Aquather Service – A Patient Guide

With kind Support from

FORCE Cancer Charity and Macmillan Cancer Support

www.forcecancercharity.co.uk       www.macmillan.org.uk
Introduction
We would like to welcome you to the Aquather Pilot Service held at The Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Foundation Trust (RD&E). This booklet should give you details of everything you need to know before attending for your appointment including what you can expect from your day.

Who will I expect to meet?
The service is run by a small team of Health Professionals who have undergone a series of intensive training in order to safely provide this service. You will meet one of three Head and Neck Clinical Nurse Specialists (CNS) Claire Barber, Zoe Copp or Joy Higgs and a Physiotherapist, Bev Broadbelt.
What is an Aquather Device?
An Aquather device is a type of snorkel designed to allow neck breathing patients to safely enter the water. It is not the first device of its kind; however it is the most current and updated. The device has a universal kite mark and is used all over the world. Our unique service aims to support neck breathing patients who wish to enter the water for either their own personal leisure or to undergo hydrotherapy. The service has been strategically designed to consider all the safety aspects associated with this activity. *It is not a service that teaches patients how to swim.*

Where is the service located?
The Aquather Service is located in the heated hydrotherapy pool in the Princess Elizabeth Orthopaedic Centre (PEOC) at The Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital.

How often will I need to attend?
As you will have had pre-training and support from your own local Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) and will be able to self-insert your own tracheostomy tube, we aim for you to become competent within one session. However we do appreciate that some individuals may require further training and support. In such cases subsequent sessions can only be offered at an additional cost. Please contact an Aquather team member to discuss this further.

How do I apply?
Referral to the service can be made directly by you or by any health professional involved in your care by contacting the specialist nurse team secretary at the RD&E Hospital.

What happens next?
A CNS will contact you to ask a series of relevant questions and to establish whether or not you are suitable to undertake Aquather training. Once you have been deemed eligible a letter will be sent to your GP and your Local CNS/SLT. Your Local CNS/SLT will be asked to support you in becoming independent with inserting your own cuffed tracheostomy tube. Separate
information will be sent directly to them. The length of time it takes to become proficient at inserting your own tube varies between individuals. However it is important to note that **you must not attend for your Aquather training until you are both confident and competent at carrying out this procedure.**

Once you are ready to attend the service you or your local CNS can contact the team secretary at the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital to arrange an appointment. It is strongly advisable that you bring a “buddy” (family member or friend) along with you to your appointment so that you can have some support once you have left the hospital. Even when competent with the aquather, it is highly recommended that you only enter the water when accompanied by a “buddy”.

**What if I live far away and have to travel some distance to access the service?**

On-site hospital accommodation is offered at a rate of approximately £20.50 per person per night inclusive of parking permit. There are 3 guest flats comprising 12 bedrooms (2 double) with own wash-hand basin and radio. Tea and coffee facilities are provided. Each flat has a shared bathroom, separate toilet and kitchen with fridge, cooker, kettle and kitchen utensils. There is also a one bedroom self-contained flat on the ground floor that is accessible for wheelchair users. Cleaning services are included. Should you wish to be booked in to accommodation during your stay in Exeter please contact:

Baker House
Residential Village
Bovemoors Lane
Exeter, EX2 5DS

**Telephone numbers**

01392 403 281 or 01392 403 294 or 01392 403 257

**Opening Times**

Monday to Thursday 7.30am to 4.30pm

Situated down the hill from the Princess Alexander Orthopaedic Centre (PEOC) entrance of the hospital.
Please note the CNS’s are unable to arrange this for you.

What does the service cost?
As the service is currently being run as a 12 month pilot scheme the training costs are kindly covered by FORCE, an independent charity dedicated to supporting cancer patients. This free service is for the duration of the pilot scheme only and will therefore only be offered free of charge on a first come first served basis. The cost of the Aquather device however will need to be paid for. The devices are available from the CNS team at the RD&E Hospital at a cost of £300 each and are exempt of VAT. Please note that the device MUST be paid for on the day of training and before it is used. We regret that nonpayment would result in your training session being cancelled. We accept cash or credit/debit card payments. Please note that Macmillan Cancer Support have kindly agreed to fund the full cost of the Aquather device for those who are financially eligible. Your local CNS can arrange this for you and if you are eligible a cheque will be sent directly to you. However you will still be required to pay for the device on the day.

What happens during my appointment?
Before you arrive you will be asked to pay for your device at general office situated in the main entrance of the hospital. You will then be issued with a receipt which you must take with you to your appointment. Please then report to the reception desk at the Princess Elizabeth Orthopaedic Centre entrance (PEOC) and a member of the team will meet you. You will be taken to a clinical area where your blood pressure and pulse will be recorded and a full explanation of the device given. Once you are happy that you fully understand how to use the device, you will be asked to insert your tracheostomy tube (supplied with the Aquather device). A clean area with hand washing facilities, mirror and lighting is available at the side of the pool. Because we aim to keep your training session as realistic as possible suction will not be routinely used as this will not be available to you in the community setting. Anaesthetic spray, lubricating gel and syringes will be made available for you. Changing facilities are available.
Please bring your own suitable swimwear.

Before entering the water a final safety check will be carried out and you will be asked to sign a check list to say that you fully understand everything you have been taught. You will then be guided in to the water and taught how to safely submerge.

**Essential Contacts**
*Head and Neck Clinical Nurse Specialist Team*
*Secretary 01392 402 215*

**Address**
The Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Foundation Trust
Barrack Road
Exeter
Devon
EX2 5DW

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**Check List – What to Bring**

- **Buddy**
- **Swimwear**
- **All Medications**
- **Cash, cheque, credit/debit card (for payment of device)**
- **Your training tracheostomy tube (if you have one)**
- **Your overnight bag if staying**