



Portman Clinic

April 2004

For practical information about the Trust and maps on how to get there, please see the dark blue 'Patient Prospectus'.

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.

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. 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. It may take years rather than weeks or months 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 about 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.

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 may not be suitable for people who regularly use 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 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. 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 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.

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. The name of your clinician will be called out when he/she is free to see you.

How do I book, change or cancel an appointment?

Please call the Clinic on 020 7794 8262. You will speak to a secretary who will be able to help you.