

Psychology session appointments – what to expect

This leaflet explains what to expect once you are referred to a clinical health psychologist at any point during your cancer treatment journey.

Why do I need to see a psychologist?

The experience of having a serious health condition can affect you more than just physically. There are emotional effects too, and relationships with your family, friends and colleagues may be affected. Sometimes, people may feel quite a lot of distress, and find that speaking to a psychologist may be helpful.

How we work

The Berkshire Cancer Centre (BCC) Psychological Care team helps people with physical health problems. We help people cope with cancer, from diagnosis, during treatment and once treatment has finished. During your sessions, we will build on your existing strengths and help you find new ways of managing your everyday life during your cancer journey.

How to get in touch with us

If you would like to see a psychologist, your oncologist (cancer doctor) or cancer nurse specialist at the Berkshire Cancer Centre can refer you. We will then send you a letter to confirm that your referral has been received and that you are on the waiting list. You will be offered an appointment with a psychologist as soon as possible, but we are a small service and there can be a wait.

Taking charge of your mental wellbeing

Coping with cancer and treatment can be difficult, and we know from other clients that being proactive about mental health and wellbeing can help. At the end of this leaflet we have included a list of current local support services and information that may be helpful for you while you are on the waiting list.

Your first session with your psychologist

In your first session, your psychologist will make an assessment. This means that your psychologist will ask you about your difficulties, your treatment experience, your life more generally and other important information. They will also ask you about your goals and will agree with you how to best achieve them.

We offer short to medium term therapy. Most people work with a psychologist for up to six sessions.

Sometimes, people can be better helped by other services and we can help with your onward referral to more appropriate support.

Working with your psychologist

The psychology sessions are currently delivered over the telephone or via video. If this is a problem for you, please let your psychologist know.

If you cannot attend a session, please let us know as soon as possible (contact details below). If you miss an appointment more than twice without letting us know, we will assume that you no longer wish to continue therapy and will discharge you from the service.

We understand that you may sometimes need to change or cancel your appointment. If this is the case, your psychologist will reschedule your appointment. But if you do struggle to attend and need to cancel sessions repeatedly, your psychologist may want to speak you about whether this is the right time for you to engage in therapy. Frequent breaks can get in the way of a successful therapy.

If you have any questions please do contact us using the details below.

**How to
contact us**

**If you need to contact us
or require further information...**

Tel: 0118 929 6474

Email: ClinicalHealthPsychology@berkshire.nhs.uk



Useful resources while you are waiting for your appointment

If things are really difficult or you are in crisis

- If you find that your psychological state worsens while you are waiting for your assessment appointment, and you are worried about whether you can cope, we would recommend that you talk to your GP about other sources of support.
- If you need **urgent help, out of hours**, but it is not an emergency, you can call NHS 111.
- If it is an **emergency**, call 999 straight away or go to your nearest Emergency Department (A&E).
- If you need someone to talk to, you can also call: Samaritans – Tel: 116 123 (24 hours every day)

Sources of support and information

- Please speak to your cancer team, oncologist or clinical nurse specialist (CNS) if you feel you require additional support or information.
- You might also want to consider the following sources of support and information whilst you are waiting for your appointment with your psychologist:

Cancer Rehabilitation Service

07392861323 (please leave a voicemail)

cancer.rehabilitation@nhs.net

Wide ranging support including physical activity, practical support, self-management, social and psychological support as well as workshops.

Talking Therapies

0300 365 2000

talkingtherapies@berkshire.nhs.uk

Free NHS service providing psychological therapies for problems including depression, anxiety, sleep problems and PTSD.

My Cancer My Choices

01344 662906

<https://mycancermychoices.org/>

bookings@mycancermychoices.org

Charity that gives people living with cancer the chance to have complementary therapies of their choice.

Macmillan support offers

Macmillan is a major provider of support for those going through cancer and their loved ones. Please find below a selection of elements of their support offer. There are of course other national charities dedicated to supporting people with specific types of cancer.

Macmillan Support Line

0808 808 00 00

Emotional and practical support, guidance on financial, welfare, work and energy concerns.

Macmillan Online Community

<https://community.macmillan.org.uk>

Online cancer forum, including online groups for patients, carers, family and friends as well as those bereaved from cancer.

Macmillan Telephone Buddy

Call 0808 808 00 00

Volunteer buddies provide a listening ear to support you during your treatment.

Macmillan Counselling

Call 0808 808 00 00

This is a free, telephone based counselling service for people living with cancer, funded by Macmillan and delivered by BUPA. More details are available on their website: <https://www.macmillan.org.uk/cancer-information-and-support/treatment/coping-with-treatment/getting-help-with-your-emotions>.