Older Adult Mental Health
Clinical Psychology Service

Older Adults Mental Health Services
Seeing a Clinical Psychologist

Your guide to psychological treatment from the WHSCT Older Adult Clinical Psychology Team

What is a Clinical Psychologist?

Psychologists are experts in human thought, behaviour and emotion. Clinical Psychologists use this knowledge to help people who are having problems that are affecting their health (both mental and physical health). They also play a role in preventing psychological problems and improving NHS services.
Clinical Psychologists have both a university degree in psychology and also complete a professional training in clinical psychology. It takes a minimum of 7 years to qualify as a Clinical Psychologist in the UK.

Clinical Psychologists are Registered Practitioner Psychologists. This means they are professionals who are legally regulated by the Health Professions Council (HPC).
How can they help me?

Clinical Psychologists don’t prescribe medication. They help by talking with people about their problems.

A Clinical Psychologist will listen carefully and try to help you make sense of your difficulties. Whenever possible, he or she will agree with you the best way of dealing with your problems and work with you to produce a plan of action.

There are many different approaches the Clinical Psychologist can use to help you overcome your problems,
and they all involve you and the Clinical Psychologist working together to bring about change.

Our Clinical Psychologists work with the community mental health teams for Older People in the Derry, Limivady, Strabane, Omagh and Enniskillen areas. They also work within the Mental Health Admission Wards in Derry and Omagh.

The Clinical Psychologists will often work alongside other professionals, including Psychiatrists, Nurses, Social Workers and Occupational Therapists.
What kind of problems does a Psychologist help with?

Clinical Psychologists may be asked to see patients, or members of their families, who are finding it difficult to cope with their diagnosis of dementia, or who are experiencing other types of distress that a psychologist might be able to help with.

As health care practitioners, Psychologists can help older persons and their families overcome problems, enhance well-being, and achieve maximum potential during later life.
The kinds of problems psychologists can help with are:

- Memory assessment to aid diagnosis.
- Adjustment, grief and loss associated with a diagnosis of dementia.
- Caregiving - Although the role of caregiving can be rewarding, it can also be quite stressful. Clinical Psychologists can help family members to better deal with the practical and emotional demands of caring for a relative with dementia.
- Depression.
• Patients who are at risk due to emotional distress, including thoughts about taking their own life or harming themself in some way.

How do I get to see a Clinical Psychologist?
Most people attending the Older Peoples’ Community Mental Health Team or admitted to the Mental Health Ward will not need to see a Psychologist. Other staff will probably be using psychological approaches in their work with you. But in some cases, a staff member may
recommend a psychology assessment. This will be discussed fully with you before a referral is made to the Psychology service.

Any member of the Older Peoples’ Community Mental Health Team or Mental Health Ward can refer a patient to the Clinical Psychology service, or an individual patient or family member can request to be seen. Your GP can also make a referral to the Clinical Psychology service.
What will happen at the appointment?

Memory Assessment

Following an appointment with your Psychiatrist or Memory Clinic Nurse, you will be offered a one-off appointment with a Clinical Psychologist. This may last up to 1.5 hours. Occasionally, more than one appointment may be needed to complete your assessment.

During the appointment you will be given the choice of whether a family member accompanies you during your assessment. The Clinical Psychologist
will ask you some questions about your memory and will offer you the opportunity to complete additional tests to help understand what might be causing your memory problems. The results of these tests will be shared with other members of the Memory Clinic Team, including the Memory Clinical Nurse and Psychiatrist. Following this, you will be invited back to meet with a member of the Memory Clinic Team to discuss the results of our team assessment. An assessment report is always sent to your General Practitioner.
Mental Health Assessment

Your first appointment will be an assessment to allow the Clinical Psychologist to learn more about you and your problems. This may last up to an hour. Sometimes, more than one appointment may be needed to complete your assessment.

This is also an opportunity for you to ask questions and find out more about what Clinical Psychologists do.

