



National Deaf Mental Health Service at The Barberry

Specialist services

Information for professionals

National Deaf Mental Health Service (NDMHS)

This specialist service is based at The Barberry, in Edgbaston, Birmingham, where we have inpatient, outpatient and day patient facilities. We also provide community services across the country.

Our multidisciplinary deaf and hearing staff use British Sign Language, and some have additional skills such as Irish Sign Language and deafblind 'hands-on' sign and finger spelling.

Our experienced multidisciplinary team is made up of psychiatrists, clinical psychologists, occupational therapists, counsellors, family therapists, social workers, inpatient nurses and community nurses.

Where appropriate we work with sign language and foreign language interpreters who have mental health interpreting experience.

The National Deaf Mental Health Service serves deaf adults with mental health problems, learning disabilities and psychosocial difficulties. We apply our knowledge of mental health and deafness to communicate with our clients in their best or preferred language.

Mental health in deaf people

The prevalence of mental health problems among the 60,000 or so sign language users, and the one in seven people who have a hearing loss, in the UK is significantly higher than that of hearing people.

However, fewer deaf people are identified as having mental health problems by their families, GPs or other clinicians – and fewer still are referred on for the appropriate specialist mental health service.

Deaf patients also have trouble accessing generic mental and physical health services. As a result many suffer in isolation. A delay in identifying their needs from an early age can increase the complexity of their problems and reduce the effectiveness of eventual clinical interventions.

Facts you may not know

- Cause of deafness can impact on the prevalence and type of mental health problem.
- Deaf people face a significantly higher risk of physical or sexual abuse.
- Many deaf people have social and cognitive difficulties as a result of language deprivation.
- Deaf children of deaf parents tend to have less cognitive, emotional and behavioural problems.
- A deaf person with language disability needs a better than average signer, to help them communicate effectively, not a signer of the same level as the patient.
- Most GPs have never met the deaf patients on their list.
- Side effects of some psychotropic medication can interfere with the fluent production and reception of British Sign Language.

Referring to the national deaf service

We accept referrals from all areas as long as we have the agreement of the patient's GP and community mental health or learning disabilities team. We require local CPA allocation.

We currently have a block contract with the West Midlands Specialist Commissioning Group, while services for patients from other areas are individually commissioned. We work closely with local teams and would welcome discussion about potential referrals.

For more information or to discuss a potential referral, please contact the National Deaf Mental Health Service on:

Telephone: 0121 301 2460
Minicom: 0121 301 2497
Fax: 0121 301 2451
Email: ndmhs@bsmhft.nhs.uk

Our experienced staff and purpose-built facilities enable patients to focus on their mental health needs, without having to worry about how they communicate.

National deaf service

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www.bsmhft.nhs.uk

Main switchboard: 0121 301 0000

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