

General Guidance

*Dedicated to you*

Cheshire & Merseyside  
Clinical Genetics Service

# Welcome to Clinical Genetics

A guide to your referral

# Genetics

The Merseyside and Cheshire Clinical Genetics Service is primarily involved with the diagnosis and genetic counselling of families with possible or known inherited disorders. The service is managed by Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust and delivered by our team at Alder Hey Children's Hospital and many local clinics.

Staff are available to answer any additional questions you might have ahead of your appointment. We can be contacted on:

**0151 802 5001 / 5002**

## **When you visit us, you may meet:**

- A Clinical Geneticist; a doctor who has experience of a wide range of genetic conditions.
- A Genetic Counsellor; a professional with specialist training in genetics and counselling skills.
- Our administration and clerical team.

This leaflet provides important information to help people who are referred to us. It aims to answer some of the common questions we get asked.

# What we do

From your initial appointment, we will provide as much information as possible about your reason for visiting us and discuss the options and course of actions that are right for you and your family. Not everyone who comes to our service has a genetic condition.

## **We help individuals and families by:**

- Making, confirming or excluding a diagnosis.
- Providing understandable information about a condition.
- Discussing the impact of a condition in the future.
- Discussing the risks to future children and/or other family members
- Explaining types of testing or screening available.
- If appropriate we can also talk about ways of living with a condition and the medical and social support available.



# Reasons for referrals

There are a variety of reasons why people are referred to us. Here are some of them:

- A known condition runs in your family and you may be concerned about your chances of developing the condition. Equally you may be concerned about passing it on to your child and future generations.
- You or your partner have a child with a combination of problems where diagnosis may be uncertain and either you or your doctors are wondering if there may be a genetic cause for this.
- You, your partner or your family has experienced pregnancy loss.
- You and your partner are close blood relatives.
- You have a family history of particular types of cancer.

# Making an appointment – step-by-step guide

- As well as this leaflet, you will have received a referral letter asking you to contact the Clinical Genetics Department to opt into our service and to make an appointment. Please note: If you do not contact us after receiving the enclosed letter you will not receive an appointment.
- When you phone the Clinical Genetics Department one of our clinic coordinators will arrange your first appointment.
- Depending on the reason for your referral you will be offered an appointment either in a telephone clinic, a hospital clinic or in your home. Genetic clinic appointments are held at various hospital sites across Cheshire and Merseyside. Please study the appointment letter, carefully for details of your appointment location and time.



# What to expect next

Your first appointment will be with your assigned Genetic Counsellor. Genetic counselling is integral to the genetics contact and is part of any new referral. It is a communication process that responds to your questions and concerns and helps with the interpretation and understanding of information provided during your appointments.

At the first appointment, the Genetic Counsellor will take your family history, where possible from both sides of the family including grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. This is necessary to enable us to provide you with accurate information. It is also an opportunity for you to share any concerns you might have or to ask any questions. Your partner, relative or friend is welcome to accompany you at your appointments. If you have hearing difficulties or your first language is not English we can arrange for an interpreter to be present.

On occasion, student clinicians may be present for training purposes. If you rather they weren't, please notify a member of staff.

Most people will require at least two appointments lasting at least half an hour. If for any reason you cannot attend your appointment, please contact the department referenced on the appointment letter. We can then arrange another date for you and offer your original appointment to someone else.

Please note: Anyone failing to attend an appointment or who cancels more than once will be discharged back to their referring clinician. This does not affect your right to request a future referral to our service.



## Feedback welcome

We strive to continually improve the service we deliver in the best way we can. Your feedback is therefore very important to us. Please ask a member of staff if you would like a copy of the leaflet that explains how to make comments, suggestions or complaints.



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