

Initial Assessment for Plastic Surgery

Physical and Psychological Assessment

Information for patients

Introduction

You have been referred to this service because you are not happy with some aspect(s) of your body and you wish to consider plastic surgery as treatment. This leaflet provides some information about what you can expect from the assessment for plastic surgery.

Frequently Asked Questions

What will happen at the initial assessment?

There are two parts to the initial assessment. The first part involves a physical assessment. You may be asked to agree to photographs being taken by the medical photography department of the hospital. These photographs are for your medical records and to help the plastic surgeons assess your case. Depending on whether you meet criteria for the requested surgery, you will be invited to the second part which involves a psychological assessment. You can bring a friend or relative if you would find it helpful, but it is unsuitable to bring children to the assessment. The assessment may take up to 60 minutes.

When you arrive for your appointment in the department you will meet one of the psychologists or psychiatrists in our team for a psychological assessment. They will ask you questions about your concerns and how these affect your life. You may also be asked to complete some questionnaires.

Following the assessment, the members of our multi-disciplinary team, including a plastic surgeon, will meet to discuss your case. You will then be informed of the outcome of the assessment by letter. A letter will also be sent to your GP outlining the outcome of the assessment. This letter will include any concerns about your well-being. A copy will be kept in your hospital medical record. It can sometimes take several weeks for this process to be completed.

Why do I have to have a psychological assessment?

The Scottish Government has developed strict guidelines about when plastic surgery can be offered on the NHS for patients. The guidelines indicate that every patient attends for a psychological assessment. This is because these operations have both physical and psychological risks and we want to make sure we offer patients safe treatment. We also know that most people hope that surgery will make them feel happier and more self-confident. Some people do feel better after plastic surgery, but this is not the case for everyone. Some people **do not** feel better about their appearance after plastic surgery. So a key purpose of the psychological assessment is to understand the background to your concerns, whether surgery is likely to be beneficial or whether a different approach might be more helpful.

How can I prepare for the assessment?

The Scottish Government guidelines state that surgery will only be offered if your weight is within a healthy range. The reason for this is to reduce the surgical risks associated with increased weight. Your Body Mass Index (BMI) will therefore be calculated and if it is above 27 you are unlikely to be considered for surgery. If you are unsure if your weight is within a healthy range, please discuss this with your GP or visit <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-weight/bmi-calculator/>

Take some time to consider your reasons for wanting surgery, what you hope to gain from surgery, and what concerns you may have about surgery. You will have time to discuss these at the assessment.

What will happen next?

If surgery is thought to be the appropriate next step, an appointment to be assessed by a plastic surgeon will be arranged. The majority of patients referred to the plastic surgery service do not receive plastic surgery.

The psychologist or psychiatrist may recommend psychological therapy, such as Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) to help you overcome your appearance-related difficulties. This will be discussed with you at your assessment or in your letter. It is your decision whether you want to attend for psychological therapy.

Keeping your appointment

If you cannot keep your appointment, or have been given one that is unsuitable, please change it by phoning **01506 523 609**. Please note that this number is available Tuesday-Thursday 9am until 2pm. Outside of these times please leave a message. Your call will give someone else the chance to be seen and will help us keep waiting times to a minimum. If you are unable to attend and do not cancel your appointment in advance you will be discharged from this service.

Public transport and travel information

Bus details available from:

Lothian Buses on 0131 555 6363 www.lothianbuses.co.uk

Traveline Scotland on 08712002233 or www.travelinescotland.com

Train details available from:

National Rail Enquiries on 03457 484 950 or www.nationalrail.co.uk

Patient transport

Patient Transport will only be made available if you have a medical/clinical need. Telephone **0300 123 1236** *calls charged at local rate up to 28 days in advance to book, making sure you have your CHI Number available. Hard of hearing or speech Impaired? Use text relay: **18001-0300 123 1236*** (calls charged at local rate). To cancel patient transport, telephone 0800 389 1333 (Freephone 24 hr answer service).

Interpretation and translation

Your GP will inform us of any interpreting requirements you have before you come to hospital and we will provide an appropriate interpreter. If you are having this procedure as an existing in patient, staff will arrange interpreting support for you in advance of this procedure. This leaflet may be made available in a larger print, Braille or your community language.

Contact information

Psychology Led Plastic Surgery Service

Psychology Department
St John's Hospital
Livingston
West Lothian
EH54 6PP
Tel: **01506 523 609**

Useful websites

You can access the following websites for further information on plastic surgery:

- British Association of Plastic, Reconstructive and Aesthetic Surgeons:

www.bapras.org.uk/public/patient-information

- Royal College of Surgeons:

www.rcseng.ac.uk/patient-care/cosmetic-surgery/

- NHS

www.nhs.uk/livewell/cosmeticsurgery