

## Patient information

# Clinical Psychology Service for Paediatric Diabetes

### What is a clinical psychologist?

A clinical psychologist is trained to understand how people think, feel and behave. They work alongside medical and nursing staff and other members of the Paediatric Diabetes Team.

The role of the psychologist is to listen to everyone's concerns and help children and their families cope with difficulties that can come from having diabetes and receiving treatment. They will try to understand each family's individual situation and support them to make positive changes.

### Who is the clinical psychology service for?

The service is available to the families of all children and young people aged 0 - 18 (until their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday) who have diabetes and are seen by the team at the West Suffolk Hospital.

The clinical psychologist will aim to meet all patients with diabetes and their families at the time of diagnosis or shortly afterwards. You can book appointments directly with the psychologist in their regular clinics which are run at the same times as the diabetes MDT clinic.

Appointments can be for the whole family, just parents or carers, the young person on their own, or for siblings.

### Why is there a clinical psychologist in the team?

We know that young people living with diabetes and their families can often feel worried, sad, angry or frightened about managing the condition. At the same time they are juggling all the challenges of any other young person (exams, peer or family relationship issues, problems at school or college). Talking to a clinical psychologist can help you to understand what is going on and find new ways of coping.

## **What happens during the appointment?**

First appointments typically last 1 – 1½ hours. Usually the family would be seen all together to start with but the young person can be seen alone if they prefer. The psychologist will want to ask about you, your child and other family members, school, the impact that diabetes is having on your life, how you are all feeling and ask about things that are going well and not so well for your child and family. This information will be used to decide if further appointments will be helpful and who needs to be involved. The psychologist will only help if you and your child want them to and this will be discussed at the first appointment.

You might be seen for just one session or you could be offered a series of weekly or fortnightly appointments depending on what you need. Follow up appointments are usually on Tuesday morning or Wednesday afternoon in the Children's Outpatient Department and are typically 45 minutes to an hour long.

## **What can the psychologist help with?**

A clinical psychologist can help with a lot of different kinds of problems such as:

- Dealing with upsetting news
- Managing strong emotions such as fear, sadness or anger
- Supporting you to live with and manage your diabetes
- Coping with treatments that you feel worried about such as fear of needles
- Managing difficult behaviour
- Dealing with feelings related to having diabetes like feeling different
- Problems getting on with other people or worries about school
- How diabetes affects family life and the impact on siblings
- Difficulties sticking to your treatment plan

As part of your annual review you will receive a questionnaire on emotional wellbeing that the psychologist will score and may contact you after to offer an appointment to discuss things further.

Appointments will also be offered as part of the assessment process for pump therapy or if you are having difficulties with gaining control over your diabetes.

## **How do we make an appointment?**

If you would like to talk to the clinical psychologist you can ask any member of the diabetes team at your regular clinic appointments. The psychologist may be available to join you to discuss this during your clinic appointment or details of your first appointment may be sent

to you by post. You can also book appointments directly at the Children's Outpatients desk or by telephone by contacting the paediatric psychology secretary on the number below.

## **What happens next?**

At the end of your first appointment the psychologist will write a letter for you as a record of what was discussed and to your GP to tell them what you have been finding difficult and what we can try to do to help. This will also be shared with other members of the paediatric diabetes team as required. You may also be asked for permission to share the information with school or other people who might be able to support you and your family.

## **Who to contact?**

For more information contact:

PA to Senior Paediatric Clinical Psychologist      01284 712627

*If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the website for AccessAble (formerly DisabledGo)*

<https://www.accessable.co.uk>

