

Managing Memory Together



Memory Assessment Services

Living well while waiting for a memory assessment

We provide specialist assessment, diagnosis and treatment for people worried about memory and offer support to their carers.

There are many causes of memory loss - including the normal changes which occur with old age. We aim to identify the cause of memory loss and discuss possible treatments. Early diagnosis and support is essential, particularly with dementia. If you want to talk about your appointment before you meet the team then please get in touch.

Taking care of your well-being

Waiting for a memory assessment can be a difficult time. You may be worried about your appointment, not know where to turn to learn more about what might happen next or about where to get help in the meantime. There are some practical ways you can take care of your well-being during this time, and this leaflet has advice and information on support available.

You may also find the experience of waiting frustrating, and mood changes and symptoms can affect relationships with those closest to you. Some people find that the different experience for you and your family member or friend may cause tension. Taking part in activities together, being able to share your worries or concerns with a friend or family member, and supporting each other can help. This section explains different ways to take care of your well-being during this waiting time.

Tips for taking care of your mental well-being

Sleep well

Making good quality sleep a priority is important. Taking time to unwind before bed without screens can help. Replace screen time with activities such as reading a book. Sticking to a regular routine for bedtime and waking up can also help.

Spend time outside each day on a walk

Taking the time to go outside and walk is a great way to clear your mind and is also great for your well-being. You might even have a local healthy walk scheme you can link up with to make some new friends or find some new places to walk.

Maintain your connection to loved ones

When you're feeling stressed, sometimes the last thing you want is to see people. Nevertheless, maintaining your connections to family and friends who can provide support and an ear to listen can be a great way to look after your mental well-being.

Continue making time for the things you enjoy

What makes a good day for you will be totally different to what a good day is to the next person. You may find it useful to make a list of the things you enjoy doing, so you can plan activities to create more good days.



Preparing for your memory assessment

About memory assessments

If you have been referred for a memory assessment it is common to want to know more about the process. This might include waiting times, what the difference between a virtual and in person appointment is, what to expect on the day, and who you will see when you are there. This section of the booklet has been created to help you know what to expect and to prepare for the appointment.



Waiting times

If you are struggling while you wait for an appointment, or feel like you or your loved one's condition is worsening or becoming difficult to manage, please contact your GP or memory clinic for advice.

Screening Calls

A memory assessment nurse will contact you to discuss which of the following options will be the best method for your memory assessment:

- Telephone
- Video Call
- Clinic
- Home visit

Following the screening call, an appointment letter will be sent which will tell you the time and place of your memory assessment. If not convenient, please contact us.

Things to think about in advance

Recording your appointments

You might have multiple appointments as part of the memory assessment process. To help you keep track you could write these in your diary or calendar.

Questions you want to ask

You should feel comfortable asking any questions you need answering at your memory assessment. Preparing a list of questions in advance might help, so you don't forget anything important.

Recording your symptoms

The more information the people at the memory clinic have about your experience, the easier it will be for them to provide you with answers about your health. Please record any symptoms and take these to your appointment.

What will happen during a memory assessment?

During your assessment, there are a number of different ways your memory nurse or doctor may choose to make a diagnosis. Each one will depend on your individual situation so you may not go through everything below.

Taking a history: The nurse or doctor will take a detailed medical and family history. The aim of this is to gather information to understand what might be causing the problems you, or those around you, might have noticed. As part of this, you will be asked about your personal history and your current difficulties. It helps if someone who knows you well is also with you, as they can help describe any changes or problems they've noticed.

Testing: Tests are carried out to check mental abilities such as memory or thinking.

These tests assess a number of different mental abilities, including your short and long-term memory, concentration and attention span, language and communication skills, and awareness of time and place.

Brain scans: Brain scans are used to aid diagnosis. These will be requested by your GP.

ECG test: An electrocardiogram may be done to understand how your heart is functioning.

What happens after my first appointment?

It may be necessary to have a head scan and / or appointments to see other members of the team such as a:

- Psychologist
- Occupational Therapist
- Speech and Language Therapist
- Physiotherapist

When all the assessments have been completed, we will contact you to discuss the results and where appropriate, we will offer a diagnosis. We can also advise on possible treatments available and answer any questions.

What happens after diagnosis?

