

Hepatology (Liver) Services

Hepatology team

The Exeter Liver Centre provides care for all aspects of liver disease for patients across Exeter and East Devon, as well as offering some services to patients in North Devon and Somerset.

We aim to provide a patient-centred and responsive service. Our team of dedicated health professionals at the RD&E provides specialist care and support for people with liver disease. You will normally meet one of our Consultant Hepatologists, Specialist Registrars or Specialist Nurses at your clinic appointment or whilst an inpatient in hospital.

The members of the Hepatology team are:

Dr John Christie – Consultant Hepatologist

Dr Ben Hudson – Consultant Hepatologist

Dr Lin Lee Wong – Consultant Hepatologist

Dr Christina Levick – Consultant Hepatologist

Dr Jane Chalmers – Consultant Hepatologist

Laura Strang – Senior Hepatology Nurse Specialist

Lynsey O'Para –
Senior Hepatology Nurse Specialist

Sophie Bamforth – Hepatology Nurse Specialist

Jo Churchill –
Clinical Nurse Manager of Okement Ward

Louise Dunn – Lead Alcohol Liaison Nurse

Jinette Newns – Medical Secretary

Jo Vigers – Medical Secretary

Caroline Dean – Medical Secretary

Sarah McNamara – Medical Secretary

Laura Dickinson – Medical Secretary

However, there are also many other professionals who at some stage may be involved with your care, such as Radiologists, Pharmacists, Research Nurses and Dietitians. Should you ever require an admission to hospital with your liver disease, then you are likely to be admitted to Okement ward, which is our designated ward.

Some people with liver disease require a liver transplant or have had a liver transplant in the past. We run a quarterly joint liver transplant clinic with Kings College Hospital via the Derriford Hospital transplant centre.

To ensure we maintain current and high standards of care we are part of the Peninsula Hepatology Network.

We have direct links with the local drug and alcohol service - Together, to ensure people with dependency problems are offered appropriate support. The team also has an alcohol specialist liaison service to support patients wanting to make changes to their alcohol use, with additional in reach support from the community drug and alcohol service.

We aim to help you understand your diagnosis, and provide the treatment, care and support that you and your family may need. We understand that your needs may change over time and we have the clinical and administrative infrastructure to help you through all the different stages of your illness.

Our Service

There are many types of liver disease and we treat people with a range of conditions. The following is just a list of the most common ones.

- Abnormal Liver Blood Tests
- Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease

- Alcohol related liver disease
- Autoimmune Hepatitis
- Primary Biliary Cholangitis
- Primary Sclerosing Cholangitis
- Haemochromatosis
- Wilson's Disease
- Alpha 1 Antitrypsin Deficiency
- Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, Hepatitis D, Hepatitis E
- Liver Cirrhosis/ Portal Hypertension and its complications
- Non – Cirrhotic Portal Hypertension
- Hepatocellular Carcinoma
- Liver transplantation
- End Stage Liver Disease

Outpatient Services

We run liver clinics on most days of the week from the medical outpatients department in Wonford. These include general consultant clinics, subspecialty clinics, nurse led clinics and FibroScan clinics. There are monthly clinics run with the enhanced supportive care team (including physiotherapy, occupational therapy, dietitians and palliative medicine) for patients with advanced liver disease. We participate in quarterly multidisciplinary liver transplant clinics held at Derriford Hospital, Plymouth and joined by the transplant team at Kings College Hospital, London.

During your appointments, we will aim to find the cause and provide the necessary treatment of any liver illness you might have. Follow-up appointments, if necessary, are very important as they allow us to monitor your condition and any changes in response to treatment. We will also be able to provide advice and education, monitor your medications, address other aspects such as lifestyle advice and make any relevant referrals. Our team also provides outreach clinics at HMP Exeter and The Clock Tower Surgery, which serves the homeless and vulnerably housed patients within Exeter.

The Specialist Nurses are able to provide education and support, not only for patients and their family but also for staff members who may not be very familiar with the management of liver problems.

Inpatient Care

Patients who are admitted, either electively or as an emergency, are usually cared for on Okement Ward, a specialist environment for the management of patients with liver and gastrointestinal disease. If you are admitted, the specialist nurses may visit you and they can help to explain treatments, medications and test results. They can offer support and reassurance to help keep you and your family informed of your care.

Day-case Services

Our day-case services are provided on the Wynard ambulatory unit or the ambulatory care unit (located on AMU) and are available on weekdays. The procedures most commonly performed are paracentesis (drainage of ascites) and intravenous infusions.

Other day case investigations include Endoscopy and Interventional Radiology. Endoscopy involves the insertion of a long, thin tube directly into the body to observe an internal organ or tissue in detail. We run specialised endoscopy lists for patients with portal hypertension and have advanced endoscopic facilities, including endoscopic ultrasound, ERCP and Spyglass for patients with complex hepatobiliary disease. Interventional radiology is a medical specialisation which involves performing a range of procedures to obtain images of the inside of the body. Our interventional radiology service carries out biopsies, drainage procedures and loco-regional therapies for patients with hepatocellular carcinoma.

