

from six weeks up to two years, depending on your child's needs. Your child will be seen by the same person at the same time, in the same room.

As part of the child's treatment, parents/carers are seen regularly by another member of the clinic. This will be fortnightly or monthly and is designed to support you through your child's treatment and provide somewhere for you to discuss your own worries about your child.

Parents/carers sometimes feel excluded by not being part of their child's treatment. This is another reason why these meetings are essential for you. Although the psychotherapy requires a certain amount of confidentiality, if your child/teenager tells the therapist anything that makes the therapist worried for your child's safety, you will be told about it straight away. Once every few months, your child's therapist will meet with you so that you can discuss your child's progress together.

### »» How you can help us

A relaxed and comfortable environment often benefits child and adolescent psychotherapy and allows us to work in the best ways possible with your child. Therefore, it will help if you:

- bring your child to appointments regularly
- bring your child to appointments on time
- give us a contact telephone number if an older child attends appointments on their own, so we can tell you if they miss their appointment

- talk about any concerns you may have, either about the therapy itself or if there are concerns about your child's life
- respect your child's privacy if they do not want to talk about their therapy.

### »» Confidentiality

Our staff are required to abide by a code of conduct on confidentiality. We may share some information with other people such as your GP and social services employees. When considering who may see information about you, our staff use the following principles:

- only share information with those who need to know in order to provide good quality care
- share the minimum information necessary to ensure good quality care.

### »» Your opinion matters

We welcome your views on the services we provide. If you would like to comment, make suggestions or a complaint, please speak to the person you normally see or ask to speak to the team manager.

You may also like to telephone our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on freephone **0800 917 7159**.

If you would like to take the matter further, please contact: Head of Complaints  
Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust  
Pinewood House, Pinewood Place  
Dartford, Kent DA2 7WG  
Tel: **01322 625751**

# Information for parents



## Child and adolescent psychoanalytic psychotherapy

July 2008

improving lives

Oxleas   
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## The aims of this leaflet

All children and young people can experience periods of anxiety, depression or conflict. These feelings may disappear over time with the support of family, school, or friends, but if they prove more persistent, help may be required from a psychotherapist.

Adolescents often find talking about their feelings and problems can help. However, children often express themselves more through play than they do in words. The child psychotherapist will try to understand, with the help of the child, the meaning being communicated through their play.

This leaflet provides information about how child psychotherapy can help and what you can do to ensure your child gets the best results from this method of treatment.

## What is involved in child and adolescent psychoanalytic psychotherapy?

Child psychotherapy is a treatment which can help children and young people with serious problems which have often started at a very young age. They are helped to talk, play, draw and think with the psychotherapist about their emotions and how these affect them, their behaviour and their relationships with others. Children may be seen on their own or with their parent/carer.

Child psychotherapy has been shown to be effective in children and young people with a range of difficulties including: depression and self-harm, eating disorders, anxiety and attachment problems. Often these difficulties may have begun very early on in the child's life and may not respond to cognitive therapy.

Child and adolescent psychotherapists work with individual children/teenagers, siblings, parents and families, offering brief or longer-term treatment. They are trained to provide assessment, consultation, group work, parent work, family work and parent-infant, parent-child and parent-adolescent psychotherapy.

Child psychotherapists are trained to listen and observe in detail in order to have an understanding of why your child/teenager is experiencing distress, anxiety and often worrying behaviour. By monitoring the relationship developing between the therapist and your child, the therapist will come to recognise how the child manages anxiety, fear, distress, relationships and their worries about themselves and others. The child psychotherapist can then help the child/teenager make sense of their own responses and fears.

## How long will the therapy take?

The length of time your child uses our services depends on how severe and complex the difficulties are and how you, the school and the rest of the family are able to support the treatment. If we have recommended psychotherapy for your

child, it is because we believe they will respond best to this type of treatment. Individual therapy sessions usually last for 50 minutes.

## What are the risks?

Sometimes in therapy a child's behaviour might temporarily relapse. If this does happen, it is important that you tell us so that we can work with you to understand why this might be happening.

If you would like to ask any more questions about your child's therapy or how we can help you, please speak to the person who is working with you to support the therapy.

## Ensuring treatment is effective

In order for the treatment to be effective, the parents/carers must support the treatment and be prepared to bring the child to every appointment. If too many sessions are missed, the treatment will not be effective, as the sessions are not independent of each other; they build up a steady momentum. This is especially important for children who have experienced loss, bereavement and disrupted attachments.

## What to expect after your referral

You and your child will meet the therapist for a specialist assessment to see if child psychotherapy is the right treatment. If it is, the therapist will tell you how often your child will need to come (usually weekly) and for how long. This could be