Having a radiotherapy mask made
Information for patients
This leaflet aims to explain how your radiotherapy mask will be made.

When having treatment to the head, neck or upper chest a radiotherapy mask will help you to keep still. Small changes in the position of your chin, head or shoulders can affect the accuracy of your treatment. Your mask will clip to the head rest which sits on the treatment couch but is not fastened to it. The marks used to position you for treatment are drawn onto the mask and not on your face or neck.

Your mask will be made from a sheet of thermoplastic mesh (shown on the front cover) or a thin sheet of clear plastic. There is a large hole so you can breathe normally during and after mask making. Eye holes may be cut out of the mask. You will be given an appointment for the mould room before your planning scan. Please allow 30-60 minutes for your mould room appointments. The mould room technicians will explain the procedure and then position you on the couch in the correct treatment position.

How is the thermoplastic mask made?

The thermoplastic sheet is softened in a warm water bath for about three minutes. Excess water is then removed and the mask is placed over your head and neck and gently moulded to your shape. It will feel warm and damp, but does not hurt.
It gradually hardens and cooling gel packs are used to speed up the setting process.

When set, the mask is carefully removed.

**How is the clear plastic mask made?**

You will have two appointments in the mould room for this mask to be made. On the first visit we will need to take an impression of your head and neck using plaster of Paris bandages. This does not hurt but it is a bit messy. The warm damp bandages are gently moulded to your shape and set in a matter of minutes. The impression is carefully removed and used by the technicians to make your custom made mask.

When you return for your second appointment, the clear plastic mask will be ready to be fitted to you.
Preparing for your appointment

• Upper clothing, including bras, may need to be removed but you will be given a gown. We suggest you wear clothing that can easily be removed eg separates.

• Dentures, wigs, hearing aids, hair grips/bobbles, earrings and necklaces will need to be removed before your mask is made.

• If you need a haircut please have this done before your mould room appointments or leave it until after your treatment has finished. If you have a beard, we recommend you shave or give it a close trim before your mould room appointment.

What happens after the mask is made?

You may have a CT scan or be free to go home. You will be given your next appointment dates before you leave.

You will wear your mask for your CT scan, this can take about 30 minutes. You will wear the mask for each treatment. The mask will be carefully fitted and removed by the radiographers and kept at the hospital during your treatment. If you would like to keep your mask when your treatment has finished please ask one of the radiographers on your last day.

You will be given a booklet that contains more information about your radiotherapy. If you have any questions or concerns before coming, do not hesitate to contact a member of the Mould Room staff on 0113 206 8543.