

## Celebrating National Cancer Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) Day 2026

National Cancer Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) Day is a day to celebrate and highlight everything that the cancer nursing workforce does for patients in the UK-wide health sector every day.

Here at MTW, we have 75 cancer CNS's providing outstanding care to some of our most in need patients every day and helping them and their families through their cancer journey, covering areas including haematology, palliative care, acute oncology, breast and urology.



A cancer clinical nurse specialist is a qualified nurse. They deliver, person-centred care to patients, providing them with specialist support, which includes information about their type of cancer, treatment options and possible side effects. They support people from the point of diagnosis and continue to be involved in their care throughout their cancer treatment.

As part of the National Cancer CNS Day celebrations this year, we are focussing on just a few of our colleagues working within the roles and hearing more about their experiences and what they enjoy most about providing care to patients. Next, we're chatting with someone who balances clinical expertise, compassionate care and a notebook that rarely leaves her side — our Upper GI Cancer CNS, Bushra Ansari...

### **Can you tell us a bit about you, your career journey and what led you to become a Cancer CNS?**

I am a Clinical Nurse Specialist working within the Upper GI cancer team at MTW for a year. My nursing journey has always been driven by a passion to support patients through some of the most uncertain and life-changing moments of their lives. Becoming a Cancer CNS allowed me to combine clinical knowledge with compassionate communication — supporting patients holistically throughout their diagnosis, treatment and beyond. I am also particularly interested in cancer genomics and improving patient understanding around personalised treatment pathways.

### **Can you share a moment in your role that has stayed with you and why?**

There have been many meaningful moments, but one that has stayed with me is when a patient told me that having someone to call who “understood the whole picture” made them feel less alone during treatment. At a time when everything felt overwhelming for them, simply being able to explain things clearly, listen without judgement, and advocate on their behalf helped reduce some of that fear. It reminded me that sometimes the greatest impact we have isn't through clinical interventions, but through reassurance, presence and continuity of care.

**How do you support patients and families during some of their most challenging times?**

Support often starts with listening. Every patient and family experiences cancer differently, so it's important to understand what matters most to them. Sometimes support means having difficult conversations, but also ensuring patients and families feel heard, respected and involved in decisions about their care.

**What skills or qualities do you think make a great CNS?**

A great CNS needs to balance complex clinical information with kindness and clarity, helping patients navigate their pathway with confidence. So, I believe some of the most important qualities are compassion and empathy, strong communication skills, clinical knowledge, organisation and coordination, advocacy for patients' needs and emotional resilience.

**What's the one item you always have with you on shift (and can't live without)?**

My notebook! No two days are ever the same, and it helps me keep track of important patient updates, MDT discussions and follow-ups to ensure nothing gets missed.

**What's one thing people might be surprised to learn about your role?**

Many people are surprised at how much coordination happens behind the scenes. A large part of the CNS role involves liaising with the wider MDT — surgeons, oncologists, radiologists, psychologists, dietitians and community teams — to make sure patients receive timely and joined-up care.

**When you're not at work, what helps you switch off and recharge?**

Spending time with family and friends, enjoying some quiet time, and taking a step away from emails and clinical notes helps me reset and come back ready to support my patients again.

[Find out more about National Cancer Clinical Nurse Specialist Day.](#)

