

# Play Information Leaflet

**This leaflet aims to explain to patients, parents and carers about the service which we, as Health Play Specialists, provide on the wards. If you have any further questions please speak to a member of the play team.**

## What is a Play Specialist?

Health Play Specialists aim to provide therapeutic and specialised play, preparation and distraction for children and young people coming into hospital to help to give them a greater hospital experience and help to cope with future admissions if needed.

## Who can attend / receive the service?

All patients who are admitted to the ward are able to have Play Specialist input. They can access play services by liaising with nurses on the ward who will then point them in our direction but we also aim to see all children on the ward throughout the day.

## Why is play important?

Play in hospital is very important as it can help a child or young person to understand what is going to happen to them. It can help to alleviate any fears, anxieties and misconceptions which a child or young person may be experiencing and help to ease pain from invasive procedures.

## Why have play in hospital?

Being in hospital can be a frightening experience for all. Not only are children or young people away from home, but also away from their usual environment, family and friends. There can be unfamiliar sounds, smells, equipment and people. The play service is a team of experienced qualified people who can help to make the child's stay much more enjoyable and help him / her to cope and understand different procedures which s/he may be experiencing. The service can provide help, support and advice which can be reassuring for the child / young person and the parent / carer.

Here are some of the things that the Play Specialists can offer:

1. To provide normalising / developmental play to help to reach developmental goals and milestones.
2. To provide stimulating and therapeutic activities to help relieve boredom and alleviate stress.
3. To prepare a child / young person and their families for hospital procedures, treatment and surgery using psychological and specialised play with the use of anatomical dolls, story boards, models, pictures and books.
4. To help children to explore and master unfamiliar equipment and procedures such as blood tests, having an anaesthetic, CT and MRI scans which help to cope with any fears.
5. To help to develop coping strategies for various invasive procedures by introducing and using distraction techniques. To also help with pain management.
6. To contribute to clinical judgement through play based observations and management.

7. To teach and promote the value of play within the multidisciplinary team (including Speech and Language Therapists, Doctors, Nurses and students)
8. To provide play programmes to meet the needs of all children / young people and to ensure multi-sensory experiences and provision.
9. To provide multi-cultural provision and participate in the organisation of seasonal celebrations and events,
10. To provide a stimulating environment for children / young people coming into hospital to create adolescent provision and keep up with current technology, materials, activities and equipment.

To ensure health and safety, equality and diversity and inclusion at all times

## Where do I need to go?

The play service is covered from Monday to Friday from the hours of 8am to 4pm. One Play Specialist also covers Saturdays on the Paediatric hospital wards.

## Does it cost anything?

There is no cost involved.

## Useful information

### Central Playroom opening times:

- Rainbow Time 9.30am-11am and 12pm to 2pm (1 to 1 sessions)
- 11am-12pm open to patients / parents and carers
- 2pm-4pm open to the patients / parents and carers
- Ward Playrooms are open 24 hours a day

- **Volunteers**

- St George's Dragons
- PAT Dog

- **Entertainment**

- Giggle Doctors
- Captain Starlight
- POD: Making Music
- Story tellers
- Magical Quest
- Magicians

- **Charities**

- St George's Charity
- Samuel's Charity
- Christian Blanford Charity

- **Toy Donation**

To donate any toys or activity materials to the unit, please contact one of our team members.

## Contact us

Please do not hesitate to contact us directly if you wish to speak to a Play Specialist at St Georges Hospital or if you have any questions or queries on 020 8725 0331

Justine Louise Makin - Lead Healthcare Play Specialist [Justine.makin@stgeorges.nhs.uk](mailto:Justine.makin@stgeorges.nhs.uk)

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## Additional services

### Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough Wing (near the lift foyer).

**Tel:** 020 8725 2453 **Email:** [pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk)

### NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

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

### NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

**Tel:** 111



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