If given a diagnosis, roughly four weeks after your diagnosis appointment, we will contact you again to see how you are getting on, and to talk about things that may be worrying you. This will include details of what happens next and possible follow up appointments.

We will tell you about services that can support you including the Dementia Adviser Service provided by the Alzheimer's Society.

We will also refer you to our Information and Education Service who can provide you with information about the group sessions they offer for people with dementia and family and friends that support them.

Exploring available support

You don't need to wait until you have a diagnosis from a memory clinic in order to access help and support. If you are struggling now, there are organisations that can help.

In this section, you'll find some questions to help you think about the kind of support you might need, as well as a list of organisations you can contact to get it.

What support you might need

There are different types of support available. Here is an overview of some of the most common types.

Practical support

This includes things like help for getting to and from your appointments, support with finances, day-to-day tasks around the house, and support managing your symptoms.

Emotional support

This relates to mental health and things you can do to support your emotional well-being.

Clinical support

This includes anything related to your health for which you may need to go back to your GP or memory clinic.

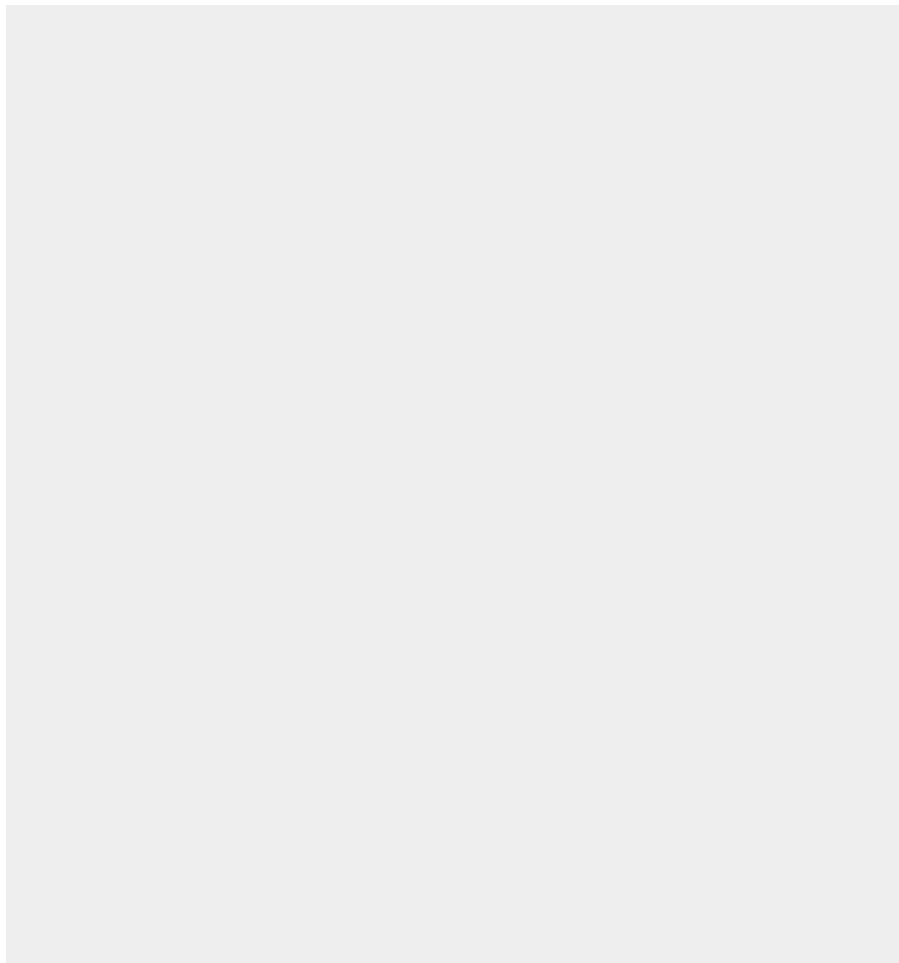
Social support

This includes maintaining your connections to your family, friends and community, and ensuring you're able to continue doing the things that matter to you.

