

Memory Assessment Services

Gloucestershire's Memory Assessment Service provides specialist assessment, diagnosis and treatment services to people who are worried about memory as well as providing support to their carers.

The memory assessment service aims to:

- Provide a service to people aged 18 years of age and over
- Give an in-depth assessment of a person's memory function
- Make a diagnosis and exclude and treat any reversible causes
- Provide support and counselling to people with dementia, relatives and carers and where necessary to put them in touch with the appropriate services within the community
- Offer the best use of new drug treatment and other interventions

How can people request a Memory Assessment?

People can refer themselves directly to the Memory Assessment Service; however if you are worried about your memory it is important that you visit your GP in the first instance to rule out other possible causes for memory loss. Confusion and forgetfulness do not mean someone has dementia. Thyroid problems, vitamin deficiency, anaemia, side effects of medication, pain, stress and infections can all cause problems with memory.

In most cases the GP will conduct a physical health check and request that blood tests are done. The GP may also do a short memory test. If the GP finds no reason for the symptoms then the GP will refer to the memory assessment service.

It is a good idea for people to book a longer appointment with their GP and to write down examples of the changes in memory loss, conversation, organisational skills or any unusual behaviour. It can also help to take a friend or relative with you.

Where people feel unable to talk to their GP about their memory problems or that of a family member they should contact us directly. We can then discuss your concerns with you and where appropriate will arrange an appointment with the memory assessment team.

To contact us directly for a memory assessment or for information and advice

Telephone: 0800 694 8800

Email: managingmemory@glos.nhs.uk

What happens at the Memory Assessment Service?

At the first appointment, people are assessed by a member of the team usually a nurse specially trained in memory assessment. People are given the choice of being seen at home or in a clinic.

The first appointment involves obtaining information about the person's personal and medical history. The person will be asked to describe the difficulties or problems they are having and how these problems affect them.

The person will also be asked to provide information about

- Any other illnesses they have had before
- Any illnesses they have now
- Any medications they are taking at the moment

The person may be asked to answer questions or to do tests that might seem silly but these are part of a group of tests that allow the team to assess how serious memory problems are. The first appointment usually lasts between one and two hours.

By the end of the appointment the memory assessment team aim to have completed a comprehensive memory assessment. In some cases it may be necessary for the person to see other specialists within the memory assessment team such as psychologists, occupational therapists, speech and language therapists and physiotherapists. The person may also be sent for a brain scan.

Once all the assessments are completed, an appointment is made with a specialist Doctor where a diagnosis will be provided.

What happens after a diagnosis?

All patients from the memory assessment service are followed up according to their needs. Those with a diagnosis of dementia will have an initial four week follow up appointment and care plan.

This appointment is an opportunity to discuss any concerns and assess the benefits of any advice or medication that has been given. At this stage people may be offered further follow up appointments or they may be discharged back to the care of their GP.

As part of the service we also refer people with dementia and their family members/carers to our information and education service, Managing Memory 2gether.

Managing Memory 2gether

0800 694 8800

managingmemory@glos.nhs.uk