

### Clinical Health Psychology Service – Information for Referrers

Living with a physical health problem can have a significant impact on quality of life and emotional well-being. Loss of independence, changing roles, withdrawal and uncertainty can be a normal part of living with a health condition. Some people adjust and adapt to these changes without the need for additional support. For others, the psychological problems start to take over, affecting mood, engagement and, at times, medical treatment. The Clinical Health Psychology Service aims to ensure that people with physical health problems in Dumfries and Galloway have their psychological needs met.

The Service provides evidence-based and specialised psychological assessment, formulation and interventions for people living with long-term conditions and associated emotional distress such as depression and anxiety. We also work in collaboration with the physical health teams who are already providing care.

We see adult patients (i.e. people who are not under the care of paediatrics) who are experiencing psychological difficulties as a consequence of a long-term physical condition, including people who are approaching end of life. Conditions include, amongst others, stroke, kidney disease, heart disease, chronic pain, cancer, cystic fibrosis, ME, and diabetes.

#### Who we are

Our Team consists of trained clinical psychologists, psychological therapists and supervised clinical psychologists in training. The service is based in Crichton Hall and Dumfries and Galloway Royal Infirmary in Dumfries. Team members also meet patients in clinic settings throughout the region. We are, unfortunately, unable to offer home visits.

We are a specialist service within the Department of Psychological Services. As such we manage our referrals and keep our own waiting list.

#### What we offer

The Clinical Health Psychology Service provides a range of interventions, including:

- Individual therapy for patients
- Consultation on cases or matters that might benefit from a psychological opinion
- One-off assessments (e.g. to assess suitability for complex, risky or lengthy medical procedures)
- Training for staff within physical health to improve psychological awareness, knowledge and skills
- Supervision for staff who have completed training in psychological skills
- Sign-posting to other services and self help materials

Individual therapy involves working in close collaboration with the patient to help make sense of and treat psychological problems. This can be intensive, both in terms of emotional energy and time commitment. Typically we would meet with someone once a week for an hour at a time for upwards of 12 sessions. Unfortunately there is as yet no magic psychology switch that we can flick to make physical symptoms, including those that are unexplained, disappear. Instead, our aim in therapy is to help people live well with their condition.

## **Making a referral**

If you believe that your patient could benefit from individual therapy and would be able to make the required commitment of time and effort, we would welcome a referral to our service. In the spirit of collaboration, as a first step please **discuss referral fully with them** and provide them with the Clinical Health Psychology Patient Information Sheet.

We recommend including the following information in your referral so it can be processed as quickly as possible.

- Patient name, CHI number, address and contact numbers
- Your name and contact details
- Brief summary of the medical status which may include stage of illness, level of functional impairment and impact on life.
- Reason for referral; what can Clinical Health Psychology add to the care of this person?
- A summary of other potentially complicating factors such as family or relationship problems, housing, employment and financial difficulties, and substance use
- Notification of risk to self or others
- Notification that the patient has consented to the referral and their expectations from Clinical Health Psychology
- Name of others involved in providing care including GP, secondary care services, and third sector services

## **Urgent and priority referrals**

We aim to prioritise cases where there is a pressing time frame, such as the approach of a particular medical treatment or progression of a terminal condition.

People who require urgent attention due to significant problems with their mental health – such that it puts themselves or others at risk - should be directed to the Crisis Mental Health Service for assessment.

## **What to expect once a referral has been made**

Referrals are discussed and allocated weekly. Once accepted, a letter will be sent to the patient advising their name has been added to the waiting list. We are fortunate that across the region our waiting times tend to be relatively short. There will then follow the offer of an assessment appointment. All correspondence is copied to you and other key people involved in their care. We will also write to you following the end of the assessment and once treatment is complete.

## **Further information**

If you have any questions or queries about our service please contact a member of the Clinical Health Psychology team on **01387 244495** (an answering machine service is available out of office hours) or at the Department of Psychological Services and Research, Cree West, Crichton Hall, Glencaple Road, Dumfries. DG1 4TG

The service is available Monday to Friday, 9.00am – 5.00pm