



Child psychology services at GOSH

This information sheet explains the work of child psychology services at Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH), who is involved and how they can help children and families. The aims of the service are to assess and treat children and families so that they are better equipped to cope with illness and hospital treatment. The service also supports the health care team in caring for children.

What is the child psychology service?

It is a team of paediatric clinical psychologists, all of whom have higher qualifications in psychology and many years' experience. They have in-depth knowledge of normal and abnormal child development and great understanding of how children and families function together. They are able to use a range of assessment methods and always consider the child as part of the wider family picture.

How can the child psychology service help?

The service can be split into three main areas: assessment, treatment and consultation.

Assessment

The child psychology service can:

- Assess a child's behaviour and emotions to build up a picture of how he or she functions within the family.
- Use various methods to gauge a child's developmental stage and measure any learning difficulties.
- See how a child is coping with illness or hospital stay.

Treatment

The child psychology service can:

- Offer treatment to both inpatients and outpatients to help with problems that have arisen from a child's illness or hospital stay.



- Work with children who are having trouble sticking to their treatment schedule.
- Help families who have to make difficult decisions about their child's treatment.
- Use specific programmes to help with the impact of illness or disability on the child and family.

Consultation

The child psychology service can:

- Offer help and advice to the wider health care team at GOSH about a child's emotions and behaviour during a hospital stay.
- Support staff members who are experiencing problems linked to a child's illness.
- Work with community psychology services to enable children to continue being supported once they have left GOSH.

How can I ask the child psychology service to help?

Any member of your child's health care team can ask a psychologist to get involved. This will usually be the psychologist attached to your child's ward but others can also be called in if needed. If you think you and your child would benefit from input from a child psychologist, please talk to your doctor or nurse in the first instance.

Research

The child psychology service carries out a great deal of research. You and your child may be asked to help but you do not have to do so. Your decision will not affect your child's care in any way, now or in the future. All research projects have to comply with our Research Governance Framework and must be agreed by an independent Research Ethics Committee before it starts. For more information, please see our leaflet *Research at GOSH and ICH*, which is available on our website or on display around the hospital.

Teaching

You and your child may be asked if you mind doctors, nurses and other professionals in training being present. They may also take part in caring for your child, under direct supervision of a trained member of staff. If you are not happy with this, please speak to the department or ward manager. This will not affect your child's care in any way.



What do I need to know about information sharing and confidentiality?

We recognise that you may sometimes want to speak to us about certain matters in confidence. We will always tell your child's doctors and nurses that we have met you. However, we will ask for your permission to pass on any other information.

The exception to this is when there is a concern that a child may be at risk of harm and we would then have a responsibility to share information to ensure that child's safety. If professionals within the hospital have concerns of this nature about your child they have a duty to inform local social services.

Social services will then have a statutory responsibility to investigate all such concerns. Professionals will aim to keep you fully informed and involved, whilst ensuring that your child's need for safety remains the most important factor in their work.

You may be aware that patients and those with parental responsibility have the right to see their records. If you wish to gain access to records kept by members of the psychosocial team, in the first instance, please seek advice from the relevant professional about how to begin this process. Alternately please see the leaflet *Information held about your child*.

Notes

Compiled by the Paediatric Psychology Service
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