

Psychology and spinal cord injury



Information for patients

Psychological Services



PROUD TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

SHEFFIELD TEACHING HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST



This leaflet describes the Psychological Service at the Spinal Injury Centre and answers some common questions that patients may have about the team.

As individuals we cope with situations in different ways and the same is true following a spinal cord injury. It is common for people to experience a wide range of emotions and everyone's experience is unique and individual. Meeting the psychology team may help you to better understand your own personal experience and ways in which you cope.

What does the Psychological Service offer?

We can help with:

- Adjusting to the reality of having a spinal cord injury
- Coping with the rollercoaster of rehabilitation
- Getting on with life following the injury

We can help with specific difficulties such as:

- Management of pain and spasms
- Coping with different emotions
- Concerns about relationships and the future
- Concerns about memory and changes to thinking
- Distress and trauma following an accident

We recognise that other people close to you can affect how you are coping with your rehabilitation. The Psychological Service can also work together with your partner or any other close family or friend affected if you think it is important in terms of your rehabilitation care.

Who provides the Psychological Service?

The team includes a clinical psychologist and an assistant psychologist. Your first contact with the service is likely to be when the assistant psychologist meets you early on in your hospital stay, to talk about your

emotional and psychological response to your injury. This will be an opportunity to discuss any further psychological support you may require.

What is the difference between psychology and psychiatry?

The psychology team uses a range of talking therapies and may also suggest practical ideas. The team does not prescribe medication. Psychiatrists are trained as medical doctors specialising in mental health and can prescribe medication. It may be helpful for some people to see both services.

What happens at the first appointment?

This is a chance for you and a member of the psychology team to meet each other and to discuss your current concerns. The appointment will usually last about one hour. We will both then decide whether further appointments will be helpful. We will also ask you to fill in some questionnaires to help us better understand your situation.

What happens next?

Sometimes people only see a member of our team for one appointment, sometimes three to four times or more. It may be that another service would be more suitable for your needs. If so, we can help to arrange this for you.

What about confidentiality?

Our service is confidential. However, we work with other healthcare professionals and it is helpful for information to be shared with the team, with your agreement. You might not want some information to be shared; we will discuss this with you. We must share information if we are concerned that there is a risk to you or others.

How do I ask to be referred?

The Psychological Service is available to those who may benefit from support other than that provided by the rest of the multidisciplinary team. If you are interested in seeing a member of our team then please mention it to one of your nurses, doctors, or therapists who will arrange a referral.

How can I contact you?

The Service is based within the Spinal Injury Centre and is part of the Department of Psychological Services at Sheffield Teaching Hospitals.

- If you have any **further questions** about the service please contact: Psychological Service, The Princess Royal Spinal Injury Centre, Herries Road, Sheffield S5 7AU Tel: **0114 271 5623**
- If you have any **concerns** about the service please contact: The Service Manager, Psychological Services, Room G04, 3rd Floor, Nurses Home, Northern General Hospital, Herries Road, Sheffield, S5 7AU. Tel: **0114 226 6929**



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