



Happier | Healthier | Hopeful

First Step

Talking therapies to help manage depression and anxiety

We all feel low or worried sometimes. Usually these feelings fade away on their own. But when the feelings won't go away, or start to interfere with your daily life, First Step can help you get back on track.

First Step provides free talking therapies to adults in Cumbria with common problems such as mild to moderate depression and anxiety disorders. We are part of the national Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) programme.

How can we help?

Feelings First Step can help you manage include:

- depression

- anxiety – for example, panic attacks, phobias, obsessions or chronic worry

- problems that remain longer than you would expect following a traumatic incident

 - for example, an assault or a car crash.

What we'll do

Listen: Our trained practitioners will listen to you and try to understand how you have been feeling. We'll help you decide what to do next.

Direct: We'll suggest good sources of self-help information. We may simply point you to ways you can help yourself, or we may recommend a talking treatment.

Treat: Talking treatments give you time to discuss your thoughts and feelings with your practitioner and most importantly work with you to identify positive actions you can take.

How to access First Step

If you think we can help, ask your GP if they think First Step is right for you. If they agree, they will refer you to our service. This is usually the best route as it allows your GP to consider a range of options for you. You can also refer yourself by completing the online referral form online at www.firststepcumbria.nhs.uk or by telephoning **0300 123 9122** within office hours. Our staff will collect some basic information and arrange for a practitioner to phone you back for an initial telephone assessment (lasting 30-40 minutes).

Before your appointment, we will send you a pack of brief questionnaires to fill in. Your answers help us understand your problems and collect the information we need.



If it is agreed that you would benefit from therapy with First Step, subsequent appointments are either face-to-face or on the telephone and last between 30 and 50 minutes depending on the type of therapy required.

If you are not happy with your treatment, please discuss this with your practitioner. If you feel unable to do this, please ring First Step on 0300 123 9122 to discuss other options.

Your First Step record

While you are receiving treatment from First Step, your practitioner will keep a computerised record of your progress. This helps them to keep your information accurate and decide what care you need. It is also helpful if they need to refer you to another service.

If you have concerns about some information your practitioner keeps, please talk to them. If you feel unable to do this, or you are not happy with the outcome, please write to First Step at the address below.

Confidentiality

We will store your information safely and you can expect us to treat it with care and confidentiality. We will share information with your GP and other health services involved in your care.

If you would like us to, we can share information with family and carers. It is your decision who you share information with.

We might also use your information for:

- training and educating staff
- research, approved by the Local Research Ethics Committee
- measuring and improving our service.

If we do, it will not include details that identify you.

Sharing your information without consent

There may be rare times when we have to pass on information about you without your consent, for example:

- to prevent risk to yourself or others
- investigation or prevention of serious crime
- formal court order.

However, the guiding principle is we hold your information in strict confidence. You can find out more in the factsheet 'Confidentiality: a guide for people who use our services'.

Accessing your First Step records

Informal access: Your practitioner will, where appropriate, allow you to see what they have written about you. This is called informal access, and you do not have to fill in any forms.

Formal access: However, if your practitioner considers that giving you access to what they have written about you might cause you serious distress or harm, or could identify another person, they have the authority to decline your request. If this happens, you can apply for formal access.

Ask your practitioner for an access to records form and the leaflet 'Can I see my health records?' This explains more about formal access. Before you submit your formal application, we recommend that you discuss your plans with your practitioner. You might find that a discussion gives you information in a more useful way than seeing your record.

Contact us

If you have any questions about First Step or want to find out more about your records, please contact:

First Step

Elmwood
2a Tynefield Drive
Penrith CA11 8JA
0300 123 9122

Feedback

We appreciate and encourage feedback, which helps us to improve our services. If you have any comments, compliments or complaints to make about your care, please contact the Patient Experience Team.

Email: PET@cumbria.nhs.uk Tel: 01228 602128 Freephone: 0800 633 5547

If you would like this factsheet in another language or format, for example Braille, large print or audio, please call:

01228 603890

E: communications.helpdesk@cumbria.nhs.uk

Or write to Engagement and Communications
Voreda House | Portland Place | Penrith | CA11 7QQ



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