

The Portman Clinic

**PATIENT
INFORMATION**

January 2008



You have received an appointment to be seen at our clinic and may have some questions before coming for that appointment. This leaflet aims to answer some of these questions.

What is the Portman Clinic?

The Portman Clinic is an outpatient National Health Service psychotherapy clinic located in a large residential house, 5 minutes walk from either Swiss Cottage or Finchley Road tube stations. The Clinic is for people who suffer with problems from criminal or violent behaviour or from disturbing sexual behaviour or experiences.

Our services are available to everyone regardless of race, culture, sexual orientation, class, gender, age, religion or ability. We are committed to providing services for people who may be excluded by others because of their past or present behaviour or their sexual preferences. It is part of our approach to think about these aspects of people's lives in a respectful and sensitive way.

Why do people come to the Portman Clinic?

You may have been referred to the Clinic as a result of seeing your GP or following contact with a psychiatrist, probation officer, social worker, psychologist or other professional person. Or, you may have contacted the Clinic directly yourself. Attending the Clinic gives you the opportunity to discuss your problems and be given an expert opinion about how you may best be helped.

Who works at the Portman Clinic?

The clinical staff at the Portman Clinic come from a range of professions and include psychiatrists, psychologists, child and adolescent psychotherapists, social workers, probation officers and nurses. All have backgrounds in mental health and/or forensic work, and have had extensive training in psychoanalytic psychotherapy.

What should I expect from my first appointment?

The first few appointments are to get a fuller picture of you and your difficulties. We would then think with you about what to do next. We may suggest treatment at the Clinic or we may suggest treatment or care elsewhere that may suit you better.

If psychotherapy treatment is recommended what should I expect?

Psychotherapy is a 'talking' treatment and takes place either one-to-one with a clinician or in a group with others and a clinician. If appropriate, we also see couples together. Sessions are on a regular basis (usually weekly) and last 50 minutes or longer for group sessions. Problems are often complicated and treatment takes time. You will have come to the clinic because you have experienced long-standing difficulties and you should therefore expect psychotherapy to continue for a long time, sometimes years, to gain benefit. The families of children being seen will also be offered appointments though not necessarily on a weekly basis.

The clinician will listen carefully to whatever you wish to discuss and will talk with you in a respectful way about your difficulties. He or she will be trying to understand things with you rather than giving you advice or telling you what you should do. It will be up

to you to talk about those matters that you are concerned about. Many people find that being able to talk about disturbing thoughts and painful emotions eventually brings relief and understanding. Coming to understand yourself better through talking in this way may help to free you from self-destructive ways of feeling, thinking and behaving.

In a therapy session you are invited to say whatever comes into your mind. The therapist will listen and attend to you, and will think together with you about your difficulties and concerns. The therapist may not speak as much as somebody might in an ordinary conversation, but they will be thinking about you and what you have said. It is helpful to let the therapist know any feelings that you have about your experience of the meeting.

Psychotherapy by its nature can affect people strongly and will at times be upsetting. However, knowing that you can see the clinician on a regular basis may make this more bearable. Because psychotherapy is at times distressing and frustrating, our experience is that it is not usually suitable for people who regularly abuse alcohol or drugs to try to escape from their distress.

If you have further questions about what you might expect during the treatment please ask the clinician you are coming to see.

What information will I be asked to provide?

We will ask you for your address, details of your ethnic origin and your GP's name and address before you come for your first appointment. We will not usually make contact with your GP if you ask us not to. His or her details are required however to ensure that your treatment is funded appropriately according to current NHS regulations. If we do not have this information there may be a delay in seeing you. Once the funding is arranged, and this is usually straightforward, we aim to offer you the first appointment within 13 weeks; in practice this is usually 6 to 8 weeks. At the same time we will also send you a questionnaire which is used to assess and improve our services. The person who sees you will not see this questionnaire.

Any information we hold on you is protected by the Data Protection Act and is held in confidence. We will use it only to manage your care and our own services.

Confidentiality

In this Clinic we attach particular importance to confidentiality. If circumstances arise where there seems to be a very good reason for information about you to be shared with other professionals the matter will normally be discussed with you first. If you then do not want information to be shared, your wish will be respected unless there is a strong clinical reason not to do so. When permission has been given, it is our practice to send a letter to your GP and/or referrer periodically, confirming your continued attendance at the Clinic. If you are concerned about this or any aspect of confidentiality please discuss this in your first appointment or at any time when you are attending the Clinic.

Where do I go when I arrive at the Clinic?

The Portman Clinic entrance is at No 8 Fitzjohns Avenue. When you arrive please report to the receptionist who will inform the clinician that you have arrived. You will be asked to wait in the waiting-room. So that your privacy is protected, it is the name of the clinician that you have an appointment with that will be called out when he/she is free to see you, rather than your name being called out.

How do I confirm, change or cancel an appointment?

Please call the Clinic on 020 8938 2600. You will speak to a secretary who will be able to help you.

Fax: 020 7447 3748

E-mail: Portman@tavi-port.nhs.uk

Are there facilities for patients with disabilities?

The Tavistock Clinic and the Monroe Family Assessment Service are wheelchair accessible. The Tavistock Clinic has lifts to all floors. Unfortunately, Gloucester House, The Tavistock Children's Day Unit and the Portman Clinic are not wheelchair accessible. If you are a patient at the Portman Clinic your clinician can arrange to see you in the Tavistock Clinic if necessary.

There are induction loops on the telephones for patients with hearing difficulties in the Tavistock Clinic but this is not available in the other buildings. Sign-language interpreters are also available.

There is a disabled toilet in the Tavistock Clinic on the ground floor next to the library. If you're in a wheelchair and would like some help with the lifts, do not hesitate to ask at reception. If you have any concerns regarding access, please first discuss it with the reception in your department. If you have further questions, please contact the PALS officer.

Who can I contact if I have any questions or worries about my treatment?

The Patient Advice & Liaison Service (PALS) is here to help with any questions or concerns that you may have about your treatment. Please contact our PALS officer on 0208 938 2523 or email on pals@tavi-port.nhs.uk

The PALS officer can also be contacted if you require this leaflet in another format (e.g. electronic version or large print).

For practical information about the Trust and maps on how to get there, please see the 'Information for Patients' leaflet.