



**St Patrick's**  
Mental Health Services

Eating Disorders  
Service at St Patrick's  
Mental Health  
Services

Inpatient, outpatient, day patient and  
aftercare services to support recovery  
from eating disorders

# About the Eating Disorders Service at St Patrick's Mental Health Services

The Eating Disorders Service at St Patrick's Mental Health Services (SPMHS) provides specialist inpatient, outpatient, day patient and aftercare services to individuals over the age of 18 with:

- Binge eating disorder
- Anorexia nervosa
- Bulimia nervosa
- Other specified feeding and eating disorder (OFSED).

The service is delivered by a multidisciplinary team of experienced and qualified mental health professionals who are dedicated to working together to treat and support individuals towards recovery from an eating disorder.

Care is provided on an inpatient, outpatient or day patient basis, according to the needs of the individual, with assessment and delivery of treatment led by the Consultant Psychiatrist.



The Eating Disorders Service is fully integrated and service users can step-up or step-down from one aspect of the service to another, depending on their needs and stage of recovery.

The mission of the Eating Disorders Service is to provide high-quality, comprehensive and evidence-based treatments and services to individuals experiencing eating disorders.

Learn more about our Eating Disorders Service [here](#).

# Eating disorders we treat

## *Binge eating disorder*

Binge eating disorder is a type of eating disorder where a person repeatedly eats a large amount of food, over a specified period of time, with a marked sense of being out of control. It is the most common eating disorder. It can occur in anyone, at any age, and with any body shape or size. It is associated with strong feelings of distress.

In an episode of binge eating, a person will typically report at least three of the following behaviours or feelings:

- Eating a lot more quickly than usual
- Consuming large volumes of food even when they are not physically hungry
- Continuing to eat until they are uncomfortably full (including getting stomach pains)
- Eating on their own due to embarrassment
- Feeling guilt, disgust, or depressed after binge eating.

# *Anorexia nervosa*

Anorexia nervosa is a type of eating disorder which affects the person's relationship with food and their body. It causes the person to become preoccupied with weight and body shape to the point that weight loss becomes a central feature of their life.

Symptoms of anorexia nervosa may include:

- Deliberate weight loss with restriction of food intake
- Weight below 85% of expected weight
- Fear of gaining weight and over-evaluation of shape and weight
- Amenorrhea (absence of menstruation) for three months or longer
- Physical symptoms such as fatigue, hypothermia, slow pulse
- Depression
- Preoccupation with food and enjoyment of cooking for others
- Social withdrawal.

# *Bulimia nervosa*

Bulimia nervosa is a type of eating disorder which affects a person's relationship with food and their body. Individuals with binge eating disorder experience recurrent episodes of uncontrolled overeating (binges). Individuals experiencing bulimia nervosa think a lot about their body weight and shape and it affects their ability to have a "normal" eating pattern.

The three main features of bulimia nervosa are:

- Intense preoccupation with body weight and shape
- Repetitive episodes of binge eating (uncontrollably eating large quantities of food, usually within two hours)
- Binge eating reinforces people's fear of becoming fat and leads to a cycle of repeated counteractive extreme weight control behaviour such as:
  - Self-induced vomiting
  - Laxative and diuretic abuse
  - Fasting
  - Excessive exercise.

## *Other specified feeding and eating disorder*

Other specified feeding and eating disorder (OSFED) may apply to individuals who do not meet the full criteria for anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa or binge eating disorder. They may experience clinically significant symptoms that are problematic and distressing in how they manage their relationship with food.

Sub-types of OSFED include:

- Atypical anorexia nervosa
- Bulimia nervosa of low frequency/limited duration
- Binge eating disorder of low frequency/limited duration
- Purging disorder
- Night eating syndrome.

# Inpatient care

Based at St Patrick's University Hospital, Dublin 8, the inpatient service in Clara Ward provides specialist and comprehensive assessment and treatment based on each individual's needs, with a multidisciplinary team dedicated to working inclusively with service users to provide focused and individualised treatment to support recovery. Medical, psychological and nutritional needs are assessed, and an individual care plan is created in collaboration with service users, and if appropriate, their families.





The initial care plan includes monitoring of physical health, meal plan review and review by a consultant psychiatrist and dietitian.

