



York and Scarborough
Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Clinical Neuropsychology

Please read the information in this leaflet
and keep it for future reference

Welcome to the Department of Psychological Medicine

① For more information, please contact:

Admin Team

Telephone: 01904 725353

Email: yhs-tr.psych.med@nhs.net

The Old Chapel, Bootham Park, York, YO31 8HE

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What is a clinical neuropsychologist?

A clinical neuropsychologist is a clinical psychologist who specialises in working with people with neurological illnesses and injuries affecting their central nervous system. Clinical neuropsychologists are skilled in assessing the changes in thinking, mood, and behaviour associated with a neurological condition.

Why have I been referred to neuropsychology?

Individuals are referred to the Neuropsychology Service for a number of reasons, including:

- Adjusting to the impact of being diagnosed with a neurological condition.
- For a cognitive assessment to investigate problems with thinking, memory and concentration.
- When someone requires support to learn more about their neurological diagnosis and develop coping skills.

People who are referred may be experiencing difficult feelings about having a diagnosis of epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, head injury, Parkinson's disease, or functional neurological disorders (FND) – such as functional seizures, or functional movement disorders.

Sometimes people who are referred do not have a neurological diagnosis, but are still worried about difficulties with their memory, concentration and thinking, or other symptoms. Changes in these areas may arise from a number of causes, including psychological factors such as anxiety, and depression, as well as from neurological conditions or stressful life events.

What can I expect at my first appointment?

This will depend on why you have been referred to our department. Appointments may be arranged for neuropsychological assessment, or for therapy intervention/support with coping strategies. You may also be referred into a group-based education programme for your condition.

Your first appointment is an initial assessment and will last between one and two hours. This involves being asked about the nature of your difficulties/condition, and how this is impacting your mood and daily life. You will be asked some background information, including your current support systems, past medical history, and social history.

Sometimes people will need to attend more than one of these, depending on what needs to be assessed.

What can I expect from a cognitive assessment?

Cognitive assessments will consist of neuropsychological tests that can include verbal, visual, and/or pen and paper tasks. Some tests may also be on a computer or an iPad. These tests will help the clinical neuropsychologist assess a range of different thinking (cognitive) abilities, such as:

- Verbal and nonverbal memory skills e.g., remembering information.
- Attention and information processing speed e.g., concentration and the time it takes to do tasks.
- Verbal and language skills e.g., speaking, understanding, and reading.
- Visual and perceptual skills e.g., making sense of information.
- Higher order skills called executive functions, which involve more complex planning and problem-solving abilities.

These appointments are usually two hours long. Additional appointments may be required if you need further tests. Please bring a list of your medication with you to the initial assessment and if possible, please bring a family member or close friend who knows you well. If you wear glasses for reading and/or hearing aids, please bring them with you to each appointment.

You will then have a feedback appointment where your results will be explained to you, including your strengths and any difficulties identified in your thinking abilities. This appointment usually lasts up to an hour. Although we do not make formal diagnoses, our assessment findings can be used to inform the diagnostic process undertaken by your consultant neurologist.

At this point, recommendations or onward referrals may be made, or you may continue to have neuropsychology input to work on rehabilitation strategies for any identified difficulties. The frequency and length of any future appointments depends on the assessment outcome, but we typically offer up to four follow-up sessions.

What can I expect from talking therapy?

Talking therapies involve talking through your problems and how they affect you, to better understand them. We help you to learn different strategies, techniques, and skills, which are based on scientific evidence. The overall aim of therapy will be different for each patient; however, it will usually focus on adapting and adjusting to your neurological problems to improve your quality of life. We usually offer around six to eight sessions of therapy, including the initial assessment.

The clinical neuropsychologist will work collaboratively with you to set goals and develop a treatment plan, including identifying unhelpful strategies and helping you start to let these go.

Your therapist will use a range of talking therapies, including Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) and/or Compassion Focussed Therapy (CFT).

You may also be referred to other services for support with your condition, such as occupational therapy, physiotherapy, adult social care, social prescription, mental health services and/or various charities.

What can I expect from my functional neuropsychology appointments?

After an initial assessment appointment with us, you will be referred for psycho-education sessions. These involve learning more about the condition. You may do this in small group-based sessions with peer support, or with another member of the team on a one-to-one basis. The psycho-education sessions are provided over four appointments and the one-to-one therapy is typically completed over six to eight sessions.

The role of neuropsychology in functional neurological treatment is to:

- Help you and other professionals involved in your care develop a better understanding of functional neurological symptoms.
- Help you to develop a deeper understanding of how to cope with your symptoms/diagnosis now and what you may be able to do to improve your symptoms.
- Identify unhelpful or self-defeating strategies and develop ways of coping with your symptoms.

You may also be referred to other services for support with your functional neurological symptoms, such as occupational therapy, physiotherapy, adult social care, social prescription, and/or various charities.

A note on confidentiality

To help you speak freely, the information that you tell your clinician in therapy sessions is kept in confidence, and any paper notes are kept in a secure environment. The only exception to confidentiality is if your clinician becomes aware that you or someone else is in danger.

You will be sent copies of the routine letters and assessment reports we send to your referrer and GP.

If you have any questions about confidentiality, or any other aspect of the work, please ask your clinician, or telephone the psychological medicine department.

Cancellations (Telephone: 01904 725353)

Your appointment with us is important and you should always try and keep it. If you need to change your appointment, please ring us on the above number or email yhs-tr.psych.med@nhs.net. The clinics are in demand so we ask that you give us as much notice as possible so that we can offer the appointment to someone else.

If you do not attend your appointment without letting us know, we will assume that you no longer wish to be seen and will discharge you back to the care of your GP. Only in exceptional circumstances will you be offered a further appointment should you fail to attend.

Feedback

We aim to provide the best possible care for individuals that access our service and strongly value your feedback. If you have any comments or concerns, do not hesitate to contact us.

How to contact us

Our office is open Monday – Friday 9am – 4:30pm except bank holidays.

Telephone: (01904) 725353

Email: yhs-tr.psych.med@nhs.net

Tell us what you think of this leaflet

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact:

Department of Psychological Medicine, The Old Chapel,
Bootham Park, York, YO31 8HE, telephone
01904 725353 or email: yhs-tr.psych.med@nhs.net.

Teaching, training and research

Our Trust is committed to teaching, training and research to support the development of health and healthcare in our community. Healthcare students may observe consultations for this purpose. You can opt out if you do not want students to observe. We may also ask you if you would like to be involved in our research.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS offers impartial advice and assistance to patients, their relatives, friends and carers. We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email yhs-tr.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net.

An answer phone is available out of hours.

Leaflets in alternative languages or formats

If you would like this information in a different format, including braille or easy read, or translated into a different language, please speak to a member of staff in the ward or department providing your care.

Patient Information Leaflets can be accessed via the Trust's Patient Information Leaflet website:

www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/patient-information-leaflets/

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