



**Spire**

Murrayfield Hospital,  
Wirral



# North West Sexual Wellbeing Service Referral Guide for Health Professionals

Treating sexual difficulties professionally, holistically & confidentially

*Looking after you.*



## Who we are

### Mr Ash Alam

Ash is an obstetrician and gynaecologist. He has worked as a consultant at Arrowe Park Hospital, Wirral, since 2006 and has a special interest in female sexual health, vaginal atrophy, and menopause. He is experienced in providing gynaecological ultrasound, colposcopy and gynaecological surgery.

### Professor Ian Pearce

Ian is a Urological Surgeon. He has worked as a consultant at Manchester Royal Infirmary since 2002 and has a special interest in the treatment of male sexual problems including premature ejaculation, erectile dysfunction, Peyronies disease and implanting penile prostheses, and female urological problems.

### Emma Mathews

Emma is a psychotherapist, trained in psychosexual and relationship therapy, cognitive behavioural therapy and EMDR. She is currently employed by the NHS in Manchester as a psychosexual therapist and has a private psychotherapy practice; she has a special interest in sexual problems and trauma.

## Guidelines for pre-referral screen

Description of problem	Guideline for pre-referral screen: female
<b>Vaginismus</b>	Please carry out an examination of the vagina and vulva to assess the extent of the problem, and to exclude any organic cause.
<b>Dyspareunia</b>	As above, after excluding infection and other physical problems.
<b>Orgasmic disorder</b>	Please check thyroid function, full blood count and HbA1c.
<b>Sexual interest &amp; arousal disorder</b>	Please check thyroid function, full blood count, HbA1c, urea and electrolytes, and liver function tests. If the patient reports amenorrhoea or oligomenorrhoea, also check total and free testosterone levels, SHBG, FSH, LH and prolactin.

### How the service works...

- Referrals are regularly triaged to assess which members of the team may be best placed to see the client for initial assessment.
- The team meet once a month to discuss referrals and care.
- If the client needs to see another member of the team we aim to offer an appointment within the week.



# Guidelines for pre-referral screen

Description of problem	Guideline for pre-referral screen: male
<b>Erectile dysfunction</b>	<p>Please provide details of drug and alcohol intake, and BMI.</p> <p>Check the vascular status of lower limbs.</p> <p>Please check thyroid function, urea and electrolytes, liver function tests, early morning (9 am) testosterone levels, LH and FSH, HbA1c, prolactin, cholesterol and lipid profiles. Please treat if abnormal.</p> <p>If age 50+ please check prostate specific antigen, perform a digital rectal examination if the patient has lower urinary tract symptoms and also perform an ECG.</p> <p>Please use the following screening measures and provide scores:</p> <p>International Index of Erectile Function (IIEF)</p> <p>International Prostate Symptom Scores (IPSS)</p> <p>Please carry out an examination of external genitalia to assess for phimosis, Peyronies disease, hypogonadism, etc.</p>
<b>Delayed ejaculation</b>	Please check HbA1c.
<b>Premature ejaculation</b>	No screening tests required, unless dictated by history or clinical findings.
<b>Orgasmic disorder</b>	No screening tests required.
<b>Sexual interest &amp; arousal disorder</b>	As for erectile dysfunction.

## Who is the service for?

### Men & women with sexual difficulties...

Sexual difficulties can be hard to talk about and can also put a strain on intimate relationships.

The North West Sexual Wellbeing Service has been established to ensure that patients who come to us with a sexual difficulty experience a smooth, multi-professional approach to care, and

are able to access consultation, ongoing appointments, and medical interventions if required from a team of experienced professionals who are able to address and advise on the medical, physical, emotional, relational and psychological aspects of the problem.



### Problems we can treat include...

- Problems getting or keeping an erection
- Reaching sexual climax too quickly, or unable to reach sexual climax at all
- Finding sex painful
- Difficulty having penetrative sex
- Problems with desire and arousal



## What is different about this service?

- Frequently when people experience sexual difficulties trying to access appropriate help and support can be a frustrating process, with long waiting times between different services.
- We realise that intimate relationships are important which is why we believe care should be easy to access and that once problems are identified patients are offered help as soon as possible.
- Often sexual problems seem to be physical, as people experience physical symptoms (e.g. pain or loss of erection). However sometimes there is also a psychological aspect that maintains the problem (e.g. 'performance anxiety' or fear).
- For some people, even if the sexual difficulty is purely organic in nature, the problem may have impacted on the patient's intimate relationship and they may wish to discuss this and be given strategies on how to get things back on track sexually.
- Key questions to consider when thinking of referring to the service are - has the problem impacted on the patient's relationship, or made them avoid relationships? Does the problem make them feel anxious, depressed or afraid? Would they like to talk to someone about this?



## How can patients access this service?

- Patients can be referred via their GP alternatively they can self-refer to the service.
- We have pre-referral screening advice which means, depending on their symptoms, any recommended tests can be completed by the GP prior to referral, this means we can exclude certain reasons for the problem prior to seeing them. If they self-refer we can arrange these tests.
- We have a referral form to be completed by either the GP or the patient. This gives us a little information before the appointment to help us assess who may be the best person to see them initially. Referral forms can be sent to Spire Murrayfield Hospital Wirral and our team will contact the patient to offer an appointment.
- Links to the referral forms and the pre-referral screening advice can be found on the North West Sexual Wellbeing Service page of the Spire Murrayfield Hospital Wirral website.
- The team are also happy to answer any questions you may have, and their contact details have been included on the back page of this leaflet.



## How to find us



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