones are provided in the main hospital corridor and in the Minor Injuries Unit.

Shops

Newspapers and a small selection of basic toiletries are available over the counter at the Spitfire restaurant, open 7.30am-3pm, Monday-Sunday.

A convenience store is situated just a few minutes walk from the hospital site, selling a wide selection of magazines, snacks and toiletries. The shop, on Holtje Avenue, is accessible through the staff car park at the rear of the hospital site. Please ask a member of staff for directions.

Cash machine

There is a cash dispenser in the main corridor, next to the refreshments vending machines. Please note that this machine charges for withdrawals.

6. GOING HOME

We will do everything we can to get you home as soon as you are well enough. Your multi-disciplinary team, led by your consultant, will constantly review your estimated discharge date. Where appropriate, your discharge will be coordinated with local district nursing and/or social services teams to ensure that you get all necessary support at home while you recover.

On the day you are discharged you will be asked to vacate your bed by 10am. This gives us enough time to prepare beds for new patients coming on to the ward. You will be asked to wait for your final paperwork and medication in the discharge lounge or dayroom. You will also be given any necessary follow-up outpatient / therapy appointments. Nursing staff will be on hand to answer any questions you may have before you leave.

Before you leave - checklist

- Please arrange for a relative, carer or friend to collect you.
- Ensure you have comfortable clothes and shoes to wear home.
- If you are prescribed medicines to take home, it is important that you read any enclosed information and understand fully how and when to take them. The nursing staff will explain your medication to you and your relative or carer if necessary.
- Make sure that any tablets or medications that you brought into hospital are returned to you.
- If you require proof of your stay in hospital for your employer, or a medical certificate signed by a doctor, please ask.
- Check that you have all your personal belongings and ask for the return of any valuables you may have handed in for safekeeping.
- Please give the ward receptionist a forwarding address for any post.
- Complete your discharge questionnaire.

NHS friends and family test

All NHS hospitals must ask inpatients when they are discharged or shortly after whether they would recommend the hospital and ward to their friends and family. Hospitals must publish the results each month on their website.

It is a simple measure to help the NHS understand how well it is caring for patients and to enable patients to compare the performance of different hospitals and wards.

You will be asked this question as part of a discharge questionnaire. However, you don't have to wait until then to give us your views as we welcome your feedback at any time – see page 18.

Support groups

QVH is fortunate to work with several groups which provide support to our patients. A selection of these groups are described below.

Breast Cancer Care is a national organisation offering support and information to anyone affected by breast cancer. Call them on 0808 800 6000.

Changing Faces is a national charity that supports and represents people who have disfigurements to the face, hands and body from any cause. They provide personal support for children, adults and families and work with employers and professionals towards a culture of inclusion for people with disfigurements. For more information call 0845 4500 275 or visit www.changingfaces.org.uk.

Headstart is a resource for QVH patients with head and neck cancers, their carers and professionals. Its aim is to provide an opportunity to meet people in a relaxed and supportive environment, share experiences and contribute to training sessions for nurses. Meetings are held every three months and alternate between East Grinstead and Maidstone Oncology Centre. Please ask staff for details.

Macmillan Cancer Support improves the lives of people affected by cancer. They ensure that people affected by cancer have access to good quality, comprehensive and appropriate information and support. Macmillan and QVH now offer an information and support centre at the QVH site in East Grinstead. The service is available to anyone affected by cancer, not just QVH patients. We can be contacted on 01342 414369. You can also visit www.macmillan.org.uk.

The McIndoe Burns Support Group provides friendship and reassurance to those who have suffered burns and their families. It is a registered charity and can be contacted via the burns centre or visit www.mcindoeburnssupport.org.

7. FEEDBACK

Compliments and thanks

QVH staff strive to deliver an excellent service to all our patients. We would love to hear about what we are doing well, and how to further improve the quality of care. You may write to the consultant or department / ward manager or the Chief Executive. All letters of thanks are recorded and shared with the relevant staff. We also run a staff awards scheme. If you would like to nominate a member of staff or a team, please ask a member of staff or contact PALS.

Alternatively, we would be delighted if you shared your comments for others to read. You can do that on the main NHS website (NHS Choices) – go to www.nhs.uk and search for Queen Victoria Hospital (East Grinstead).

Suggestions and comments

Please feel free to tell staff if there is something on your mind that you are not happy with. We always welcome comments and suggestions relating to the quality of care you have received at our hospital and will use this information to help us improve. Please tell a member of staff or contact PALS (see below).

You will also be asked to complete a questionnaire about your stay on the ward. This includes the 'NHS friends and family test' question (see page 16). We appreciate you taking the time to complete it as your feedback is important to us and can help improve the experience of other patients.

