

Introducing the Psychology Team working at the NSIC

DR JANE DUFF

Consultant Clinical Psychologist
Head of NSIC Clinical Psychology Department



Jane has worked in the department since 1997 and is the Head of the Clinical Psychology Service at the NSIC
Jane's working days are Monday to Thursday.

DR ELIZABETH POUNDS-CORNISH

Principal Clinical Psychologist



Liz joined the department in 2007 and works Mondays, Wednesdays & Thursdays

DR ALEXANDRA TYLER

Clinical Psychologist



Allie joined the department in 2019 and works Monday - Wednesday

HANNAH BURTON

Psychological Therapist



Hannah joined the department in 2021 and works full time Monday-Friday

KIM BROOM

Family Counsellor



Kim joined the department in 2018 and works Tuesdays & Thursdays

The Department has a range of professional's expert in psychological care including Clinical Psychologists, Psychological Therapists and Counsellors. As part of their professional practice, they are required to receive clinical supervision, as is common amongst many healthcare professionals. The focus is on reviewing the work they do with a patient to ensure quality of service and the professional's own development. If you have concerns about this or other aspects of confidentiality, please discuss with your treating psychologist/psychological therapist/counsellor or the NSIC Head of Clinical Psychology.

Clinical Psychology Trainees and Counselling Psychologists are often on placement with the Department, either seeing and supporting patients, or involved with research.

The department is also supported by Clinical Psychology Assistants who contribute to clinical, service improvement and research/audit work.

For ease in this leaflet, we have referred to Clinical Psychologists, Psychological Therapists and Counsellors by the generic term Psychologist as the application of psychological knowledge to people and their families following spinal cord injury is their common and unifying background experience.

What to expect when receiving psychological support at the NSIC?

Psychologists are experts in providing emotional support to help people to think through and manage the consequences of spinal cord injury (SCI). The leaflet “Emotional health after SCI” talks about the kinds of feelings that are commonly experienced, how we would work with you, patient experience of our service and tips for things they found helpful. Psychologists talk to people about how they are coping now, what has helped someone to cope and to identify different strategies and approaches.

The team works with inpatients and their families at the NSIC. At the first meeting, the Psychologist will talk with you about aspects you are finding particularly challenging and want support with. As part of our team we have a Family Counsellor. You could ask for your family members to be supported by them also. We take a collaborative and practical approach, which involves you and the Psychologist jointly working on your concerns with the aim of increasing your sense of being able to cope with the sudden, and sometimes overwhelming, changes that a SCI can bring.

We will always try to see you in a private and confidential space so you can raise any concerns you have. Sometimes due to space constraints this can be difficult, we will discuss with you options or rearrange the appointment if preferred.

We work alongside the team at the NSIC and will discuss with you about confidentiality the first time we meet. Usually the detail and specifics of a discussion is confidential unless we have safety concerns for you or others. After each session we provide a summary on the NSIC electronic notes and share information to help the team to support you. We have found working together with our MDT colleagues helps improved the outcome for you. There is also a set of paper notes which can be used to store information that is personally sensitive, please discuss this with the Psychologist during the first meeting or anytime if you have concerns.

The Psychologist will discuss with you goals that will be shared with the team at goal planning meetings. For example, if you and the Psychologist are working

on increasing your confidence in going out it might be that a first goal would be for you and your family to go to the main restaurant in the hospital (outside of the NSIC), then perhaps you and an Occupational Therapist (OT) to go to ASDA, with a goal after this to shop in town or have a meal at a restaurant.



Sometimes your Psychologist might also be your Keyworker for the Stoke Mandeville Needs Assessment and Goal Planning Programme, just as an OT or Physiotherapist (PT) would be. If this is the case, the Psychologist will be clear about when they are being your Keyworker and discuss with you in advance any concerns you may have. More information about this programme is available in the leaflet “Rehabilitation and Goal Planning at the NSIC”.



There is a lot of research to demonstrate that psychological / mental health is interconnected with physical health. Sometimes our work with you might also include joint sessions with other staff, like a PT or OT, or SCI charities. We would ask your permission before introducing you to people not employed directly by the NSIC.

As a team we provide sessions on the Patient Education Programme, Family and Friends day and sometimes patient groups. Psychologists are experts who are qualified to work with a range of concerns, mood and mental health, wellbeing, pain and head injury and can use self-help leaflets alongside our

work on all of these and other areas, please ask us if you would like more information.

It is important to us that we stay at the forefront of psychological care and knowledge following SCI so we can provide the best service possible. We are active in research and have written about 150 papers and books with international leaders in SCI. We have researchers that work under our supervision from Universities. If we are involved in a research study, we will approach you separately to see if you are interested in participating. Taking part or deciding not to will be independent to our work and will not impact on our treatment and service for you.

The Stoke Mandeville Spinal Needs Assessment and Goal Planning Programme is co-ordinated by us and part of your service. This programme aims to ensure that people get the most from the rehabilitation process by specifically identifying and addressing the individual needs of each person to assist them in learning to effectively manage the consequences of their injury. The Needs Assessment Checklist provides a basis for Goal Planning and enables us to review the programme and improve the quality of rehabilitation activity and outcome. Your anonymised medical data, that is/was collected as part of this routine care, may be used to improve patient care and for future research. As it is anonymised data no one can tell it is your data being used and you will not be informed of the results. All research will be reviewed by a national approval body called the Health Research Authority and by your local NHS Trust before it begins.

How do I get to see a Psychologist?

Any member of your clinical team can refer you to the Psychology Service, or you can also request to be seen for yourself or for your family member. As mentioned, the Psychologist will talk with you about how you are feeling and coping and assess the nature and extent of any difficulties you may have. Research and experience have shown that discussing these in a confidential environment, focussed on your individual needs, helps people to cope and adjust in the long term to their injury.

Please remember that this leaflet is intended as general information only. We aim to make the information as up to date and accurate as possible, but please note that it is subject to change. Please therefore always check specific advice on any concerns you may have with your doctor.

How can I help reduce healthcare associated infections?

Infection prevention & control is important to the well-being of our patients and for that reason we have infection prevention & control procedures in place. Keeping your hands clean is an effective way of preventing the spread of infections. Please follow our infection prevention and control guidelines when visiting our healthcare sites. Further information is available on our website.

Patient Advice Sheet

If you would like a copy of this information on audiotape, in large print or translated, please call the Patient Advice Liaison Service on 01296 831120 or email bht.pals@nhs.net