

Psychiatry at The London Centre

One of the services which The London Centre offers is Psychiatric Assessment and Treatment, including a prescription service for those who would benefit from medication. Here is some information about what you can expect from Psychiatric input, where it may be beneficial, how it works alongside Psychology and some answers to some frequently asked questions.

What is a Psychiatrist?

Psychiatrists are medically trained doctors who have chosen to specialise in mental health. Within the field of eating disorders, Psychiatrists can diagnose, evaluate and monitor medical risk, prescribe medication for any relevant comorbidities such as depression or anxiety, provide an opinion on treatment planning, and assist with stepping up to a more intensive form of treatment if required. Whilst not all clients will need, or want, medication, for many medication may be an important part of their treatment planning. Additionally where physical or medical risk is present, it may be important to have someone have oversight into this in order to make recommendations to help ensure your safety.

Why do I need to see a Psychiatrist?

If physical or psychological risk is present, or if there is a level of complexity to your presentation involving a number of different difficulties, we may recommend that you see a Psychiatrist. You are able to see a Psychiatrist internally or externally to the clinic, or within the NHS if appropriate and we are able to help with referrals if you choose not to see a Psychiatrist at The London Centre. Additionally if you are on medication or would like to consider medication options, it may be beneficial to do this through a Psychiatrist rather than via your GP.

There are a range of medications that can be prescribed to help people with mental health difficulties and a Psychiatrist will be able to talk you through all of the medication options available to you and either prescribe a medication for you or arrange for your NHS GP to prescribe them. Where medication has been prescribed it is always helpful to offer a follow up appointment to check that the medication is working for you, however unlike other clinics this can be done in a 15 minute telephone appointment to save on costs. Very often there will be a period of monitoring and dose adjustment as many of these medications take a while to reach their full effect. Where medication isn't working for you, either due to unwanted side effects, or because you aren't seeing the desired improvements, there are usually a number of alternatives which we will help you consider so that you find the one for you.

What will my first appointment with a Psychiatrist involve?

In your initial appointment, our Psychiatrist will carry out a full assessment of your current difficulties, as well as the history of these difficulties. The initial assessment is very comprehensive to enable us to make adequate recommendations regarding risk, treatment and medication. Treatment recommendations will almost always recommend a combination of psychological, dietetic, or occupational therapy treatment, and may or may not involve medication options. With your

permission your Psychiatrist will also be in touch with your GP in order to ensure that your NHS doctor is aware of the recommendations made. It is likely that they will also ask your GP to conduct a number of physical health monitoring tests such as bloods, and ECG or DEXA scan if necessary.

Psychiatrist vs Psychologist - how do I know which one is right for me?

Ultimately, it comes down to the severity of your condition, and whether you are likely to need medication. Talking therapy will almost always be a part of your treatment therefore we often recommend an assessment appointment with a Psychologist first, and from there we will recommend that you see a Psychiatrist if we feel this would be a helpful part of your treatment.

Frequently Asked Questions

How often will we be seen?

The answer to this question is usually as often as feels helpful. This will be thought about during the first meeting you have with your Psychiatrist and a realistic timescale in terms of frequency, cost and medication needed will be agreed.

How long does a session last?

We would recommend that an initial Psychiatric assessment last 60 minutes for clients aged 18 and over. For clients aged 16-18, we recommend a 90 minute family assessment which also allows time both with the client alone, and the family/carer on their own if they feel that would be beneficial.

Is Psychiatry a standalone treatment, or do we need other sessions too?

Our recommendation is that your Psychiatric appointments are alongside Psychology, Dietetics or Occupational Therapy as talking therapy, primarily Enhanced Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT-E), is the leading evidence based treatment for eating disorders, meaning it has been shown to be the most effective treatment for adult clients.

How old do you need to be to see a Psychiatrist?

Our Psychiatrists are able to see adults and young people from the age of 16 and above and families or carers are welcome at consultations along with their young person.

Can your Psychiatrist carry out ADHD assessment and prescribe ADHD medication?

Unfortunately ADHD assessment, review and prescribing isn't currently a service we are able to offer.

How does prescribing work and how will I get my medication?

Our Psychiatrists use an e-prescribe service with Pharmaciege. A prescription (if required) will be written for you during your consultation and sent digitally directly to Pharmaciege. You will shortly afterwards receive a secure payment link via email directly from Pharmaciege. Once you have made

payment for your medication, (there is a charge for your medication via this service but delivery is free nationally, however same day deliveries outside London do carry a fee), Pharmacierge will ask you to confirm the correct delivery information and your medication will be delivered to you by courier as soon as possible.

If appropriate your Psychiatrist will pre-authorise a repeat prescription for you. They are however not able to prescribe any medication not initiated or being reviewed by them.

For more information about this e-prescription service and for answers to FAQs regarding prescriptions, please visit <https://www.pharmacierge.com/faqs>

Once you are established on a stable dose of medication, our Psychiatrists, in most cases, can hand the ongoing prescribing back to your GP.

Who are our Psychiatrists and when do they work?

Dr Christina Barras is our Consultant Psychiatrist and has been specialising in Eating Disorders for over 8 years. Alongside her role at The London Centre, she also works as a Consultant Psychiatrist in the NHS. Christina is based within our Central Clinic and offers a Monday and a Saturday clinic each month. She also offers online follow-up appointments on weekday evenings.

Contact Details

Please do contact us or ask your clinician if you have any other questions that we haven't answered here.



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