

# Outlook

Specialist psychological support for people with an unusual, changed, or visible difference in appearance



*Exceptional healthcare, personally delivered*

## Who are we and how can we help?

We are a friendly service offering specialist psychological support to adults with appearance concerns relating to an unusual, changed or visible difference in appearance. This may include as a result of:

- **Congenital appearance concerns** e.g. birthmarks, hemangioma
- **Health conditions** such as psoriasis, vitiligo, alopecia (hair loss)
- **Trauma** – after accidents or treatments causing changes to someone’s appearance e.g. scars, burns

“Having someone understand why I have the problems I do and who could see where I am coming from was so helpful”

“These sessions weren’t just about emotional help but practical help and advice, which helped me enormously”

## Issues we can support people with include:

- **Appearance-related distress** – adjusting to a visible difference or changed appearance
- **Difficulties in dealing with other people's reactions**
- **Anxiety regarding treatments** e.g. having an anaesthetic or being in hospital
- **Coming to terms with a diagnosis and/or coping with treatment**
- **Coping with emotional issues** e.g. anxiety, worries, feeling low
- **Building confidence or self-esteem**, including social situations
- **Adjusting to loss and grief** e.g. of a loved one or a change in your body
- **Help getting back to previous activities** or adjusting to new ones e.g. going home after being in hospital, getting back to work / study
- **Managing psychological trauma** following an accident, injury, surgery or other treatments
- **Support with decision-making and / or preparing for surgery or other medical treatments**
- **Signposting to other services**

## What happens when you get referred?

When you are referred you to the service, we will send you a letter asking you to confirm that you would like to be seen. We will then put you on our waiting list and will contact you as soon as we can offer you an appointment. It is completely up to you whether you choose to come and see us.

“The sessions were flexible and adapted to my changing needs. We focused on practical changes which I could implement in my day to day life”

“The sessions feel informal and the pace of it is within your control.”

“The sessions gave me the tools to help myself to realise “I can do this, nothing bad will happen if I try”

## What can you expect at your first appointment?

Before your initial appointment, you may be sent some questionnaires in the post, to help us understand how things are for you now, and how things change during the course of any support we provide.

**Please could you arrive 15 minutes early to your appointment and bring these questionnaires with you, regardless of whether you have been able to complete them.**

This will enable the team to look through your forms before your appointment.

At the initial appointment, you will meet a member of the clinical psychology team. They are experienced in helping people to feel more able and confident to cope with the emotional impact of health issues.

During the first session you will have the opportunity to talk about your concerns. We will also explain in more detail how we might be able to support you with these. At the end of the first session the psychologist will discuss a plan of care, which may include further sessions with Outlook or signposting to other services.

If you would like anyone to join your sessions, such as a family member or friend, you are welcome to invite them as long as they are over 16. Sometimes, we will ask your permission if another colleague can join the session. It's fine to say no.



"It has been great to feel like there is finally someone to listen and understand what I am going through. I was able to talk openly in a comfortable surrounding environment without judgement. Thank you so much - the sessions made a huge impact on life!"



"I felt relaxed enough to open up and say how I was really feeling, which meant the right help and advice was given"

## What will the sessions involve?

As well as having a safe and supportive space to talk, we will often explore:

- Ways to handle difficult thoughts, feelings, or sensations (e.g. fatigue) so they have less impact on you
- Clarifying what matters to you (your personal values)
- Taking steps towards your goals

We may also agree on some activities for you to do between sessions. Learning new skills takes time and practice but these activities will help you to get the most from your sessions.

“The support has given me the confidence to have my photo taken, ask for something in a shop, go out for a meal... all baby steps to begin with but which have helped me put my life back together”

“During the sessions we have been working on noticing, reflecting and having a more positive outlook. I feel through discussion this has really helped and having the week in between appointments to input ideas very useful.”

## How many appointments will you have?

We usually provide short-term, focused psychological support. We will work with you to decide what goals you want to achieve. This will help us decide together if we are the right service to support you and if so how many sessions would be useful. Follow-ups are 45 minutes long.



"It was great to feel more able to help myself...this meant that my progress has continued even once I'd stopped the sessions"

We are not able to offer long-term, regular sessions in this service. However, if that seems a useful or appropriate option for you, we can try to help you find other services that offer longer-term counselling.

## What happens to the information we discuss?

We take confidentiality seriously. Most of what we talk about with you will remain private. However, it can be helpful for us to share important information with staff closely involved in your care, e.g. in summary letters after the first and last appointments. If there is anything you don't want shared please discuss this with the psychologist. However, if we are very concerned there is a risk of harm to you or others we may need to pass this information to relevant services, such as your GP. We keep a brief record of our session together in the medical notes and fuller notes are kept securely within the psychology team. If you have any particular concerns about confidentiality, please let us know.

## Where are we based?

We run clinics in a number of venues at Southmead Hospital, Bristol. Details of these will be sent to you with your initial appointment.

## Our contact details

The administration office is usually staffed on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays between 9am and 3pm. You are welcome to leave a telephone / email message outside these times and one of the team will get back to you.

**Telephone:** (0117) 414 4888

**Email:** Outlook&CHP@nbt.nhs.uk

### **Our admin address is:**

Outlook & Clinical Health Psychology

Office 3, Level 3, Gate 38

Brunel building, Southmead Hospital

Bristol BS10 5NB

### **Our website has details about the service and some useful links:**

[www.nbt.nhs.uk/outlook](http://www.nbt.nhs.uk/outlook)

## If you want to give us feedback

We really value feedback from all clients who access the service and we will ask people at the end of their time with us to complete an anonymous feedback form. You can also provide direct feedback by writing to us or contact the Advice and Complaints Team on 0117 414 4569.

"I appreciated the opportunity to talk things through and giving me hope"

"The sessions were flexible and adapted to my changing needs. We focused on practical changes which I could implement in my day to day life"

"I have achieved things I never thought I would manage again"

"This experience has been hugely influential in my recovery and sense of wellbeing. My own journey is far from complete but I am so much better"

"Thanks to my sessions I now feel much more at ease with my feature, I don't care what other people think of it!!"

If you would like a large print version of this leaflet please ask a member of staff.

**PATIENT  
APPROVED** 

**How to contact us:**



0117 414 4888



Outlook&CHP@nbt.nhs.uk



Outlook & Clinical Health Psychology  
Office 3, Level 3, Gate 38  
Brunel building, Southmead Hospital  
Bristol BS10 5NB



[www.nbt.nhs.uk/outlook](http://www.nbt.nhs.uk/outlook)

If you or the individual you are caring for need support reading this leaflet please ask a member of staff for advice.

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take part...  
be involved...  
in research



While in our care, you may be invited to take part in a research study.

To find out more visit:

[www.nbt.nhs.uk/research](http://www.nbt.nhs.uk/research)



**Southmead  
Hospital Charity**

[southmeadhospitalcharity.org.uk](http://southmeadhospitalcharity.org.uk)

Southmead Hospital Charity raises funds for departments and wards throughout the Trust, meaning you can support an area close to your heart