

## Contact Us

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## PALS

To make a comment, raise a concern or make a complaint,  
please contact the Trust's Patient Advice and Liaison Service  
(PALS)

Tel: 01225 362900  
Free phone: 0800 073 1778  
Email: [awp.pals@nhs.net](mailto:awp.pals@nhs.net)

## Other formats and languages

If you need this information in other formats  
(such as large print, audio, Braille) or in another  
language, please call the PALS number.

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Avon and Wiltshire  
Mental Health Partnership  
NHS Trust

## Clinical Psychology

### Wickham Unit

Information for service users about  
what clinical psychologists do and how  
they may work with you  
at Wickham Unit

**You matter, we care**

Many of the people we see are not sure what to expect when they first meet with a psychologist, so we have written this leaflet to give you some information about clinical psychology. We hope it is helpful and answers some of your questions. If there is anything else you want to know please ask your named nurse or a member of the psychology team.

**Psychologists at Wickham are:**

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**What is a psychologist?**

Clinical psychologists are trained in the assessment and treatment of a range of difficulties that can occur at any time in a person's life. These difficulties can relate to problems with: emotions; relationships; adverse life events; behaviour; offending; unusual experiences; drugs and/or alcohol use.

We are not medical doctors and will not prescribe medication. Our work is focussed on how people think, feel and behave.

**How may psychology help?**

Psychology can help with your recovery by working with you to understand what led to you coming into mental health services. This may help identify some of your needs and the support that you may need to reach your full potential and live a fulfilling life.

## Confidentiality

Clinical psychologists work as part of the multidisciplinary team at Wickham Unit. They share important information with the team to provide you with the best care. This may be done verbally and/or in writing. They may also need to let nursing staff know how each session has gone in general, so you can get the support you need.

This means that some of the issues that you talk about in sessions might be discussed with other members of the team. This is particularly relevant to issues that concern the safety of others and your own safety.

Wherever possible, the psychologist will let you know what information is shared with the team as well as other services outside Wickham, who may be involved in your future care.

**For more information, please talk to a member of staff or to one of the psychologists.**

## How can a psychologist help me?

Some people find it hard to express difficult feelings, so they may act in ways that cause problems for themselves or others. Clinical psychology can help you to improve your understanding of yourself and can teach you more helpful ways of responding to difficult and stressful situations.

A psychologist may help you to:

- learn new skills and strategies for managing difficult feelings, emotions and situations
- understand your thoughts and feelings, and how past events relate to you feeling “stuck” and unable to make changes in your life
- increase your self-awareness
- improve your social relationships
- reduce your risk of offending
- learn ways to keep yourself safe
- stop, or reduce, drug and alcohol use
- develop skills for dealing with problems which may arise on the ward and later on in your life.

You and your psychologist will agree the aims of your therapy. A psychologist may not be able to solve all your problems for you, but they will work with you to find

a new way forward.

### **What will happen in psychology sessions?**

During your first few meetings, the psychologist will ask you about your difficulties, so that you can both decide whether seeing a psychologist would be useful.

We will usually ask questions about how long you have had your problems, how they affect you and what you do to cope. We may ask you about your family and/or other people who are supportive to you, as it is important to think about who can help with your treatment goals.

You could be asked to fill in questionnaires about your circumstances and feelings, or to complete tasks which look at memory and thinking skills.

The psychologist will talk to you about what they are asking you to do and why.

After the first few meetings, you or the psychologist may decide that it would not be helpful to meet again. If this happens the psychologist will try to help you think about other options that may be useful.

### **Regular sessions**

You and your psychologist will agree on when, where and how often to meet.

These sessions are generally held between 9am and 5pm on weekdays.

Each appointment lasts up to 50 minutes, but can be less if you choose.

It will be up to you and your psychologist to decide how often you will be seen, for example, weekly, fortnightly or once a month.

The work will progress at a pace you feel comfortable with.