After your assessment, the Psychologist will discuss the different treatment options available to you. These may include:
• Further appointments with the psychologist
• Advice about how another service or organisation may help you.

If appropriate, the Psychologist may also speak to your other community mental health team worker about ways in which they can offer you additional support with your plan.

The number of further appointments will depend on the individual treatment plan agreed between yourself and the Psychologist.
Where will we meet?

For those living in the Council Districts of Derry, Limivady and Strabane, appointments will be offered at Waterside Hospital, Gransha Park, Derry. For those living in the Council Districts of Omagh and Enniskillen, appointments will be offered at Holly Villa, Tyrone and Fermanagh Hospital, or South West Acute Hospital, Enniskillen.

If you are admitted to the Mental Health Wards at Waterside Hospital or Tyrone and Fermanagh Hospital, and
you have a specific problem or worry, your Doctor or Nurse may suggest that you discuss this with a Psychologist. In these circumstances, the Clinical Psychologists will visit and assess you on the ward.

How long will we meet for?

Usually the meetings last about an hour, but there is no hard and fast rule.

You may only need to meet a couple of times over several months or you may work more closely for a longer
period of time as agreed with the Clinical Psychologist.

Are the meetings confidential?
The Psychologist will take notes during the assessment and any subsequent sessions. These notes are confidential and are kept securely within your casenotes. They are not shown to other professionals.

Clinical Psychologists work as part of the community mental health and ward clinical teams. Information which you share with us is treated as strictly confidential. We will **only** share
information with other professionals on a need to know basis, to provide you with the best care.

If something comes up in your session which indicates a serious risk to you, or to other people the Psychologist is legally required to take steps to protect you and other people from significant harm.

It is standard practice for the Psychologist to write back to the professional who originally referred you, with a summary of the assessment and a description of the
treatment plan you have made. A copy of this report is usually sent to your General Practitioner and where appropriate, to other mental health professionals who are interested in your care. You have the right to a copy of these letters if you so wish.

What About Quality of Care?
From time to time we have Clinical / Counselling Psychologists in doctoral training working in the department. They have first degrees in Psychology and are attending one of the local Doctoral courses in Clinical or Counselling Psychology. All their work
is supervised by the qualified staff. You have the right to choose whether or not to be involved in their training.

Compliments and Complaints
We are continually trying to improve our services to you so it is important we listen to what you have to say about your care and treatment.

If you are unhappy about any aspect of your care, please talk to your Clinical Psychologist when the problem first occurs.
If you have any concerns or complaints let us know. Likewise we would also like to know when we get things right!

It is also your right to make a formal complaint and to have it fully investigated and the results reported back to you. If you wish to make a formal complaint about services provided by Western Health and Social Care Trust, we have a Complaints manager and Complaints Officers who can help you. Contact details are as follows:
Complaints Department
Trust Headquarters
MDEC Building
Altnagelvin Area Hospital,
Londonderry
BT47 6SB
Tel 02871345171 Ext: 214130 /
214121 / 214122 / 214142 /
214194
Or Direct Dial No: 02871 611226
Email:
complaints.department@westerntrust.
hscni.net
Contact Us Here:

Our Offices are located at:

Older Adult Clinical Psychology Service
Oak Villa,
Gransha Park
Clooney Road
Derry
BT47 6WJ

Tel: 028 71 865114
Fax: 028 71 864383

and
Older Adult Clinical Psychology Service
Holly Villa,
Tyrone and Fermanagh Hospital
Donaghiarie Road
Omagh
County Tyrone
BT79 0NS

Tel: 028 8283 5996 (Afternoon only)
Fax: 028 82 835936

At times when no one is in the office, an answer phone is in use. Please leave a message for any member of
the team and we will return your call as quickly as possible.

The Clinical Psychologists working within our service follow a strict code of conduct and have Chartered Status from the British Psychological Society. The title "Clinical Psychologist" is protected and can only be used by those registered with the Health Professions Council.