

Rapid Diagnostic Cancer Clinic Psychology Service

This information sheet explains why you have been referred to our Clinical Psychologist as part of your hospital care and what to expect.

Reasons for Referral to Psychology

Being referred to a psychologist is not uncommon, particularly when experiencing difficulties with your physical health. Following a discussion with a member of the Rapid Diagnostic Cancer Clinic (RDCC) team and with your consent, you have been referred to psychology within our hospital as you may benefit from assessment and support around the following:

- ***The impact of physical health on your thoughts and emotions:*** It is common to experience a range of emotions when undergoing investigations into a physical health issue, such as a potential diagnosis of cancer. The psychologist can help support you during your time with the clinic but also help you access appropriate continuing local support to manage these emotions.
- ***The impact of your thoughts and emotions on your physical health:*** How we think and feel can affect our bodies physically, for example thinking about a frightening experience can lead to our heart beating faster, muscles tensing and our stomachs churning. It can therefore be helpful to talk with the psychologist to understand how your emotions are potentially impacting your physical symptoms and to access local support to reduce the impact of these emotions on your body.
- ***The impact of thoughts and emotions on attendance:*** You may be experiencing difficult thoughts and emotions that make it feel hard for you to attend the clinic. The psychologist can work with you and the clinic team to support you in coming to your appointments.

If you are under the care of the RDCC team and have not been referred to psychology but feel you may benefit from this support, please speak with a member of the RDCC team.

What will happen next?

You will be contacted by a member of our team to arrange an appointment. The appointment will last 50 to 60 minutes and will be face-to-face, by video call or telephone. You may complete some questionnaires about how you are feeling as part of your appointment with the psychologist.

What will happen during the appointment?

Our psychologist will provide you with a space to discuss the impact your physical symptoms may be having on you emotionally, as well as how your thoughts and feelings may also be affecting you physically. The psychologist will also ask whether you have any other psychological / emotional difficulties or complex social circumstances which may impact on your ability to attend the hospital clinic.

At the end of the appointment, the psychologist will discuss with you if you would benefit from further psychological support, either to enable you to attend the hospital clinic or help you cope with your feelings through the support of local psychology services.

The psychologist may also make some recommendations for any social support you may need. Due to the nature of the RDCC pathway, most people have a one-off appointment with the psychologist, however a follow-up appointment can be arranged if both you and the psychologist feel this may be helpful.

Will my appointment be confidential?

The majority of what you discuss with the psychologist will be confidential, however they will write a summary relevant to your care that will be shared with your consultant, your GP and you. If you are at risk to yourself or others, this information will be shared with the appropriate services. The psychologist will discuss the sharing of information with you fully at the start of your appointment.

What should I do if I can't make an appointment?

Please call the Rapid Diagnostics Clinic team straightaway if you are unable to attend the appointment for any reason. We can then rearrange your appointment as quickly as possible and give your slot to another patient in the same situation as you. You can contact the team on 020 8725 4221 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm). Out of hours or at busy times, please leave a message and we will call you back. You can also email the team on stg.rdcc@stgeorges.nhs.uk

What happens after my psychology appointment?

The summary written by the psychologist after your appointment will be shared with your consultant, your GP and you. It will highlight any recommendations for further support within the clinic or locally to you. You will not be referred on to any other service without your consent.

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 Services

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

Web: 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.



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