Thinking about what support you might need

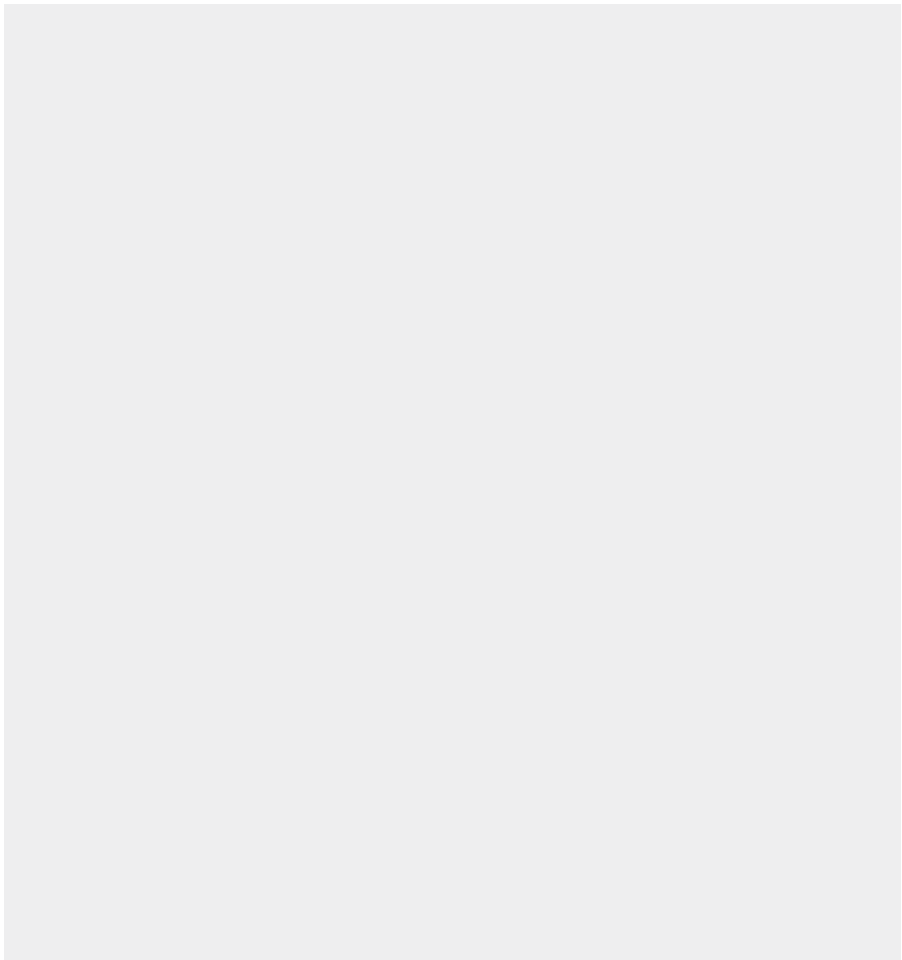
Emotional support

- What does a good day/bad day look like for me?
- What activities do I enjoy that I want to keep doing?
- Would I like to take someone to my assessment for support?
- Would I like to talk to other people who are in the same position as me?



