

Pain Clinic Psychological Service



Information for patients

Department of Psychological Services



PROUD TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

SHEFFIELD TEACHING HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST



You have been referred to the Pain Clinic Psychological Service at the Northern General Hospital. Psychology is part of the care available for patients who attend the Pain Clinic. You may have some questions about what your referral means and what you can expect from the service. This leaflet has been written to answer some of your questions and help you decide if you would like to be seen by a psychologist.

What do psychologists do?

Everyone copes with situations in different ways and the same is true for chronic pain. In the Pain Clinic Psychological Service, psychologists help with:

- coping with the impact of living with chronic pain
- developing skills that can help manage your pain
- dealing with changes in relationships
- feeling worried or frightened about your pain or about the future
- feeling anxious, low, depressed or angry
- helping you to decide whether certain other treatments are the right thing for you

These are just examples. Do not worry if we have not included the difficulties that you are experiencing.

How can seeing a psychologist help?

A psychologist is trained to help you to:

- explore your thoughts and feelings
- understand how difficulties may develop
- try different ways of coping
- identify and develop your strengths to help you cope

What is the difference between a clinical psychologist, counsellor and psychiatrist?

- Clinical psychologists use a range of talking therapies and can suggest practical ideas that may be helpful. They do not prescribe medication.
- Counsellors also offer talking therapies but may be more likely to offer one particular approach.
- Psychiatrists are medical doctors who specialise in the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of mental health problems. They can prescribe medication.

Why I have I been referred to the Psychological Service?

You may have been referred because you have talked to one of the Pain Clinic team about some of the difficulties you have been having and they felt you may benefit from some further help.

Do I have to be seen at the hospital?

The Pain Clinic Psychological Service is based at the Northern General Hospital. If it is not possible for you to come to the hospital for your appointments, then the psychologist can help you identify other ways of getting help. This may mean going back to your GP to be referred to services closer to your home.

How long will I have to wait?

Once we have got your referral you will be sent a letter asking you to let us know if you wish to be put on the waiting list. If you do not wish to be seen, or we do not hear from you, then you will be discharged from the psychological service. If you do wish to be seen, your letter will tell you how long you can expect to wait.

What will happen at the first appointment?

Your first appointment will usually last for about one hour. You can come by yourself or you can bring a friend or family member if you prefer. This is a chance to meet with the psychologist and talk about the kinds of problems you have been having with pain, and how these are affecting your life. We will ask you questions about your pain, how you cope on a day to day basis and how you cope with flare ups. We can decide together whether further psychology sessions may be helpful for you. We may ask you to fill in some questionnaires.

What happens next?

Some people will see the psychologist once or twice; others will see the psychologist for longer. The number of times you will need to be seen varies from person to person, but this will be discussed with you. You may be asked to attend weekly, fortnightly or monthly, depending on your circumstances. Sometimes another service might be better for you. If so, we can help to arrange this for you.

Can I see the psychologist as part of a group?

We often see people for individual appointments, where they see the psychologist on their own or with a family member or partner. We can also offer to see people as part of a small group. If we think you would benefit from the support that a group offers, we would discuss this with you.

What do psychology sessions involve?

Psychology uses "talking approaches" so you will be asked to talk with the psychologist about the difficulties you are having. Exactly what you talk about varies from person to person. However, you do not have to talk about anything that you do not want to discuss.

Will I see the same person every time?

Your first appointment could be with any of our psychologists. If you are offered further sessions, these may be with someone else. Once these sessions have started you will always see the same person. If the psychologist is not available for any reason (for example, sickness) then your appointment will be cancelled. We may offer you the opportunity to see a different psychologist if your usual psychologist is going to be away for a long period of time.

You may be offered appointments with a trainee psychologist who works under the supervision of a qualified psychologist. If you do not want to see a trainee, you can refuse this.

What about my medical treatment?

Your psychology appointments do not alter any medical treatment you are receiving, and you should continue to attend all your other appointments.

Is what I say confidential?

Psychologists are bound by a strict code of confidentiality. We will not give information to your family, friends or anyone who is not concerned with helping you professionally, without your permission. We do work as part of a team, so there are times when it may be useful to talk to other members of the team about your care. This will be discussed with you first. A letter summarising your treatment will be sent from time to time to your family doctor (GP) and the Pain Clinic team (which will go in your medical notes). You will be asked if you would like to have a copy of these letters.

We must tell your GP (or another healthcare professional) about any concerns we have if we believe you are at risk of harming yourself or someone else. We are also required to keep a written record of any meetings we have. A brief entry is written into your medical notes. More

detailed psychology notes are kept securely in a separate file. Your psychologist will be happy to discuss confidentiality with you and any other concerns you may have.

What should I do if I cannot attend an appointment?

If you are unable to attend an appointment you should contact the Pain Clinic on **0114 271 5210** as soon as you can. They will let your psychologist know, and your appointment can be rearranged. It is standard hospital policy that if you do not attend an appointment and do not contact the service to let us know then you will be discharged from the Pain Clinic Psychological Service.

Who can I contact?

Dr Ellie Hurrell

Principal Clinical Psychologist
Pain Clinic, OPD4,
Northern General Hospital
Herries Road
Sheffield S5 7AU

Telephone: **0114 271 5210**

Should you have any queries or concerns about the Pain Clinic Psychological Service please contact:

The Service Manager
Room G04, 3rd Floor Nurses Home
Northern General Hospital
Herries Road
Sheffield S5 7AU

Telephone: **0114 226 6929**



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