

SECONDARY BREAST CANCER PATIENT - SUPPORT STRATIFICATION GUIDE

This is an editable traffic light system to help prioritise/stratify those patients with the greatest need of support.

Input is focused accordingly depending on the green, amber or red stratification:

A **green patient** for instance may be given CNS/Keyworker details and encouraged to call if they have any concerns.

*Most contact focusses on those that fall in the **red or amber** categories.*

For **amber and red patients**, the contact may increase including referral for support from elsewhere as appropriate. You can edit or change the input you can/will deliver to suit your service

As the situation changes patients can be re-stratified and assigned a different colour.

Your experience and skills will contribute hugely to the assessment of patient needs, but you may find it helpful to use a Holistic Needs Assessment or other assessment tool to help with the identification of current needs and concerns and how much support is required.

You may wish to consider:

The patients' current feelings around their diagnosis and treatment plan, including information needs, coping strategies and current mood.

Support networks in place – family/friends/work colleagues

Psychological wellbeing, psychiatric history

RED PATIENTS

Patients in this category may have;

- High disease burden and/or high-risk tumour biology
- Had 3 or more lines of treatment
- A life expectancy of months/weeks
- Complex symptoms requiring Palliative Care input
- Significant distress or psychological concerns.

Suggested input

- Provide patient with contact details for any new changes
- Arrange times to see during clinic or chemotherapy visits
- Arrange regular telephone contact follow up tailored to patient need
- Reassess at set points.
- Consider palliative and supportive care referral if not already done.
- Look at RESPECT documentation/advanced care planning

Plan of support:

AMBER PATIENTS

Patients in this category may have;

- High distress levels and/or psychological concerns, communication or memory difficulties
- Varying tumour burden
- Difficulty in coping with complex decisions and treatment and/or side effects
- A life expectancy of months/years
- Limited support available

Suggested input

- Provide patient with contact details, reinforce access to CNS/Keyworker and encourage to call to report any needs/concerns
- Arrange times to see during some clinic or chemotherapy visits
- Watchful waiting – including monitoring clinic letters and scan/blood results to remain aware of any changes
- Tailor telephone contact follow up for example every 2–3 months as needed.
- Signpost to Breast Cancer Now's Living with secondary breast cancer online support.
- Referral to psychological support via palliative care/hospice/Maggie's/ psychotherapist

Plan of support:

GREEN PATIENTS

Patients in this category may have;

- Low disease burden
- Low number of concerns
- No complex needs
- Been assessed as being currently well
- A life expectancy of years

Suggested input

- Provide patient with contact details and access to CNS/Keyworker
- Provide information on signs and symptoms of possible progression (see Breast Cancer Now personal organiser)
- Explain that CNS/Keyworker will not ring or see in clinic routinely but that they should call to inform them of;
 - any change to needs or concerns
 - any new symptoms or side effects
 - need signposts or referral for support
 - have any questions or information needs
 - finding it harder than expected to manage
- Signpost to Breast Cancer Now Helpline for support and local support services/Macmillan

Plan of support: