

# What is the role of the Triage Assessment Clinical Nurse Specialist

By Suzanne Friday

## The role of the Triage Assessment Clinical Nurse Specialist includes

Acting as an autonomous practitioner, within the scope of the role, providing a comprehensive telephone triage and clinical assessment service to patients and/or their carers/relatives resulting in a safe and appropriate clinical decision that reflects their clinical need.

Having good clinical judgment, careful listening, critical thinking and assessment skills.

Being extremely skilled at listening to what patients tell them. They must hear not only what the patient says, but also have the ability to interpret such subtle indications as the tone of voice, hesitations or incomplete responses.

Being an integral member of the Multidisciplinary team

Being a first point of contact for the patients (keyworker) and offering advice, support and answering any questions that the patient may have throughout their journey

Attending the weekly MDT meeting

Having knowledge of diagnostic tests for example OGD, Colonoscopy, Ultrasound, CT scan and MRI

Having knowledge of the risks involved in having endoscopic procedures

Having knowledge of specialist diagnostic tests such as Endoscopic Ultrasound, PET scan

Having knowledge of cancer treatments such as chemotherapy, radiotherapy, surgery.

- Vetting the referrals from the GP to determine whether the patient is suitable for telephone triage
- Assessing the patient over the phone or in a face to face clinic - taking a full clinical history to determine what investigations are needed
- Requesting investigations by using a MDT approved protocol/algorithm for example a patient referred in with dysphagia to solids and no weight loss would be booked for an OGD
- Following up with the patients after they have had their investigations – discharge back to GP, routine OPA or referring patients on for further investigation or to another speciality
- Supporting the trust in achieving the Urgent Suspected Cancer and Referral to Treatment waiting time targets by preventing breaches and reducing the Did Not Attend rate

- Meeting weekly with the MDT coordinator
- Engaging with the cancer management team, RMH Vanguard and other healthcare professionals in order to raise the profile of specialist nursing and patient centred services
- Acting as a role model to junior staff
- Managing junior nurse specialists working within the telephone assessment service
- Self development