



University Hospitals Bristol
NHS Foundation Trust

Patient information service
Psychological health services

Psychology services for paediatric cardiology



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The cardiac psychology service

Having a baby or child with a heart condition, or being told during pregnancy that your baby has a heart condition, will feel different for each family or individual. There may be times when you have questions, worries or concerns. As part of the team, we have medical doctors, cardiac nurse specialists, play specialists, ward nurses, and clinical psychologists who can all help with different areas.

The cardiac psychology service has a number of roles, including:

- Helping children and families plan, prepare and cope with the experience of cardiac surgery and cardiac catheterisation. This can involve:
 - Providing support through pre-admission clinics, admission (on ward 32 or the paediatric intensive care unit), and after discharge.
 - Supporting and preparing children if they are anxious about procedures such as blood tests, cannulas being inserted and surgery.
 - Helping parents find ways to talk to their children about surgery.
 - Supporting children and families after surgery and helping to think about whether longer term support is needed going forward.
 - Supporting children in preparing for chest scars or managing any feelings about their scar after surgery.
 - Supporting parents and siblings with their own feelings about surgery.
- Supporting children and their families with the experience of being in hospital.
- Supporting parents to bond with a newborn baby in hospital.

- Helping children and families adjust to living with a heart condition and managing the demands of the illness and its treatment more generally.
- Talking to parents about how to support siblings who have a brother or sister with a heart condition. Siblings can have a range of reactions and feelings and it can take time for them to make sense of what is happening.
- Supporting parents who have an unborn baby diagnosed with a heart condition during their pregnancy.
- Providing bereavement support and linking families in with longer term support if needed.

If you have concerns about how you or your child are managing, we can help to think about whether the psychology service can provide the right support for you at the moment.

How do I arrange to see a clinical psychologist?

There are three clinical psychologists who work in paediatric cardiac services – Dr Vanessa Garratt, Dr Nell Ellison and Dr Joanna Latham.

You can ask any of the paediatric cardiology or fetal medicine staff to refer you, or you can speak to one of the clinical psychologists directly. You may see us at a surgical or pre-admission clinic, or if you are in hospital, we are often on the ward. Alternatively, you can contact us on the number below.

We are based at:

Psychological health services
Level 6, Bristol Royal Hospital for Children
University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust
Upper Maudlin Street, Bristol, BS2 8BJ

Tel: **0117 342 8168**

What happens when I meet with them?

We try to be flexible with our involvement to suit families. We can meet with family members individually or together, depending on what you prefer.

If you are currently in hospital, we can meet you next to your child's bed, in the quiet room, or at another private place in the hospital. The psychologist will let you know when they are available to come and see you.

If you are not currently in hospital, we will telephone you to arrange an outpatient appointment, or we can arrange to have an appointment over the telephone or in our virtual clinic. We have an outpatient clinic in Bristol on Monday and Wednesday mornings, or a telephone / virtual clinic on Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons.

What is a clinical psychologist?

Clinical psychologists use an understanding of how people think, feel and behave, and of the psychological impact of living with long-term medical conditions, to help children and families with the kind of difficulties described in this leaflet. We have training in a variety of psychological approaches that can help when people are having difficult thoughts or feelings that are affecting their wellbeing, and making it harder to manage their, or their child's, medical condition and do the things they want to do in life. Clinical psychologists do not prescribe medication (such as anti-depressants).

I was given this guide but am not sure why

Everyone who has contact with the cardiology team is given this leaflet, so that you are aware of our service should you wish to use it – either now, or in the future. If it was suggested that you might want to meet with the psychologist, but you feel after reading this information that you do not want to have an appointment with them at this time, please tell the member of the team who gave you this leaflet. The decision to use the cardiac psychology service is entirely up to you, and if you decide not to, it will not affect your child's care in any way.

What happens to the information I share with the clinical psychologist?

The clinical psychologists are part of your child's care team. This means that some information may be shared with other staff who are closely involved with your child's care, if it is appropriate and helpful to do so. If there is something that you tell the psychologist that you do not want them to share with anyone in the team, please let them know. They will always try to ensure that information is kept private when necessary. However, if there is reason to think that there is a risk of harm to you or others, this information may need to be passed on to other people. The psychologist will talk to you before passing on information, whenever possible.

What if I am not satisfied with the service I receive?

If you have concerns about the service you receive from the psychologist, please discuss it first with them or another member of the cardiology team.

If this does not address your concerns or you do not feel able to do so, please contact the head of the Psychological Health Services Cardiac, Critical care, Pain and Neuropsychology cluster:

Psychological Health Services
Level 6
Bristol Royal Hospital for Children
Paul O’Gorman Building
Upper Maudlin Street
Bristol
BS2 8JB

Telephone: **0117 342 8168**
9.00am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

or

You can contact the LIAISE team on **0117 342 8065**. This is a service that aims to improve the experience of patients and families at the Bristol Royal Hospital for Children. They aim to help the hospital understand and resolve any problems you experience promptly, similar to a conventional PALS service.

or

The patient support and complaints team (PSCT)

Telephone: **0117 342 1050**

Notes and queries

Please note that if for any reason you would value a second opinion concerning your diagnosis or treatment, you are entirely within your rights to request this.

The first step would usually be to discuss this with the doctor or other lead clinician who is responsible for your care.

Smoking is the primary cause of preventable illness and premature death. For support in stopping smoking contact **Smokefree Bristol** on **0117 922 2255**.

As well as providing clinical care, our Trust has an important role in research. This allows us to discover new and improved ways of treating patients.

While your child is under our care, you may be approached about them taking part in research. To find out more please visit: www.uhbristol.nhs.uk/research-innovation or call the research and innovation team on **0117 342 0233**.

For access to other patient leaflets and information please go to the following address:

www.uhbristol.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/information-for-patients/.

Hospital switchboard: 0117 923 0000



Minicom: 0117 934 9869



www.uhbristol.nhs.uk



For an interpreter or signer please contact the telephone number on your appointment letter.



For this leaflet in large print, audio or PDF format, please email patientleaflets@uhbristol.nhs.uk

