

NELFT Psychiatric drug Deprescribing Clinic (PDC)

Aim of service:

To support patients to stop unnecessary or unwanted psychiatric medication prescribed for common mental health conditions.

Context:

Many patients are prescribed drugs for mental health problems that they no longer should use drugs for. This may be because:

- the condition for which the medication was first prescribed has improved, or
- the balance of harms and benefits has become unfavourable, or
- the medication is no longer needed, or
- patients would like to stop their medications.

Sometimes stopping these medications can be a difficult process because of withdrawal effects or due to de-stabilising an underlying condition.

The clinic

The Psychiatric drug Deprescribing Clinic (PDC) at North East London NHS Foundation Trust (NELFT) is now able to assist patients to reduce or stop their psychiatric medication. It is staffed by psychiatrists and pharmacists who have expertise in safe deprescribing of psychiatric medications (including tapering at a rate that is tolerable to the patient).

The clinic is open to referrals from:

- GPs in Havering, Redbridge and Barking and Dagenham place

Inclusion criteria:

- Over the age of 18
- The clinic is set up to help people to stop these medications which can include:
- Antidepressants: citalopram, escitalopram, fluoxetine, fluvoxamine, mirtazapine, paroxetine, sertraline, venlafaxine and duloxetine, etc.
- Benzodiazepines such as diazepam and lorazepam, etc.
- Z-drugs, such as zopiclone and zolpidem.
- Gabapentinoids, such as pregabalin and gabapentin.
- Antipsychotics, when prescribed for sleep or mood problems (but not for schizophrenia or bipolar disorder) such as quetiapine.
- Any patient who would consider reducing or stopping any one (or more) of the above medications or who would be interested in discussing the possibility (we are able to help patients who are ambivalent about medication think through their options, but it is generally difficult to manage patients who have no interest in reducing their medication).



Exclusion criteria for the service include:

- Patients who are opposed to stopping their medication (we are able to counsel ambivalent patients, but not able to compel people who are opposed to reducing their medication).
- Patients in crisis or actively suicidal.
- Patients who are under the care of a secondary mental health team.
- Patients who do not have a local prescriber.
- Patients for whom the risks of deprescribing are deemed too high to be conducted in the community.
- Patients with a primary diagnosis of a psychotic disorder, bipolar disorder or dementia.
- Significant drug and alcohol problems (in which case they may be more suitable for a D+A service).

The service can range from a one-off appointment with advice given about the benefits and risks of stopping medication, advice about the best way to approach dose reduction and a letter for the treating GP, or it could consist of support over weeks or months to guide and support a patient through the process of stopping medication. Treating doctors will be informed of progress.

For referral form and details required please click on the link as follows:



referral form

Referrals by email:

nelft.havingreferrals@nelft.nhs.uk

Referrals by post:

Single Point of Access (SPA)
Yew Tree Resource Centre
20 Yew Tree Gardens
Romford, Essex RM7 9AA

Any queries please call the Single Point of Access (SPA) on: 0300 555 1253

