

# Assessment appointment

## West Lothian Psychological Therapies Service

Information for patients attending in person or by telephone



### Why have I been referred?

You have been referred to our team as we may be able to help you with your mental health difficulties. We are offering you an assessment appointment to help us make a judgement together about whether psychological therapy is likely to be helpful to you.

### What will happen at my assessment appointment?

Your assessment appointment may last up to one hour. You will speak to one of our qualified psychologists. We will ask about the main difficulties you are having and how they affect your life just now. We will ask you for some information about your background that is relevant. We may also ask about any treatment you have had before.

Your assessment may take place face-to-face at our department in St John's Hospital. In that case, please follow all the current guidance about infection control when attending hospital appointments. You can find this on the NHS Lothian website:



Scan the QR code using the camera on your smartphone to view the leaflet.

Alternatively, you can access the leaflet at this address:

[policyonline.nhslothian.scot/Policies/PatientInformation/COVID-19 Important Information on Attending Your Appointment.pdf](https://policyonline.nhslothian.scot/Policies/PatientInformation/COVID-19%20Important%20Information%20on%20Attending%20Your%20Appointment.pdf)

Alternatively, your assessment may take place by phone. In that case, please make sure you have a safe and quiet place to talk about confidential matters, where you won't be interrupted. Please make sure we have the correct phone number for you, and that your phone is charged.

We have enclosed a questionnaire to help us understand how you have been feeling. Please complete this in advance and have it to hand to discuss with your therapist.

### What happens next?

This assessment will help us decide what may be most helpful to you. The decision will be based on what we learn about you, and the evidence we have about the kinds of problems talking therapy can be helpful with. It is possible that we will recommend:

- Advice or guidance about self management
- Advice to your GP about how they could help you further
- Being placed on the waiting list for a group treatment
- Being placed on the waiting list for individual therapy
- Being directed towards another service which better fits your needs.

At the end of your appointment the therapist will discuss this recommendation with you. We will write to your GP (or referrer) to let them know what has been agreed. We can send you a letter to confirm the outcome of your appointment, please discuss this with the clinician that you see or speak with.

## How long might I have to wait?

If you are placed on a waiting list you will be contacted by letter and invited to make an appointment when your name reaches the top. Waiting times do vary, and we are aware that long waits can be difficult for patients. We are doing all we can to address this situation and aim to offer treatment as quickly as possible.

## What if I can't or don't attend my appointment?

Missed appointments increase waiting times. Please give us as much notice as possible if you are unable to keep your appointment so we can offer your appointment to someone else.

If you cancel your assessment appointment on more than 2 occasions, it is unlikely we will be able to offer you another appointment and you will be discharged back to the care of your GP.

If you do not attend an appointment and have not informed us, we reserve the right to discharge you back to your referrer. If you contact us within 4 weeks of the missed appointment you will be re-added to the assessment waiting list. After 4 weeks have passed since the missed appointment you will need a new referral from your GP.

## How do you manage the information I give you?

NHS Lothian uses an electronic system (TRAK) for recording patients' information including letters, reports and notes about contacts you have with different departments within the NHS, including emergency services.

The electronic system allows information to be shared more easily and safely between departments. However, please note that only those health care professionals directly involved in your care will be allowed to access your electronic notes on a 'need to know' basis. You can find out more about how we protect your data by going to:



Scan the QR code using the camera on your smartphone to view the information. Alternatively, you can access the information at this address:

[www.nhsllothian.scot/YourRights/DataProtection/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.nhsllothian.scot/YourRights/DataProtection/Pages/default.aspx)

In Psychological Therapy services, we write a summary of each session and add it to the electronic system. We may also keep more detailed paper notes which will not be added to the electronic system and will be destroyed when you have been discharged from the service. There may be certain things that you do not wish to be recorded in the electronic notes and if this is the case you can discuss this with your therapist.

All NHS staff are bound by strict rules of confidentiality. We will, however, need to make an exception to these rules if there are specific concerns about risk of harm to yourself or others, including children. We will also need to share information if there is a specific legal requirement to do so.

## Who can I contact about my appointment?

You can contact our office on **01506 523 615** (during office hours or leave a message) with any questions about your appointments with us. If you have any comments, feedback or complaints about your contact with the team please ask to speak to the Lead Psychologist.

Please note that we are **not** a crisis service. If you are in crisis you should contact your GP during opening hours or NHS 24 on 111 at other times. You may also find it helpful to contact Breathing Space (phone support for those whose mood is low and may feel suicidal) on 0800 83 85 87, or to review the advice and information on [westspace.org.uk](http://westspace.org.uk)

