



The Leeds  
Teaching Hospitals  
NHS Trust

# Clinical Psychology Service for people with Sickle Cell and Thalassaemia

Information for  
patients

This leaflet gives information about the Clinical & Health Psychology Service, and how we can help you. If you have any questions, please speak to someone in your hospital care team for more information.

## **Why might I see a clinical psychologist?**

We know that living with a chronic condition like Sickle Cell or Thalassaemia can have an impact on many different aspects of life and can sometimes make it very difficult to cope. It can present stressful challenges, and can affect people in many different ways.

Talking therapy can be helpful in coping with the physical, practical and emotional consequences of your condition. It can form an important part of your overall care. For this reason, clinical psychologists are a key member of most specialist teams. Seeing a psychologist is a normal part of care for many people, just like seeing any other healthcare professional.

The psychologist you see will have an understanding of your condition and the psychological impact of both the condition and the treatment you receive.

## **How could the service help me?**

Clinical psychologists are trained to help people talk through their problems. Sometimes talking through issues in this way can help you to find better ways of managing your difficulties, gain confidence, feel more in control, and improve your overall wellbeing. Clinical psychologists do not prescribe medications.

The topics discussed with the psychologist will depend on what is going on for you at that time. You do not have to talk about anything you don't want to talk about.

*Some examples of issues that we often discuss in sessions are:*

- Coping with difficult feelings related to your condition, e.g., stress, anxiety or low mood
- Dealing with worries about current and future life situations
- Issues with body image, confidence or self-esteem
- Managing the impact that health challenges can have on your relationships, work, hobbies, or other important areas of your life
- Struggling with the demands of treatments, including coping with specific fears e.g., fear of needles
- Coping with the emotional impact of being in hospital or having to come into hospital often
- Managing pain
- Memory and concentration problems
- Making difficult decisions about your treatment
- Getting the most out of your interactions with healthcare professionals
- Supporting you when you move from child to adult services

You are welcome to bring a partner, relative or carer, if you would prefer someone to come with you to your appointments with your psychologist.

## How often will I see the psychologist?

Appointments are arranged in clinics between 9am and 4pm, Monday to Friday, and can last up to 60 minutes.

The first one or two sessions are about finding out how things are for you. This will be a chance to discuss your concerns and what support might be helpful for you at the moment.

At the end of the appointment, we will agree a plan together. Sometimes people don't need any more sessions, or we may decide to meet for regular sessions (normally once every two weeks) for the coming weeks or months.

We offer a range of talking therapies and we can decide together what help might be most useful.

## Where will I see the psychologist?

You could meet the psychologist for the first time at an individual assessment appointment, or at a clinic appointment with other members of your care team. If we meet for the first time at a clinic appointment, we may have a briefer conversation and then agree to meet again in private in another appointment.

The psychology service can see people for face-to-face and virtual (telephone or video) appointments, depending on your needs.

The majority of face-to-face appointments will be at St James's University Hospital. Your appointment letter will tell you exactly where your appointment will be held.

## Who will I see?

You will see the same person at each appointment. This will be a clinical psychologist or a psychologist in clinical training (PICT), under their supervision. Clinical psychologists are all registered by the Health & Care Professions Council (HCPC) and have to adhere to strict codes of professional conduct and practice.

## What happens to the information I share with the psychologist?

All information you share during psychology sessions is private and confidential, although it may be helpful if we share some information with the team caring for you. This will be discussed in your appointment and only done with your permission.

Psychologists have a duty to tell somebody if they are worried that you or someone else is at risk of harm. In these circumstances we may have to pass on information you have given without your consent, to make sure that you get the support that you need. We would always try to talk about this with you first if we have any concerns.

## How do I access the psychology service?

You can be referred to us by a member of your Sickle Cell & Thalassaemia care team in the Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust.

If you would like to see a psychologist, please tell one of your care team who can make this referral for you. You can do this at your appointment, or contact your nurse specialist on telephone number **0113 206 8236**.

After receiving a referral, and if we feel that our service can meet your needs, we will contact you by letter and add you to our waiting list. We try to offer a first appointment as quickly as possible, but the waiting time will depend on the demand on our service.

**Please be aware that we are not an emergency service.**

If you feel you need urgent medical or emotional support, please go to your nearest 24-hour Emergency Department (A&E). You can also contact the Samaritans for 24-hour emotional support on telephone number **116 123**. Please also visit your GP, who may be able to refer you to another service for more urgent psychological support.

## **Cancelling appointments**

If you cannot come to an appointment, please telephone us to let us know. Please give us at least 24 hours' notice, so that we can give the appointment to someone else.

If you cancel or do not come to multiple appointments, we may not be able to offer additional appointments and have to discharge you from the psychology service in line with Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust policy. You will be able to access the psychology service again in future but a new referral will be needed.

## Contact us

You can contact the Department of Clinical Health Psychology on telephone number **0113 206 5897**. Office Hours are Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5.00pm.

Outside of these hours, an answer phone message can be left. Please leave your name, telephone number and message. A member of staff will then get back to you as soon as possible.

More information about the service is available on our website [www.leadsth.nhs.uk](http://www.leadsth.nhs.uk).



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© The Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust • 1st edition Ver 1  
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Produced by: Medical Illustration Services • MID code: 20231010\_015/MH

LN005714  
Publication date  
10/2023  
Review date  
10/2026