



A guide to your memory assessment

What is the Memory Assessment Service?

The Memory Assessment Service is for people aged over 18 who are experiencing problems with their memory and/or other “cognitive” difficulties. This might include behavioural/personality changes, problems with language, planning/problem-solving, visual perception, or other changes. You have been referred to us because you, your family and/or your GP noticed that you were experiencing some of these difficulties.

What are the causes of memory/cognitive problems?

Memory and other cognitive (“thinking”) problems are common and there are many reasons why people may have them. Tiredness, life-related stress, depression, anxiety, physical health problems or the side effects of some medications can all have an impact on our memory and thinking. Sometimes however, memory and other cognitive problems can be a sign of dementia.

What is dementia?

Dementia is not one single illness but rather a name for a collection of symptoms, which are caused by changes in how the brain is working. There are many different types of dementia; the most common is Alzheimer’s disease and the second most common type is vascular dementia.

The first appointment:

Included with this leaflet is a letter offering you an appointment for a memory assessment. Please phone us on the number provided to let us know whether or not the appointment is convenient for you.

You will be seen by one of our Senior Practitioners. These are qualified nurses or occupational therapists by background and are experienced at working with people with memory/cognitive problems. The senior practitioner will explain the assessment process, the possible outcomes from the assessment and how you might want to receive this information. They will ask if you agree to go ahead. You do not have to undergo the assessment if you do not want to.

During the assessment, we will want to find out more about your current memory/cognitive problems and in what ways these problems are affecting you in everyday life. We also need to know a bit more about you, so will ask about your physical health, what medications you take, how you are feeling in yourself and so on. It is helpful if you can have a list of current medications with you.



As part of the assessment, we may want to complete a short paper-and-pencil memory test so please wear your glasses and/or hearing aids, if you have them.

We think it is really important to speak with someone who knows you well to get their view, so hope a family member or friend is able to be with you. We will ask them to complete a couple of questionnaires as well. You may want to share this letter with them too; it contains information you might both find useful about what to expect.

You can also ask to talk privately with the senior practitioner if you would like to.

If it is not possible to have someone with you, we will ask to arrange a phone call with a person who knows you well. Please think about who you would like for us to speak to and have their contact details to hand.

The appointment can last up to two hours, so do let the senior practitioner know if you need to take a break. As with any health problem, we need to find out as much as we can about the problems you currently have to try to find out what is causing them, so need to talk for a while to do this. The assessment can be divided over two sessions if you prefer.

What happens next?

Following this appointment, we will speak as a team to discuss all of the assessment information and to decide what we think is causing your memory/cognitive problems.

If we think you need additional assessment the senior practitioner will contact you to discuss this.

The second appointment:

We hope to speak with you and your family member/friend one or two weeks after your first appointment to feedback the outcome of the assessment. We will check what you want to know and feedback the outcome in accordance with your wishes.

After sharing with you what we think is causing your current problems, we will work together to develop a Support Plan. The Support Plan identifies any care or support needs you or your family/friends have; any treatments that may be available and what other activities or groups you may be interested in.

You and your GP will automatically receive a copy of your Support Plan. Your family member can also have a copy if you would like them to.



Notes - Use this page to note down questions or things that you would like to discuss with your Senior Practitioner:

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Contact details

Memory Assessment Service: Tel: 0121 301 5440, 9am-5pm Monday- Friday
For out of hours emergencies please contact your GP.

Alzheimer's Society National Dementia Helpline: Telephone: 0300 222 1122
9am-5pm Monday-Friday; 10am-4pm Saturday and Sunday

Alzheimer's Society Website: www.alzheimers.org.uk

PALS (Patient Advice and Liaison Service): 8am-8pm Monday-Friday
Telephone: 0800 953 0045, Text: 0798 588 3509, Email: pals@bsmhft.nhs.uk