

Renal Psychology Service

This leaflet explains about the psychological support available for adult patients with kidney disease. If you have any further questions, please speak to a member of the renal team.

What is the renal psychology service?

Kidney disease can have a major impact on various aspects of your life. The renal psychology service is here to help you cope with the emotional and psychological challenges that can come with living with a renal condition and its treatment. You would be seen by a clinical psychologist who can offer support in the form of talking therapy, practical help and the chance to discuss concerns related to your renal condition and journey. Clinical psychologists are not medical doctors and do not prescribe medication.

Some difficulties that we can support you with include but are not limited to:

- Depression, anxiety, anger
- Adjustment and loss
- Living with uncertainty
- Coping with impact on various areas of life, including relationships and sex
- Coping with side effects of treatment, such as fatigue
- Adjusting and coping with changes in your body, including impact on self-esteem
- Coming to terms with changes in health, including possible end-of-life issues
- Communicating with others about your renal condition or treatment

- Coping with long hospital admissions or postoperative complications.

Who can access the service?

Anyone under the care of a renal consultant or renal surgeon at St George's Hospital, either as an inpatient or outpatient, can access the service.

What is the referral process?

Any staff member in the renal department can complete a referral form on your behalf. A referral should be discussed with you first and only be made with your agreement. Please request a referral if you think our service may help.

You can also self-refer or find out more about the service on the contact details below. The service is free. If you have any particular requirements, such as needing an interpreter, please mention this at the referral stage so that they can be arranged.

What happens after referral?

If you are referred, we will contact you to arrange an initial outpatient assessment when you are at the top of the waiting list or, if you are an inpatient at St George's Hospital, we will come and see you on the ward. Outpatient appointments can take place remotely or face to face at the Courtyard Clinic, St George's Hospital.

At the assessment we will explore your concerns and priorities and decide with you the best way we can help. If you are offered further appointments, a treatment plan will be discussed and tailored to your individual needs. On average, outpatients have six to eight appointments, however this is decided with you based on your needs and you may have fewer or more appointments.

Appointments are usually once a fortnight.

You may decide not to take up any further appointments after the initial assessment or there may be another service that is better suited to your needs which you may be helped to access. You can always be re-referred to the renal psychology service if needed in the future.

Will my information be confidential?

The clinical psychologist will take notes during or after your appointment. These will be stored securely and confidentially. A summary of the session will be put into your main medical notes to help the whole renal team look after you in the best way they can.

If there is anything you wish to keep confidential, please discuss this with the clinical psychologist. Your wishes will be respected as much as possible but information about any serious or potential risk to you or other people will need to be shared with the relevant services.

Letters which summarise the work you and the clinical psychologist do together will be sent to your GP, the person who referred you and your renal consultant (if they were not the referrer). These letters will also be filed in your main medical records.

Is there anything else to know?

We strive to be as flexible as possible to maximise access to the renal psychology service. We ask that you notify your clinician as soon as possible if you are unable to attend your appointment, as this lets us know that you are still interested in input and allows opportunity for the slot to be offered to someone else.

Please note that a missed appointment will not automatically be rebooked. Please contact your clinician if you have missed an appointment and would like to reschedule. If you do not make contact or if you miss more than two consecutive appointments, you may be discharged from the renal psychology service. This would not affect other areas of your renal care.

Please note that we are not an emergency service and there may be a wait for your appointment. If you need urgent help, please contact your GP or local crisis team, attend your nearest emergency department (A&E) or speak to ward staff if you are currently admitted to hospital.

Useful sources of information

- St George's renal service
[Renal - St George's University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust \(stgeorges.nhs.uk\)](https://www.stgeorges.nhs.uk)
- St George's Kidney Patients Association
[St George's Kidney Patients Association \(sgkpa.org.uk\)](https://www.sgkpa.org.uk)
- Find an NHS psychological therapies service (IAPT)
[Find an NHS talking therapies services - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)
- MIND: [Home - Mind](https://www.mind.org.uk)
- Cruse bereavement services: [Home - Cruse Bereavement Support](https://www.cruse.org.uk)
- Samaritans: call 116 123
[Samaritans | Every life lost to suicide is a tragedy | Here to listen](https://www.samaritans.org)

Contact us

If you have any questions or would like to self-refer, please contact the renal psychology service 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday email on renal.psychology@stgeorges.nhs.uk or call 07787 659 510 and leave

a message . We will get back to you as soon as possible.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.stgeorges.nhs.uk

Additional services

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or care. You can contact the PALS team on the advisory telephone line Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 2pm to 5pm.

A Walk-in service is available:

Monday, Tuesday and Thursday between 10am and 4pm
Friday between 10am and 2pm.

Please contact PALS in advance to check if there are any changes to opening times.

The Walk-in and Advisory telephone services are closed on Wednesdays.

PALS is based within the hospital in the ground floor main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough Wing.

Tel: 020 8725 2453 **Email:** pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

Website: www.nhs.uk

NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones. **Tel:** 111

AccessAble

You can download accessibility guides for all our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website (www.accessable.co.uk). The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.

Reference: REM_RPS_LP_03 **Published:** August 2023 **Review date:** August 2025

