



**St Margaret's**  
Hospice Care

# Lymphoedema Service

## Laser: Low Level Light Therapy (LLLT)



## What is LLLT?

LLLT is a low intensity red and near infrared light therapy (class 1 Laser). It is not a heat treatment as it only emits low level energy. You will therefore not be required to wear protective goggles unless you are sensitive to flashing lights or find it unpleasant to look at.



## Aim of treatment

The aim is to help soften the skin and underlying tissues which in turn should improve lymph drainage over a course of treatment. It can also help to improve range of movement and reduce inflammation associated with infection (Cellulitis).

## How does it work?

In firm tissues, the light therapy can help soften the skin and tissues by improving oxygen uptake. This allows the lymph to flow easier and is especially helpful in areas where there is “stubborn” swelling.

## What happens during my treatment?

- When you arrive for your treatment you will be asked to remove any compression you may be wearing over the affected area
- You will be asked to lie on a couch or sit in a chair, ensuring you are comfortable and well supported
- The practitioner will carry out a clinical assessment of the affected area and record baseline measurements
- You will be asked to wash the area to be treated to ensure it is free from moisturising cream or any debris

- The practitioner will then apply the light therapy directly to the skin over the area to be treated, or just above if your skin is sensitive to touch or broken
- When the laser is in use you will see a red flashing light visible over the area being treated
- Different areas may be treated over the affected region, each lasting one minute. The total treatment may last between 10-30 minutes depending on the area to be covered

## How often will I need to attend?

Treatment will depend on your clinical presentation. Generally speaking, an intensive course will include treatment 3 times/week for 3 weeks alongside manual lymphatic drainage. On completion of this phase you will then receive another treatment 2-3 weeks later. Depending on your response subsequent treatment sessions may be offered at 3, 6 and 12 months.

## What will it feel like?

You should not feel anything although sometimes some patients report a tingling sensation over the area being treated or a creeping sensation in the skin.

## Are there any side effects to having the treatment?

There is a rare possibility that the LLLT could cause mild erythema (redness) to the treated area. If this occurs it will be closely monitored by your practitioner and treatment discontinued if indicated.

## Does the treatment work and if so, when should I notice any changes?

As is the case with all lymphoedema treatments there are certain treatments that work with some people and not with others. Your lymphoedema practitioner will monitor your response to treatment and whether the laser therapy is a suitable choice for you. Changes can occur at any time and these are dependent on what symptoms you present with and also if other combinations of treatments (such as compression, skin care, activity) are being used.

*cont.*

Please remember that if you choose to opt out of having this treatment it will not affect other aspects of your care or services we offer. Additionally, if you have any questions either during or after your treatment session you can discuss these with your lymphoedema practitioner.

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