

Psychology appointments – what to expect

This leaflet explains what to expect when you have been referred to the Berkshire Cancer Centre psychology team.

Why do I need to see a psychologist?

Having a serious health condition can affect you more than just physically. There is an emotional impact too, and you may find your relationships with family, friends and colleagues are affected. Some people feel a lot of distress, and find that speaking to a psychologist can help.

How we work

The Berkshire Cancer Centre (BCC) Psychological Care team supports people with physical health problems. We help people cope with cancer, from diagnosis, during treatment and even after treatment has finished.

During your sessions, we will identify your existing strengths and help you build on your capacity to cope.

How to get in touch with us

If you would like to see a psychologist, your cancer specialist at the Berkshire Cancer Centre can refer you to us. One of our team will then contact you to arrange a short telephone assessment called a triage call. In this call we ask you about your difficulties, your treatment experience, your life more generally and other important information. This is to check that we are the right service to provide support for you. Where we identify other services which might give you more appropriate support, we will signpost you to them and write back to your referrer. If our service is the right one for you, we will email you to confirm that you are on our waiting list. You will be offered an appointment with a psychologist as soon as possible; due to demand there is usually a wait of a few months.

Taking charge of your mental wellbeing

Coping with cancer and treatment can be difficult. 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.

Working with your psychologist

In your first session, your psychologist will review the information from your triage call, and ask about some things in more detail. 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 eight sessions.

The psychology sessions are mostly delivered via video. If this is a problem for you, please let your psychologist know; we do offer telephone therapy as well as a small number of in-person sessions at the Berkshire Cancer Centre and at the clinic at 25 Erleigh Road, Reading RG1.

Changing, cancelling and missed appointments

If you cannot attend a session, please telephone (0118 904 4600) or email us (ClinicalHealthPsychology@berkshire.nhs.uk) as soon as possible.

If you miss an appointment more than twice without giving us notice, 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.



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

Tel: 0118 904 4600

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
- **Call NHS 111** for urgent help out of hours when it is not an emergency.
- **In an emergency, call 999** straight away or go to your nearest Emergency Department (A&E).
- For someone to talk to, you can also **call the Samaritans on 116 123**, available 24 hours a day every day.

Sources of support and information

- Please speak to your cancer team, oncologist or clinical nurse specialist (CNS) if 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:

Support within the Cancer Team

Cancer Rehabilitation Service

0118 322 6940 (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.

My Cancer My Choices

01344 662906

<https://mycancermychoices.org/>

bookings@mycancermychoices.org

Macmillan Cancer Support Centre

0118 322 8700

Macmillan.information@royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Confidential emotional, financial, and practical support for patients and their family at any stage of cancer, diagnosis, during or after treatments.

Drop in without an appointment or call us to book a specific time slot in advance. Based in the Berkshire Cancer Centre, open Mon-Thurs 9am-4pm Friday 9am-2pm, and closed bank holidays.

Support in the Community

Talking Therapies

0300 365 2000

talkingtherapies@berkshire.nhs.uk

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

Support from Macmillan

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.