



## The NHS Buckinghamshire Talking Therapies Service Terms and Conditions

Welcome to the NHS Buckinghamshire (Bucks) Talking Therapies Service. We aim to support you to improve your mood and wellbeing, and we strive to provide excellent care. In order that we can provide care to as many people as possible, we need you to help us. Please read the following pages carefully. Buckinghamshire Talking Therapies Service is provided by Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust. More information about our service can be found on our website at [www.bucks-talking-therapies.nhs.uk](http://www.bucks-talking-therapies.nhs.uk).

### When having an assessment with us

On rare occasions prior to your appointment, we may need to cancel or rearrange, we will do this ASAP by contacting you on the telephone number you provided. Please allow approximately 40 minutes in a quiet confidential space for the assessment. If you are no longer able to attend the appointment, please let us know ASAP (by calling us on **01865 901 600**) so that we can free the slot for someone else and reschedule the assessment with you.

### Treatment agreement

Following your assessment your worker will discuss your treatment options with you. If Bucks Talking Therapies can meet your needs, your worker will make an initial plan for treatment with you which will be reviewed as treatment progresses. We aim to work in partnership with you: decisions about your treatment will consider your views and preferences and our knowledge of treatments and services. We are always happy to discuss and explain any decisions made to you.



We know that attending appointments regularly is key to feeling better and staying well. Please try to attend all your appointments, this will help you get the most out of your therapy sessions. Also, attending regularly will reduce the time other people have to wait.

## Transfer to another service

Some Bucks Talking Therapies patients need more specialised help than Bucks Talking Therapies can provide. We aim to transfer you to other services as smoothly as possible. This may involve us passing relevant information about you to services such as the Community Mental Health Teams.

## Arranging appointments following the assessment

We are committed to providing an accessible, flexible service. We always try to arrange appointments with you at a time and place that is convenient. Most of our appointments are between 9am and 5pm on weekdays but we do have a small number of appointments available before 9am or between 5pm and 8pm Monday to Thursday.

## Attending appointments

There is a high demand for our service. We try to keep waiting times as short as possible, but these depend both on clinician availability and your personal requirements. We will do our best to find appointment times that suit you, but we need your help to make the best use of our available resources. Please be as flexible as possible and this will reduce the length of time you wait to start treatment.

To maintain the quality of our service for all, we have the following requirements:

- **Before you start treatment:** When you reach the top of the waiting list, we will offer you an appointment. If you are unable to make it please cancel your appointment as soon as possible, so that we can offer your appointment to someone else. We will offer you one more appointment after that but will discharge you if you do not attend without letting us know.
- **First treatment appointment:** If you miss your first therapy appointment and do not contact us, we will assume that you have changed your mind about therapy, or that it is not the right time for you. We will therefore discharge you from the service.
- **During treatment:** If you are unable to attend a therapy appointment, please contact us as soon as possible to cancel it, ideally at least 72 hours (3 days) before the appointment. We may be able to offer the appointment to someone else, even when it is a one-off appointment.



- **If you are unable to attend in person at short notice:** please contact us, we may be able to conduct your session by phone.
- **If you miss a scheduled appointment, and we do not hear from you:** Your practitioner will try to contact you by telephone, and if we know you have given permission, we will leave you a brief message. We will work on the assumption you will be attending the subsequent scheduled appointment unless you tell us otherwise. Should you then not attend your next appointment without informing us beforehand, we will write to you and your GP to confirm that we are discharging you from the service.  
*In summary, if you miss two appointments without letting us know you will be discharged from the service unless there are exceptional circumstances*
- **If you have trouble attending regularly:** we will discuss options with you. We will do what we can to help you attend therapy appointments, but in some circumstances the best option may be to return to our service when you can make the commitment of regular sessions.
- **If you are late:** If you arrive late, we will do our best to use the remaining appointment time as productively as possible. However, your therapy session will be shorter, as we are not able to run over the allotted time. If you are very late for the session, it may not be possible to run it.
- **If we need to cancel your appointment:** We aim to offer regular and good quality treatment. If your worker has to reschedule your therapy appointment (for example, due to illness) we will try to give you as much notice as possible. Please make sure you have told us the best way to contact you and update us if your details change. Appointments cancelled by us will always be rescheduled and will not shorten your course of therapy.

