

The Clinical Psychology Service

Information and advice for children and young people
with a medical condition, and their parents/carers

Paediatrics

What is the clinical psychology service?

The clinical psychology service is a service to help children, young people and families cope with some of the difficulties that can occur from having a medical condition or its treatment.

What does the clinical psychology service do?

Our psychologists work with children, young people and their families in hospital, outpatient clinics, homes and schools. We use talking and drawing to help understand how children and young people think, feel and behave. Coming to hospital can make some people feel nervous, sad, angry or frightened. We will listen to your concerns and try to find a helpful way forward. Children, young people and their families can talk to us about what they think is important; nobody will think it is silly.

We also sometimes work with other people you might meet like doctors, nurses and play specialists.

Going to see a psychologist does not mean that you are 'mad'. Most of the problems we help with are things that everyone struggles with at some point in their life. Psychologists are different from doctors and psychiatrists as they do not prescribe medication.

Who is the clinical psychology service for?

Our service is available to all children and young people aged 0-18 who have a Sandwell GP, live in Sandwell and have a chronic physical health condition or have been an inpatient with medically unexplained physical symptoms and are under review by doctors/nurses at Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust.

How can our service help?

Sometimes having a chronic medical condition or having a child with one can be stressful times, such as when moving school, growing up or during family changes. Parents and children can sometimes find it upsetting or difficult to talk to each other about these things and need some extra support.

We would just like you to know that we are around to talk to if you feel it might be helpful.

What sort of problems can we help with?

Some of the problems we can help children and young people with are:

- Coming to terms with a medical diagnosis and developing coping strategies.
- Worries about treatment and making decisions.
- Emotional (low mood and anxiety) and behavioural issues.
- Coping with symptoms such as pain, tiredness and other physical symptoms.

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- Dealing with the effects of having a medical condition on things such as school, friends, relationships and feeling different.
- Family-based issues (needs of the whole family).
- Needle phobias.
- Preparing for surgery.

How can the service be accessed?

A child/young person can be referred to us by any member of their healthcare team or you may wish to contact us directly yourself.

What happens next?

If a child is in hospital we will see them on the ward. If a child is at home they will be given an appointment to see us in the children's outpatient department at Sandwell General Hospital. If you are unable to attend the appointment please let us know as soon as possible so we can give the appointment to someone else.

What happens during the appointment?

First appointments usually last 1 - 1½ hours and we will talk to you all about your concerns and how we may be able to help. Sometimes this might involve drawing pictures or playing games as this makes it easier for some children to express how they are feeling. You can see the psychologist on your own or you may like to take someone with you.

What a child or young person says to us is private (confidential) unless we are worried about their safety or the safety of others. It may be useful to share some of the things a child or young person tells us with their family, school or medical team so that they can help too, but we will plan with the child/young person what information we will share.

What happens after the appointment?

At the end of the session we will plan with you what to do next. This may involve:

- arranging another appointment to work with the family, just the child or just the child's carers
- arranging for the child to see someone else who will be able to help
- suggesting how the child and their family could manage the problem and deciding that they do not need to see us again – a one off session was all that was needed

After the first appointment we will write to the child's GP and the person who referred them to our service to let them know we have seen them. We also like to contact school and other people who know the child but will discuss this with the parents/carers first.

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Contact details

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Children's Outpatients

Sandwell General Hospital

0121 507 3684 or 0121 507 2598

If you would like to suggest any amendments or improvements to this leaflet please contact the communications department on 0121 507 5420 or email: swb-tr.swbh-gm-patient-information@nhs.net



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