Information for patients

The epilepsy psychotherapy service
**Why have I been referred for Psychotherapy?**

You have been referred for Psychotherapy and may be wondering whether this can help you with the problems you are experiencing. Many people with epilepsy struggle with feelings of anxiety, depression and low self-esteem and can sometimes feel isolated. Other areas in your life, such as relationships and employment may be problems for you too. Psychotherapy can help you to work through these types of problems. Together with your medication, psychotherapy may give you a better chance to improve your life.

**What can I expect?**

Your first appointment with your therapist will involve them carrying out an assessment of your situation. Together you will create a picture of the things that concern you. By doing this, you will become more aware of the exact problems you are experiencing and have a chance to explore them further.

At your assessment appointment you will be offered the change to contract for 4 to 8 sessions. However some people may need more or less sessions than this but you can review this with your therapist as you go along.

You will work with the same therapist for all your sessions.

**Continuing therapy**

Once you have decided to commit to therapy, it is important that you attend regularly on an ongoing basis for the therapy to work.

Most of our therapists work from an **Integrative** approach. This is a very flexible form of therapy because it recognises the use of other therapeutic models such as cognitive, psychodynamic, person-centred and attempts to blend them in to an approach that can be then tailored for each individual.
This kind of therapy encourages you to explore your physical symptoms and your emotions by relating them to both current and past experiences in your life. Over time you and your therapist would aim to build an open and trusting relationship by talking together. Through this you may become able to recognise and process the impact of difficult events and situations, improving your ability to deal with the challenges of daily life.

We also offer **Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)**. This type of therapy will help you to explore new ways of learning to make your quality of life better. It is a short term therapy which aims to help you identify the areas in your life which are troubling you. This therapy will help you to explore the links between your thoughts, behaviours, physical symptoms and your feelings.

Once the problems are named, the therapist can help you to focus on ways to work on these problems by learning new ways of dealing with them. This may include:

- Self-monitoring through keeping diaries about your thoughts, lifestyle, seizures and medication
- Relaxation techniques
- Active problem-solving where you will learn to cope better with daily life-stressors instead of worrying about them.

Whatever the problems, you will be given help to find ways to work on them.

**How do I get an appointment?**

Once you have been referred for psychotherapy, you will receive a call offering you an assessment appointment. Appointments are during the day and we will do our best to try to find a time to suit you. You are welcome to bring someone with you to your appointment.
What do I do if I cannot attend my appointment?
There is a large demand for psychotherapy so please try to keep to your appointment if you can. If you cannot attend we would appreciate as much notice as possible (at least 2 days notice) so that the appointment can be offered to someone else. If you do not provide enough notice the time may be taken from your session allocation.

To inform us of any changes please call:
0114 271 3928 or alternatively 0114 271 1512.

What if psychotherapy isn't right for me?
Occasionally, it happens that psychotherapy may not be right for someone. In such cases we will try to suggest other sources of help.

What about my medication?
For advice on medication you will need to contact your Epilepsy Nurse or Consultant. Your therapist is not medically trained and cannot advise you about medication.