## Patient health questionnaires

We routinely use patient health questionnaires (mood questionnaires) to help us assess the level of difficulties you are experiencing. This can also help us agree the best treatment option. You will be asked to complete these questionnaires before every appointment. This helps you and your worker to see how you are progressing throughout your treatment.

These questionnaires can be completed securely online through our patient portal. Once you have submitted the completed questionnaire your worker will securely download it to your clinical record. If you are interested in completing the questionnaires in this way, please inform your worker who will set up a secure link to allow you to do this over the internet yourself.



## Presence of other people during your sessions

We are a teaching service and on occasions we have trainees who observe our work to improve their skills. We will inform you if this will be the case for your session. If you do not want this to take place, please let your worker know.

## SMS text reminders

If you have agreed to receive SMS Text reminders for your appointments, these will be sent automatically to your mobile approximately 48 hours before the appointment. We will also use this facility if we need to get in contact with you. This would normally be a text message asking you to call our Admin team regarding arranging, or to discuss, an appointment.

## Voicemail messages

If you have given your consent to leave voicemail messages on your landline or mobile, we will use this option if you are not available when we call. If another person answers your phone, we will leave a message. This contact would usually be to ask you to call our Admin team regarding an appointment. We would not disclose any personal information about you or your treatment.

## Emails

We can send correspondence by email if you prefer. We utilise a secure email service to do this. This means when an email from us arrives to you, it will contain a link to a form you will need to complete in order to then view the email itself and any attachments. We sometimes find that due to email filtering beyond our control, emails from us will sometimes appear in your Junk/Spam folders, so if you are expecting an email from us, we would recommend checking these folders if it has not arrived in your inbox. If you prefer you can request emails to be sent in the usual way, which does mean we would not be able to guarantee its security once it has left our network.

## Confidentiality and Sharing Your Personal Information

We need to keep information about you to help us provide the best possible care for you. The information you provide is kept on a secure electronic clinical recording system. This system is separate from the one used by your GP or other healthcare providers. Only Bucks Talking Therapies staff involved in your care will routinely have access to this information and where appropriate, access to other information from Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust relating to your current or past care.

We take security and confidentiality of the information you provide to us very seriously. All staff working for the NHS are required to abide by strict professionals' codes of conduct and everyone working for the NHS has a legal duty to keep information about you confidential.



**This means that staff involved in your care at Bucks Talking Therapies would always share information with your GP about your care.** We would only share information with other organisations when there is a genuine need for them to know. This may also include people who provide care to you from organisations other than the NHS. They too have a legal duty to keep this information confidential.

We also need to let you know that on some occasions we are not able to keep confidentiality, for ex-ample if we become concerned about your safety or the safety/wellbeing of another person. Where possible, we will discuss this with you beforehand and consider what steps are required to provide the support necessary to ensure the safety and wellbeing of you and/or others, to address child or adult safeguarding issues.

## Your information and how we use it

Bucks Talking Therapies is required to use the information that you have given us in accordance with the law.

It is standard practice throughout the NHS that services inform the Department of Health and other Healthcare providers about patient/service users' care and support. We may also use your information for some healthcare related purposes such as research and service audit. The information is provided confidentially and will not identify you in any way. This helps to ensure that patients are offered the best possible treatment and helps to improve patient care. If you have any questions about how your information is used, then please discuss this with your worker who will be able to answer any questions you may have. If you change your mind about how we use your information, please tell your worker and we will stop using it. We will also make sure your 'opt-out' of using your information is recorded. This will not affect your treatment in any way.

## Making a comment, or raising a concern or complaint

Should you, at any time during your treatment, feel that it is not helping, or you are unhappy with your treatment, you should discuss this with your worker.

If you feel unable to talk to your worker directly then please call **(01865 901 600)** or email Bucks Talking Therapies ([bucks-talking-therapies@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk](mailto:bucks-talking-therapies@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk)) and ask to speak to a Duty Manager or a Team Manager. If you feel unable to discuss your concerns with a Bucks Talking Therapies Duty Manager or a Team Manager, you can get advice and support from the Oxford Health NHS FT Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on the free phone number 0800 328 7971. Further information regarding the PALS service is available on the Oxford Health website: [www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk](http://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk)

Thank you,  
**The Bucks Talking Therapies Team**

