

Group Clinics: Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What group clinics?

A: Group clinics are a way for you to spend more time with your specialist or community doctor, nurse or GP, get your one to one review and get answers to your questions alongside others living with similar health issues. You may also get advice from specialist nurses and doctors, pharmacists, physiotherapists, dieticians, social prescribing link workers and health coaches in this way.

You spend longer with the clinician than you would in a one to one appointment. People find having more time for questions and the chance to learn from other people's experiences and share their own mean they learn more, cope better and often succeed in keeping themselves well.

Q: What happens at a group clinic?

A: At your group clinic you get the clinical review and support you need. You get answers to your specific questions and there is group discussion about health issues too.

Your group clinic lasts between 60 and 90 minutes. There are usually 6-8 people in a group.

You will report to the surgery reception and a member of the team will direct you, there will be a facilitator and their job is to keep the group together and make sure the clinic stays on track.

They will ask you to confirm your identity, sign the agreement document and check you are happy to take part. Then they will start the session by reminding everyone in the group to keep information confidential and to follow some simple group rules or understandings that help you to get the most out of the clinic and your time with your clinician.

Each member of the group introduces themselves. There is time to review and understand your condition and your main concerns about it. Then you come up with questions for your clinician who joins the group after about 15 minutes. When the clinician joins, they discuss and answer common questions with the group. Each individual will have the opportunity to speak to the doctor in turn while the rest of the group benefit from hearing the consultation. The facilitator wraps up after 60-90 minutes and you get the chance to reflect on what you have learnt and what you want to do next to keep well. Watch this short video that explains the group clinic process:

English

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bNFhYSp6WDU>

Welsh

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TG09P0TZwWk&t=3s>

Q: Do I consent to participate?

A: Yes, there is a consent process in place and this helps you and others stay safe and preserves the whole group's confidentiality. Watch a video explaining the consent process here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N8eCFkxAwVE>

Q: What's benefit of a group clinic?

A: Group clinics are a very engaging consultation model for people with a whole range of health care issues. They are a real and better alternative for many people.

Group clinics are up and running all over the UK. They have proved popular. People say that they enjoy hearing the experiences and getting advice from other people in a similar situation. They also like having longer with the clinician to talk about their concerns and for questions. They enjoy sharing what has worked for them with others and hearing about others' successes. They feel less isolated and alone, managing their health issues.

Q: Can I still have a one to one telephone or face to face consultation with my doctor or nurse?

A: Yes if you would prefer a one to one consultation please speak to a member of our reception team.

Q: What happens if I am late joining?

A: Our policy is if you are more than 5 minutes late you will be unable to participate. This is because it is important that everyone is checked in, consents and signs up to the group understandings at the start. It is very disruptive for the group when people join late. If you are late, get in touch and we will book you into another group clinic or remote consultation. Contact us to re-book here: 01889 562145 opt1

Q: How do I know a group clinic is for me?

A: You won't know until you give it a go! People tell us they really enjoy the experience. Group clinics might not suit everyone. If you are feeling anxious beforehand, let the facilitator know. It is also OK to join a group and just listen and see if it is for you. You can even join in and decide to leave if it isn't right for you. At any point you can leave a group, you can do.

Q: What happens if I don't want to say anything in a group clinic?

A: Do let your facilitator know if you are feeling worried about being in a group. It is OK to join a group to just listen. You will still learn a lot and many people who do this and end up joining in once they feel comfortable.

Q: What happens if I change my mind when I'm in a group clinic?

A: If you feel the group clinic isn't working for you, let the facilitator know. You can leave at any time. The team asks for feedback at the end of every group clinic so let your facilitator know if you think things could be improved.

Q: Can my partner, friend or carer join me in my group clinic?

A: Yes, with your agreement. It is often very useful for family members, carers or friends who support you to join. They need to consent to take part and agree to respect confidentiality, and confirm their identity just like other participants. Ideally you should just invite one person to join you; otherwise groups can get too large. Please let the facilitator know ahead of the time so we can add their name to the register.

Q: How is my health information kept confidential during a group?

A: We assure this in three ways. First, before the group, all participants sign an agreement to not to share any information discussed within the group. Unlike the confidentiality regulations surrounding a doctor's obligation to keep all information confidential, this is not enforceable by law. However, as all participants will be sharing personal information, it is in everyone's interests to respect this.

Second, when you join the session, the facilitator asks you to consent to share limited and relevant information about your condition with the group. This information will be shared with the group in the form of a Discussion Board. You consent verbally.

Third, the clinic team makes a record that you have consented and note this in your computer record.

Clinic teams get training and support in preserving confidentiality and safe information sharing.

Q: Will there be any follow up after the group clinic?

A: If you have any private concerns or the clinician feels you needs some further one to one time or follow up, then you can be booked in for a follow-up one to one appointment as usual. We expect you will have a positive experience and will book in to further group clinics when you are invited.

Q: Can patients get together and form their own groups after a group clinic?

A: Yes. Some people find that they get on really well, form friendships and want to carry on meeting to support each other after they meet at group clinics. Getting involved if this happens is your choice. Being part of a support group helps some people stick to their goals and keep motivated to make lifestyle changes that may help with you manage your condition and recovery. Your clinician can refer you to support groups that already exist. Ask about this if you are interested.

Any other questions?

If you have other questions or if you have been to a group clinic and want to add to this list of questions to help other patients, please get in touch with your clinic team. Thank you.

