



Referral Acceptance Criteria

Introduction

Shooting Star Chase children's hospice service provides a network of care for children and young people with a life-limiting diagnosis and their families. The service is multi-disciplinary and is provided by the Hospice at Home Team working with families in the community and the Care Teams based at our children's hospices - Christopher's near Guildford and Shooting Star House in Hampton.

Shooting Star Chase provides care that is highly skilled, with knowledge of current best practice; flexible in its approach considering the needs of the families and dedicated to enhancing the lives of the young people and families we work alongside. Our multi-disciplinary care team includes nurses, nursery nurses, care assistants, therapists, and doctors specialising in Palliative Care. We aim to offer a seamless service for young people and their families providing palliative and end of life care, as well as short breaks, in close liaison with professionals working in the statutory sector.

At both hospices, we have excellent therapeutic and recreational facilities which can be accessed by the families such as a hydrotherapy pool, a multi-sensory room, soft play room and a team of staff/volunteers offering complementary therapies such as massage and aromatherapy. We also offer family accommodation to enable one or more members of the family to stay with their young person if they wish.

Both hospices are supported by an excellent medical team of local GP's who make regular visits to Christopher's and Shooting Star House. The doctors provide a 24-hour on-call service every day of the year. The service has the support of a Consultant in Paediatric Palliative Care, a specialist in symptom management and care of young people with life-limiting conditions.

Acceptance criteria

- For new referrals young people with a life-limiting diagnosis who are unlikely to reach their 19th birthday.
- Aged from birth to 19 years (pre-birth referrals are also considered).
- Families must reside within the Shooting Star Chase geographical boundary or not have access to a Children's Hospice facility in their locality.

- Young people who are 19 years and already receive a service from Shooting Star Chase can continue to have a service until the day before their 21st birthday as long as they meet criteria at each annual review. Transition work should be in progress. However if the young person is assessed as nearing end of life at this time, then careful consideration should be given as to whether Shooting Star Chase continue to provide this service.
- Families must reside with the Shooting Star Chase geographical boundary or not have access to a children's hospice facility in their locality.
- New referrals for young people aged over 16 years will be assessed sensitively according to life expectancy and needs. Every effort will be made to investigate options for on-going support after 19 years should this be required.
- Additional criteria are available for referrals of young people with acquired neuro-disability, cancer, epilepsy and cystic fibrosis.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Geographical boundary

Shooting Star Chase geographical area includes Western parts of London and Surrey.

Life-limiting condition

These are conditions for which there can be no reasonable hope of a cure and from which young people die within months, or more usually, years. Many of these conditions cause a progressive degeneration rendering the young person increasingly dependent on carers.

Life-threatening conditions

These are serious conditions or diseases for which treatment aimed at cure is available but may fail. Access to palliative care services may be necessary when treatment fails.

Palliative care

This is the active and total care of a young person and their family by a multi-professional team at a time when the young person's condition is not responsive to curative treatment. The young person will be cared for holistically, addressing physical, psychological, social and spiritual needs and extending to support of the family in bereavement.

Terminal care/end of life care

This is the specialist care given when the end of a young person's life is imminent. Special care is taken to make the young person as comfortable and pain free as possible and to cater for their total care in a holistic way.

Bibliography

The Association for Children with Life-limiting or Terminal Conditions and their families & The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (2003) A Guide to the Development of Children's Palliative Care Services.