Meet the matron

Between 2pm and 4pm every Thursday in the Canadian Wing office between Margaret Duncombe and Ross Tilley Wards there is the opportunity to drop in and meet with one of our matrons to give feedback, raise an issue or simply have a chat.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS is a confidential service available to help you sort out problems or concerns about the hospital's services and pass on your views and comments. PALS also acts as a central point where you can get information about the hospital's services and help with accessing further health information. You can ask to speak to PALS, or call them on 01342 414355.

Complaints

Whilst we strive to do the best for all the patients in our care, we acknowledge that sometimes patients may be unhappy about an aspect of their visit or care. We take all concerns raised very seriously.

If you are not happy, please tell the person in charge of the ward or department as soon as possible. If you are still unhappy, contact PALS (see above).

If the query or problem is not resolved, and you wish to make a formal complaint, you may contact our Patient Experience Manager on 01342 414355 or write directly to the Chief Executive at the address given at the end of this guide.

You should expect an acknowledgement of your complaint within two working days of receipt of your letter. An investigation into the concerns raised will take place and the Complaints Manager will then contact you within five working days to clarify with you what you would like to see happen

as a result of your complaint, establish the most appropriate way of handling your complaint and agree a timescale for resolution. We will then work to achieve your desired outcome(s) as quickly as possible.

If you are not satisfied with the trust's response please feel free to seek clarification or you can write to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman. The Ombudsman will only consider cases that have been responded to by the trust first.

The address is:

Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman
Millbank Tower
Millbank
London
SW1P 4QP

Assistance with making a complaint about your NHS treatment is available from the Independent Complaints Advocacy Service on 0845 600 8616.

8. WAYS OF GIVING BACK

QVH Charity

Every day QVH provides life-changing surgery and care, free of charge to every NHS patient who needs it including adults and children with cancer, people who have suffered from serious accidents, and people who need treatment for genetic conditions. The QVH Charity means the hospital can do so much more for these patients and their families.

If you would like to support the hospital's life-changing work, visit our charity website at www.supportqvh.org or pick up one of the leaflets around the hospital site.

Our charity aims to maximise the benefits from all donations it gratefully receives by asking donors to consider using GiftAid. GiftAid increases donations by an additional 28p in the pound at no additional expense to the donor.

If you are a UK taxpayer and would like to maximise your donation in this way, please see one of our leaflets or contact our charity team.

Registered charity number 1056120.

League of Friends

The QVH league was founded in 1949 to provide, for patients and staff, amenities and equipment to supplement that which is normally provided by the NHS. Some £3 million has been raised since that time from fundraising events, donations, legacies and member subscriptions.

Minimum subscriptions are £2 annual and £35 lifetime. If you wish to join or make a donation please write to:

The Honorary Secretary, League of Friends
Queen Victoria Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
Holtye Road
East Grinstead
West Sussex
RH19 3DZ

Registered charity number 215518.

Become a member

You can be part of what we do at QVH by becoming a foundation trust member. Our members keep us informed, share first-hand experiences of the care we provide, and help us make decisions about how we develop services that patients and carers really need.

QVH membership is free, and it gives you a number of entitlements. As a member, we will keep you informed about what's going on at the hospital. You get to show your support and help shape our future.

You also get to vote to elect our council of governors – independent people who hold our board of directors to account. As a member you can also nominate yourself to stand for election as a governor. Membership enables you to keep in touch with your governors and to attend important meetings as often or as little as you like.

To join us just complete the form available online or in our membership leaflet.

To become a member you have to be 18 years of age or over, and live in Kent, Surrey or Sussex. But people who are under 18 or live outside the area can become affiliate members – the only difference is that you will not be entitled to vote.

Volunteering

QVH volunteers are incredibly generous with their time and help us to provide the best patient care. They help visitors at our main entrance desk, outpatients departments and cafe and offer administrative support.

To become a volunteer you must be over the age of 18 and complete an application with the names of two referees. Following a short interview we will undertake a criminal records check and ask you to complete a health questionnaire. Please note this process can take a few weeks to complete before you can start your voluntary duties.

For more information visit our website or call 01342 414170.

Tell other patients about the care you received

NHS Choices is the national online information service to help you make choices about your health. Visit www.nhs.uk and search for 'Queen Victoria Hospital (East Grinstead)' to read comments about our hospital and to add your own.

Thank you for taking the time to read this guide.

If you have any suggestions to improve it for other patients, please inform any member of staff or contact the Corporate Affairs team on 01342 414362, info@qvh.nhs.uk.

Queen Victoria Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
Holtye Road, East Grinstead
West Sussex, RH19 3DZ

Tel: 01342 414000
Web: www.qvh.nhs.uk
Email: info@qvh.nhs.uk

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