



York and Scarborough  
Teaching Hospitals  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Welcome to the Department of Psychological Medicine

How can my appointment help me and what should I expect from psychological sessions?

① For more information, please contact:

Admin Team

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[yhs-tr.psych.med@nhs.net](mailto:yhs-tr.psych.med@nhs.net)

Monday – Friday 9:00am – 5.00pm

The Old Chapel

Bootham Park, c/o York Hospital

Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
Why have I been referred to the Department of Psychological Medicine? .....	3
Which professional will I see at the Department of Psychological Medicine? .....	4
How is psychology linked to health? .....	5
When are people referred to the Department of Psychological Medicine? .....	6
What will happen during my first appointment? .....	7
How can my appointments help me?.....	8
In summary .....	9
A note on confidentiality.....	9
Cancellations.....	10
How to contact us.....	10
Tell us what you think of this leaflet .....	11
Teaching, training and research.....	11
Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS).....	11
Leaflets in alternative languages or formats .....	12

# **Why have I been referred to the Department of Psychological Medicine?**

York and Scarborough Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust recognises that having a health problem can have a significant impact on all the aspects of a person`s life. The speciality of psychological medicine has been established to help people to live with their health difficulties, both during and after medical treatment.

The Department helps people with a wide range of concerns by providing evidence-informed talking therapies. Talking therapies involve talking about how you are feeling, with someone who can help you make sense of the difficulties experienced and find ways to change or better manage these. These therapies are delivered by professionals with extensive experience of the nature of specific illnesses, hospital processes and systems.

Our work can include helping people who are living with acute or chronic health problems such as cancer, neurological conditions, chronic pain, renal problems and many others.

We can also provide help for people who have become anxious about their health condition or disability. This may include where having a health problem has affected their quality of life, even after the problem has been stabilised or treated.

# **Which professional will I see at the Department of Psychological Medicine?**

There are a number of different health professionals working in the Department. All are fully trained and accredited by the Health Care Professions Council (HCPC) and their relevant professional body, or are at an early stage in their career and training and are therefore working under the close supervision of a qualified colleague.

Your appointment may be with any of the following specialists from our staff team:

- Clinical Psychologist, Counselling Psychologist or Neuropsychologists (including Senior, Principal and Consultant).
- Counsellors (including Specialist Counsellors).
- Psychological Therapists (including Cognitive Behavioural Therapists).
- Assistant and Clinical Psychologists in Training.

All the clinicians working for the Department of Psychological Medicine will provide you with evidence-informed interventions. This means therapies that research has shown are effective in treating the problems that you are having at the moment.

# How is psychology linked to health?

We view the mind and body as influencing one another. Research has shown that emotions and thought patterns can influence physical factors such as our immune system and our experience of symptoms such as pain.

Experiencing symptoms or illnesses can affect people's lives in many different ways. Having a health problem can change the way people feel about themselves and their bodies. Lifestyles may alter and people may experience feelings of loss if they have to give up work or activities that they previously valued. It may be a struggle to find the same enjoyment and purpose in life.

Having a health problem can bring about changes in mood, such as feeling significantly tense, irritable or low in mood. People may also feel anger or frustration at times. These are all very normal reactions.

Health problems can also impact on family life and relationships. Family members may have a wide range of emotional reactions when their loved ones are ill. Roles within families may change, making it challenging for all concerned.

Our experience is that many people find psychological support an effective way of dealing with many of these issues.

# **When are people referred to the Department of Psychological Medicine?**

People are usually referred by their hospital consultant, specialist nurse or GP.

We accept referrals for people who may:

- be experiencing high levels of emotional distress in relation to their health and treatment.
- have difficulty coming to terms with a diagnosis or in coping with an illness.
- be finding it difficult to make decisions about healthcare.
- be trying to cope with a number of health problems at the same time.
- find it helpful to talk to a trained professional about the psychological aspect of their situation.

# What will happen during my first appointment?

- At first, you will be offered an initial assessment. We are now offering these appointments via telephone, video link and in person.
- Your clinician will be aware of some of your medical history but may ask you to give more detail about how your recent health has been.
- They will ask some background information about yourself and how you have coped with difficulties at other times in your life.
- You may be asked to complete short questionnaires to gain a better understanding of your current situation at various points during your treatment (e.g. at the beginning, during and towards the end of treatment).
- Our appointments usually last 45 minutes to one hour.
- At the end of your session, you and your clinician will make a joint decision about the way forward, including how many appointments will be necessary to work on your current difficulties.
- If you are offered further sessions, they will usually be fortnightly, depending on any other treatment you may be having.
- We may occasionally ask if a clinical psychologist in training can sit in on or listen to your first session. This is optional and you are welcome to say 'no'.

# How can my appointments help me?

Your initial appointment can help by:

- Giving you a safe, confidential and non-judgemental space to talk about how your health problems have affected your life and the impact this has had on what is important to you in life.
- You may develop a deeper understanding of how you cope with your health problems now and what you may be able to do to improve your symptoms.
- Starting to develop more strategies for coping with your own emotions.
- Identifying unhelpful or self-defeating strategies and starting to let these go.
- Providing an additional space for you to discuss thoughts and feelings about the choices you are making regarding your medical treatments.
- Focussing on adapting and adjusting to having health problems and moving towards a better quality of life.



## **In summary**

Meeting with one of our team gives you an opportunity to talk through the reasons why you were referred and to find ways to work towards positive change. Talking therapies involve you and your clinician working together to build a joint understanding of your situation and emotional health. You may be asked to work towards your goals in between appointments by keeping a diary of symptoms or emotions, or by experimenting with new ways of doing things.

## **A note on confidentiality**

To help you speak freely, the information that you share in your sessions is kept in confidence, and any paper notes are kept carefully in a secure environment. The only exception to confidentiality is if your clinician becomes aware of a risk to yourself or another. You are welcome to have copies of the routine letters we write to your referrer and GP.

If you have any questions about confidentiality, or any other aspect of the work, please do ask your clinician, or telephone the 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. Our clinics are in high 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 or referring clinician.

## **How to contact us**

Office open Monday – Friday 9:00am – 5.00pm

(Phone line open – 8.30am – 4.30pm)

Except Bank Holidays

Telephone: 01904 725353

yhs-tr.psych.med@nhs.net

The Old Chapel, Bootham Park, c/o York Hospital,  
Wigginton Rd, York, YO31 8HE

At busy times, you may need to leave a message on our answer phone.

Thank you for reading this leaflet

## **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 use the contact details for the admin team.

## **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](mailto: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/](http://www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/patient-information-leaflets/)

Owner	Jo Barker, Administrator, Psychology Department
Date first issued	June 2012
Review Date	June 2027
Version	6 (issued June 2024)
Approved by	Dr Veronica Jenkins-Oliver
Document Reference	PIL730 v6
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