Multidisciplinary Care

We run regular specialist multidisciplinary meetings for patients with advanced liver disease, liver cancer and autoimmune liver diseases. This gives patients with more complex conditions a breadth of expertise throughout their treatment. We are a hub centre for second line therapies (mainly obeticholic acid) for the treatment of Primary Biliary Cholangitis (PBC).

Research

We encourage our patients to take part in any local or national research projects. Your Consultant or Specialist Nurse may discuss these with you if appropriate. We have a dedicated team of research nurses who provide an individual service for patients who consent to participate in any such study.

Support Group

We host a patient support group for people with liver problems every second Tuesday of the month at 18:30 in the medical outpatients department. Family members are welcome to join. This is an excellent opportunity to learn more about liver disease and meet people who might have a similar problem. This can also be a platform to make suggestions or provide support for our local liver services. This is always attended by members of the Hepatology Team. The support group is affiliated with the British Liver Trust. If interested feel free to ask one of our Consultants, Specialist Nurses or Secretaries for details.

If you cannot attend

If you are unable to attend your appointment on the day or at the time you are given, please contact the consultant's medical secretary or the specialist nurses to rearrange the appointment.

Interpreters

There are interpretation services such as language line or translators available if required. Please contact your consultant's medical secretary in advance prior to your appointment to allow sufficient time for these to be arranged.

Where to find us

Outpatient clinics are run from the medical outpatients department Level 1, Area D

Okement Ward is located on Level 2, Area F

Endoscopy is located on Level 2, Area N

AMU is located on Level 1, Area C

Wynard Ward is located in the Centre for Women's Health

How to get to the Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital at Wonford

Public Transport

The hospital is easily accessible using public transport and other sustainable means of travel. We are well served by local bus routes, from across Devon. A number of services stop at the hospital, whereas others require a connection with a local bus route from Exeter City Centre.

Both the main Exeter Train stations, St David's and Exeter Central, are around 3 miles from the hospital and are served by buses that travel directly to our site. Information and the most up to date timetables can be found on:

www.stagecoachbus.com

www.travelinesw.com

www.traveldevon.info

Walking

The hospital site is around one and half miles from Exeter City centre and takes approximately 30 minutes on foot.

Bikes

Bike paths run throughout Exeter and the hospital site is easily accessible by bike. Bike parking is available across the site, particularly outside the main hospital entrance.

Park and Ride

There is a park and ride bus service from the Sowton Park and Ride site, which is situated just off the M5 and A30 junctions. The buses go directly to the RD&E Wonford site.

There is also the Dartline PR3 Park and ride bus which runs from Digby directly to the RD&E site.

Car

Car parking on site is limited and can be difficult to park during peak times. We encourage visitors to use public transport and other sustainable means of travel whenever possible. If you choose to travel by car you will need to allow plenty of time to park. The car park is pay and display and can be paid for by cash or card.

There is free disabled parking near all the main entrances and at car park C. If you display your blue disabled badge in your windscreen you can park for free in our pay and display car parks.

The car parks have security attending them during hours of operation and also have CCTV in operation.

The current charges for the RD&E onsite parking at Wonford and Heavitree are as follows:

- 20 Minutes free parking
- £2.50 for up to two hours
- £4.50 for up to four hours
- £8.50 for all eight hours
- £26.00 for a weekly ticket

Please be aware that these charges are subject to change. The number of spaces is limited, so please leave plenty of time to find a space.

For further information please contact Car Parking on **01392 402358** or visit our website www.rdehospital.nhs.uk

Useful numbers / Links

Nurse Specialists

Laura Strang, Lynsey O'Para and Sophie Bamforth
– Direct line **01392 406108**

Specialist Nurse's Secretary **01392 406101**

Dr Christie's Secretary – Jinette Newns
..... **01392 402791**

Dr Hudson's Secretary – Jo Vigers **01392 408808**

Dr Wong's Secretary – Caroline Dean
..... **01392 404615**

Dr Levick and Dr Chalmers Secretary – Sarah McNamara..... **01392 404087**

Okement Ward **01392 402800**

British Liver trust

www.britishlivertrust.org.uk

Information Line **0800 652 7330**

The Hepatitis C Trust

www.hepctrust.org.uk

Confidential helpline **0845 223 4424**

Together Drug and Alcohol Service

www.edp.org.uk/together-drug-alcohol-service

Support line **0800 233 5444**

Second opinions and complaints

If you would like a second opinion you can speak with your Consultant or Specialist Nurse who will be happy to arrange this.

If you are not happy with the outcome, you are able to contact the hospitals Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) who are able to offer you advice and support. PALS are open Monday to Friday 09:30 to 16:30 and can be contacted on 01392 402093 or emailed at rde-tr.PALS@nhs.net

The Trust cannot accept any responsibility for the accuracy of the information given if the leaflet is not used by RD&E staff undertaking procedures at the RD&E hospitals.

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