



Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Foundation Trust: Information for Families

# Spinal Surgery Clinical Psychology Service

**This information sheet from Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH) explains about the clinical psychology service for children and young people having spinal surgery.**

## What is a Clinical Psychologist?

The Clinical Psychologist works as part of the Spinal Surgery multi-disciplinary team. The Spinal Surgery Clinical Psychologist is available to offer support to children, young people and families at any point on the spinal surgery pathway - from when spinal surgery is being considered, during a hospital admission and/or following spinal surgery.

## How can a Clinical Psychologist help?

The Spinal Surgery Clinical Psychologist is available to offer support around specific anxieties about the spinal operation, behavioural difficulties or any other emotional need related to your child's health or the proposed operation. For example, seeing a psychologist can be useful when:

- You have difficult decisions to make about scoliosis treatment options
- You or your child have worries about having spinal surgery or having an anaesthetic.
- Your child finds it difficult to cope

during medical procedures or with managing pain

- You or your child need psychological support around managing their scoliosis or associated medical condition in day to day life
- You or your child are struggling to cope with the impact of scoliosis treatment

## How can I see a Clinical Psychologist?

If you would like to meet with a Clinical Psychologist, you can ask your Consultant Spinal Surgeon for a referral or contact one of the Spinal Clinical Nurse Specialists on 020 7813 8238 who can make a referral.

## What should we expect when seeing a Clinical Psychologist?

At the first meeting, you will be given the chance to talk about the difficulties that have brought you to see a psychologist, and how these are affecting family life. We will also ask your child about their interests, hobbies, friends, home and school life. We may ask them to play



games or do some drawings. This meeting will help you and the psychologist decide together whether the kind of psychological input we can offer will be useful to you.

Please let us know if you need an interpreter and we can arrange this free service for you.

## **Are our discussions with the psychologist confidential?**

Information within the psychology appointments are shared on a 'need to know' basis with your child's doctors and the medical team involved in your child's

care. This may sometimes involve local health services. This means that key points will be shared, however, full details of the sessions will not normally be discussed. This is to ensure holistic care is provided to your child and the relevant medical team members are informed of all aspects of your child's wellbeing. Any detailed notes made by the psychologist will be kept separately from your child's medical notes.

When there is a concern that a child or adult may be at risk of harm the psychologist has a duty to share this information with relevant professionals in order to ensure their safety. Where at all possible, this will be discussed with you first.

### **Notes**

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Compiled by the Spinal Surgery team  
in collaboration with the Child and Family Information Group

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