

## Psycho-sexual counselling referral guidance

The Psychosexual Counselling Service offers brief psychological-based sex therapy interventions to help address sexual problems experienced by individuals over 16 years of age. The service is accessible by **GP referral only**.

Our Psychosexual Therapist is accredited with the IPM ([institute of psychosexual medicine London](#)). The IPM approach to Psychosexual Medicine is psychosomatic medicine applied to a range of sexual disorders. It offers a type of brief therapy, based on psychoanalytic skills. It is a unique practice that helps to understand how emotional factors, not always experienced at a conscious level, can interfere with sexual performance and enjoyment.

The underlying causes of a problem may be physical or psychological in varying proportions but are rarely limited to one or the other. The attitudes, anxieties and fantasies revealed during the consultation and the physical examination are particularly relevant to the understanding of the sexual problem.

We provide a **maximum of 6 sessions** of therapy following an **initial assessment**. Our service is inclusive, and we recognise and work with gender, sexual and relationship diversity.

We offer a mixture of face-to-face and virtual (online) sessions depending on the client's preference.

### We can accept GP referrals for:

- **Loss of desire (interest or libido)**
- **Lack of intimacy or fear of intimacy**
- **Erectile dysfunction**
- **Premature ejaculation**
- **Delayed or absent ejaculation**
- **Pain with penetration/vaginismus**
- **Pelvic pain/genital pain**
- **Difficulty with orgasm**

### We are unable to help with:

- General relationship issues - *refer for individual or couple counselling (e.g., Relate)*
- Sexual addiction, porn addiction, sexual compulsive behaviour and or sexual offending.
- Historical sexual abuse and or sexual assault
- Gender and Sexuality Identity

## Referral checklist

**Before** referring to our service, please check to ensure.

- Your patient is aware of and consents to a Psychosexual Therapy Service referral.
- Your patient is registered with a GP in Oldham, Rochdale or Bury.
- Your patient is over 16 years of age.
- Your patient is aware that if they are currently engaged in psychological therapy and or counselling, starting another therapy is not usually recommended.
- Your patient is ready and able to commit to a course of therapy lasting several months.
- Your patient has undergone the recommended tests/investigation/ examinations prior to referral and details are included with your referral.
- Your patient has experienced this problem for at least 6 months, it occurs 75-100% of the time and causes significant distress.
- Please confirm, in your medical opinion, that any differential diagnosis has been considered and excluded.
- Your patient is psychologically stable and any underlying mental health issues have been diagnosed and appropriately treated and managed prior to referral.
- Your patient is not dependant on drugs or alcohol.
- Your patient is aware that our service does not provide trauma related therapy and if they have experienced recent or historical trauma including rape, sexual assault, domestic violence, or abuse, please consider if a referral to a specialist service would be more appropriate in the first instance.
- Your patient's issue is not related to sexual and or porn addiction or sexual offending.
- Your patient's presenting issue is not primarily related to sexual orientation or gender identity.

As a psychological based service, it is essential that all physical causes of sexual problems have been excluded prior to starting psychological therapy (even when a psychosexual issue is suspected). It is important the following investigations and or tests are undertaken prior to referral and that detailed results are included at the time of referral.

### Men

- Genital Examination
- Weight, waist measurement and BMI
- Blood pressure and heart rate
- Lipid Profile
- Fasting glucose
- HbA1c
- Assessment of CVD risk and appropriate management of identified risk factors.
- Fasting total testosterone (to be taken between 7 and 11am) ***If total testosterone result is less than 12nmol/l, other tests are required, please refer to British Society***

***for Sexual Medicine (BSSM) Website (BSSM.org.uk) including the guidelines:  
'Management of Erectile Dysfunction in Men' and 'A Practical Guide – On The  
Assessment and Management of Testosterone Deficiency in Adult Men']***

- Consider DRE and measuring PSA and thyroid function tests if clinically indicated.
- Sexual Health Screening if appropriate

### **Women**

- Genital examination
- Thyroid function
- Fasting plasma glucose
- HbA1c
- Serum prolactin
- FSH
- LH
- Testosterone
- Gynaecological causes
- Sexual Health Screening if appropriate

### **How to refer**

Complete all relevant sections of the referral form and email to, via secure, NHS email address.

**Subject Header – Psychosexual referral**

Oldham - vcl.oldhamadmin@nhs.net

Rochdale- vcl.rochdaleadmin@nhs.net

Bury - vcl.buryadmin@nhs.net