

Introducing the SCIRT clinical psychologists

Information for patients, parents and guardians

We are part of the Southampton children's integrated rehabilitation team (SCIRT), who support children and young people who have experienced a brain illness or injury.

This factsheet explains the support the SCIRT psychologists can offer to children and their families, and aims to answer some initial questions you might have about psychology. You can contact us by talking to a member of your child's healthcare team or speak to us directly on **023 8120 4657**.

Why do psychologists form part of the SCIRT team?

When a child experiences a brain injury or illness, it can affect everyone in the family. It can affect people in different ways, and may feel scary, confusing and overwhelming. All of these feelings are completely understandable responses in difficult situations, but coping with them can be challenging. We're here to support you and your family.

Practical and emotional support we can offer includes:

- thinking through what has happened, and is happening, and helping families to make sense of it
- advice on how to explain things to your children, family and friends

- providing a space to talk about your child's illness or injury, your experiences and your feelings
- thinking about adjustment to any changes and recovery
- sharing ideas about coping strategies and identifying strengths and resources
- support around coping with ongoing medical procedures
- practical ideas around managing behaviour and emotional support

Cognitive screening and assessments

Brain injury and illnesses can impact on a child's thinking skills, such as memory, planning and attention. Recovery takes time and it can be difficult to predict. As part of our role, we monitor your child's thinking skills and can share ideas on how best to manage any changes to support rehabilitation. We can also advise on if and when further assessment may be helpful. Cognitive assessments can help us to identify where your child's current strengths and needs are, and plan any support that may help strengthen and develop their thinking skills.

Linking with schools and community support

As your child's recovery continues, we can explore who it would be helpful to link up with in your community to discuss continued rehabilitation, to enable your child to reach their full potential. For example, we can talk with your child's teacher, SENCO (special educational needs coordinator) or educational psychologist about supporting your child in their ongoing learning environment.

Support when moving home

We recognise that when children and young people leave hospital there can be mixed emotions for everyone, including excitement about going home alongside fears of what life may hold. We are here to support your child and the rest of the family during your child's move from hospital to home, and can discuss longer term support that might be helpful and where to access this.

Where we meet

We can meet wherever feels suitable for you – on the ward, in a quiet room, or at our psychology offices (Block 8 – opposite the eye unit). We are flexible with our involvement to suit families, and can offer time to anyone in the family who would like it.

Confidentiality

We aim to keep what we talk about as private as possible, though there are times when it's helpful to share information with other professionals involved in your child's care. We can talk through confidentiality and what this involves when we meet.

Advocacy

We work alongside the medical and therapy team to promote good psychological understanding on the wards to help staff care for you and your child.

Requesting support from the service

You can contact us by giving us a call yourself, or asking a member of the team to contact us. We introduce ourselves to and check in with families the ward, so do let us know if you would like some time to talk.

If you would like any more information or to book an appointment, please contact the team on: **023 8120 4657**

Contact us

Children's clinical psychology team
2nd Floor, Block 8, Mailpoint 133
Southampton Children's Hospital
Tremona Road
Southampton
SO16 6YD

Useful links

www.childbraininjurytrust.org.uk
www.braininjuryhub.co.uk

If you need a translation of this document, an interpreter or a version in large print, Braille or on audiotape, please telephone **023 8120 4688** for help.

www.uhs.nhs.uk/childrenshospital