Memory Assessment Pathway

Information leaflet

Bedfordshire and Luton

Local Services, Local Solutions
Welcome to our Memory Service
The Memory Service is a specialist assessment service within the NHS that aims to meet the needs of people who are concerned that they may have a memory problem.

Our team is made up of specialist doctors, nurses, occupational therapists and psychologists. We assess and diagnose the nature of the person’s memory difficulties, report this to the family doctor and advise on further treatment or intervention. The team will continue to be involved after diagnosis when appropriate and can offer information, advice and support to the person with memory problems and their family. Before you are seen by the team your GP may have requested some blood tests and a head scan.

What are the benefits in attending?
When you attend the Memory Clinic we will try to give you an answer to the questions you have about your memory changes. If a problem is identified then we will advise you and your family doctor how best to address the problem. In many cases the Memory Service team will offer you the treatment or intervention that may be required to help with your memory changes. This may include the prescribing of Dementia medications that may slow down memory decline and ultimately improve your quality of life.

You will be asked for your consent to participate in any assessment and treatment. We will only carry out our tests if you wish us to. Those who choose to attend do so because they are concerned about a change in the way that their memory works and are worried that this may be serious.

What happens now?
If you are referred to the memory service by your GP you will be invited for an initial assessment. You will be sent a clinic appointment to see the Doctor who will talk with you and your family about your memory difficulties and complete a brief memory test. We encourage you to bring someone with you to talk about this together.

Some physical investigations may be arranged and you may be referred for a head scan and be asked to have some blood tests at your GP surgery, if this has not already been arranged.

These investigations will help us rule out some common problems that can affect memory.

After the initial assessment, some people may not need any further treatment and will be discharged from the memory service with any relevant information and advice.

Once the blood tests and head scan have taken place, you will be given an appointment to see a Doctor. Occasionally you may be asked to attend further appointments with a Psychologist and Occupational Therapist for more detailed memory testing. We will try to arrange this as quickly as possible but this will depend on how long it takes to receive your head scan results.

At the clinic you will have the opportunity to discuss your test results with the Doctor and will be told what we believe is causing your memory problem. The cause may be minor and can be rectified but it may be more serious, including such things as Alzheimer’s Disease or another type of Dementia. In some cases it may not be possible for us to give a diagnosis at all, in which case we may suggest further tests or repeating some you have already taken.

We will ask you at an early stage about what you want us to do with the results of your assessment. Some people do not want to hear the result, some people wish their partner or family member to be there when they hear and others ask that they are told alone, so do make sure we know your views.

It can be an upsetting experience to receive your results if we have found that you have a problem. Please bear this in mind if you are attending the Memory Clinic on your own.

Our Dementia Nurse specialists or a member of the Older Peoples Community Mental Health Team will meet with you and your family/friends to talk about the information and diagnosis you were given at the clinic and help plan your next steps. Whatever the result, we will ensure that you receive support, the information you need and a named person you can contact to talk about any questions or problems that you may have.

Information
We understand that you may have many questions about what you see or hear during this time. Please do not hesitate to ask. We are very experienced and are very willing to help where we can. There are many leaflets and booklets that you might find useful, just speak to any member of our staff who will be pleased to help find the information you require.

Everything you tell us is confidential information that will only be discussed within the NHS, your GP, and with other doctors who may be asked to see you. We will not disclose any information about you to any third party, including your family, without your expressed consent.
**Research and clinical trials**
You may also be offered the opportunity to be involved in some of the clinical trials or research programmes aimed at pushing the frontiers of new treatments and knowledge of conditions associated with memory problems.

These trials and research programmes are under the strict ethical oversight of the Ethics Committee and you are in no way obliged to be part of these trials nor will it affect your access to the Memory Clinic service in any way.

**There are four Memory Assessment Clinics held across Bedfordshire and Luton. The four Older People’s Community Mental Health Teams are:**

- **Luton (Luton Community Mental Health Team)**
  on 01582 707555

- **South Beds (South Beds Community Mental Health Team)**
  on 01582 657588

- **Bedford (Bedford Community Mental Health Team)**
  on 01234 310539

- **The Lawns (Mid Beds Community Mental Health Team)**
  on 01767 224181

**Patient Experience Team**
If you have any concerns or need advice about accessing NHS services, you can speak in confidence to the Patient Experience Team on 0800 0131 223.
or you can email pals.ppi@sept.nhs.uk

This leaflet can be produced in large print, audio cassette, Braille and other languages on request.

SEPT regards equality and diversity as integral to the way it works. Our staff will ensure that everyone is treated fairly and no one is discriminated against on the basis of their ethnicity, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation and religion or belief.