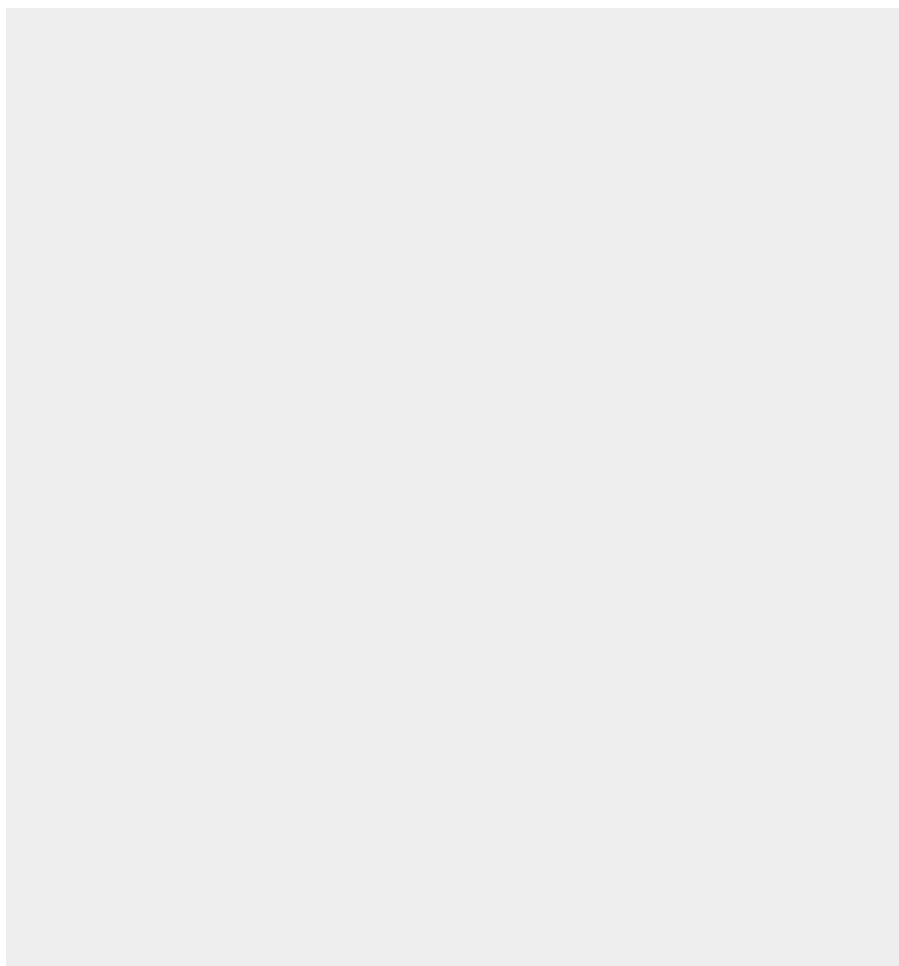
Clinical support

- Are there any other health needs I need to discuss with my GP?
- Are any of my symptoms worsening or becoming unmanageable?
- What questions do I want to ask at my memory clinic appointment?
- Are there any communication needs I can tell my GP/memory clinic about to help me during my appointment?



Social support

- What groups or activities are there in my local area, that I could attend?
- What does my support network look like?
- Who would I see more of if I could?
- Are there ways I could connect online more with friends or family members?



Practical support

- How will I get to my appointment?
- What do I need to do for a remote appointment?
- What's working/not working for me at the moment?
- What helps me make decisions?
- Are there any adaptations I need around the home to help me stay independent?
- Would any assistive technology, or memory aids help me?

Who can I contact for support?

While you are waiting for your memory assessment, these organisations will talk through your current worries or difficulties and help you access information.

Managing Memory Together

Managing Memory provides specialist memory assessment and support services to people with memory problems and dementia. You can also arrange to come along to one of our group information sessions. Contact **0800 694 8800** or email managingmemory@ghc.nhs.uk

Alzheimer's Society

The Alzheimer's Society is able to provide fact sheets to learn more, or offer practical support with things like driving and assistive technology. You can also call their helpline for more specific advice. You do not need to have a diagnosis of dementia to access support from Alzheimer's Society. Contact Alzheimer's Society on **01452 525222** or email gloucestershire@alzheimers.org.uk or visit alzheimers.org.uk

Social Prescribing Link Worker

A social prescribing link worker can be accessed through your GP. They are aware of all of the groups and activities in your area and can help you find things to do that match your interests and to meet other people in your community.

Advocacy services

If you feel like you'd like to have support at appointments to make your feelings better known, and to ensure you are being listened to, and having your questions answered, you can have an independent advocate attend with you. This can be accessed through your local council.

Dementia UK & Young Onset

Looking for information or advice about dementia or Alzheimer's?

Call the Dementia UK Helpline on **0800 888 6678** for support from dementia specialist Admiral Nurses or visit www.dementiauk.org

Gloucestershire Carers Hub

Here to support carers, working with you so that you receive the right information and support at the right time for you.

Contact **0300 111 9000** or visit www.gloucestershirecarershub.co.uk

Your Circle

A directory to help you find your way around care and support and connect with people, places and activities in Gloucestershire. Visit www.yourcircle.org.uk

If you have any questions about your appointment or you need more information please contact us:



Telephone us on **0800 694 8800**



Email us at managingmemory@ghc.nhs.uk



Find out more by visiting www.ghc.nhs.uk and search Managing Memory Together

This booklet has been produced as part of the 'Next Steps' initiative. If you would like more copies or want this leaflet in another format, please contact:



Communications Team
Gloucestershire Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust
Edward Jenner Court
1010 Pioneer Avenue
Brockworth, Gloucester
GL3 4AW

You can also email us at:



ghccomms@ghc.nhs.uk