Inpatient care seeks to medically stabilise service users, monitor for risk of medical complications, provide a supportive environment during the initial phase of weight restoration and provide a supportive environment to reduce eating disorder behaviours.

The inpatient Eating Disorders Service includes:

- Consultant-led diagnostic evaluation
- Dietetic assessment and management
- Medical monitoring of physical and laboratory status
- Meal support therapy
- Family support and education
- Group work provided on an individual need's basis including: body image work, mindfulness-based stress reduction, self-esteem work and personal development, wellness and recovery and goal groups, and compassion-focused therapy
- Cognitive behavioural therapy
- Recreational programme
- Occupational therapy
- Psychological assessment and intervention.

# When is inpatient admission indicated?



Inpatient treatment is indicated for service users with:

- Experience of anorexia nervosa who require monitoring and support during the early phase of weight restoration or require a more supportive environment to help manage eating disorder behaviours
- Experience of binge eating disorders or bulimia nervosa who require a more supportive environment to help manage their eating disorder behaviour.

The inpatient service provides a focused admission for individuals with complicated behaviours secondary to bulimia nervosa or binge eating disorders.

## Outpatient care

Provided via SPMHS' Dean Clinic in St Patrick's University Hospital, the outpatient Eating Disorders Service provides comprehensive assessment, treatment and follow-up by a team of experienced and dedicated staff.

As with the inpatient service, the outpatient service caters for individuals over the age of 18 with binge eating disorder, anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa and other specified feeding and eating disorder (OSFED).

The initial assessment and diagnostic evaluation of individuals is done on an outpatient basis. Following this assessment, an individual care plan is developed based on needs of the service user.

The outpatient Eating Disorders Service includes:

- Consultant-led diagnostic evaluation
- Dietetic assessment and management
- Medical monitoring of physical and laboratory status
- Cognitive behavioural therapy
- Psychological assessment and intervention
- Specialist supportive clinical management therapy.

# Day programmes

SPMHS' Day Care Eating Disorders Service, offering a number of programmes to support eating disorder recovery, is an alternative to hospitalisation for those who need extra support but can manage with less intensive treatments. Admission to day programmes may also be as a step-down from inpatient care or a step-up from outpatient care.

Day programmes available as part of the Eating Disorders Service include:

- **Eating Disorders Treatment Information Programme:**

This one-day group programme is aimed at individuals who are experiencing eating difficulties and who would like to learn more about recovery from eating disorders and treatment options available. The comprehensive programme offers participants the opportunity to learn more about eating disorder recovery through presentations from a wide range of clinicians specialising in eating disorder care and treatment. This programme also provides onward referral to inpatient or day patient treatment options.

- **Compassion-Focused Therapy for Eating Disorders:**

This programme offers comprehensive psychological therapy for people who can manage recovery from their eating disorder in the community. The group is open to any individual with an eating disorder diagnosis and incorporates education for both service users and their supporters, as well as skill-building and therapeutic elements. The group helps participants to treat themselves more compassionately and to foster social connectedness.

- **Eating Disorders Day Care Programme:**

The Eating Disorders Day Care Programme is a hybrid programme, with some online sessions and some in-person sessions, with the programme length varying for each participant depending on their individual needs. The programme provides care for people over the age of 18 who are experiencing anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa and binge eating disorder, and also offers treatment for people with eating disorder symptoms caused by other mental health difficulties. The programme has a primary focus on group work, with groups facilitated by nursing, psychology, social work, art therapy, dietetics and occupational therapy.

- **Eating Disorders Day Care Service -  
Binge Eating Stream:**

This programme is a 12-week multidisciplinary team-led intervention, which focuses on people's experiences of binge eating and explores the underlying and maintaining factors that influence participants' eating patterns.

Through the group, there is a focus on exposure work, with skills-building to cope and manage eating patterns, associated thoughts and emotions more effectively.

## Aftercare

The Eating Disorders Service at SPMHS also provides aftercare services. Aftercare is an opportunity for those who have completed the day care programmes to maintain their recovery through peer support and ongoing professional guidance. It is available one-half day per fortnight for up to a year.

# Eating disorder recovery workshops for families

The Eating Disorders Service offers a programme for families or supporters of people experiencing eating disorders. The programme, 'Supporting an Adult in Their Eating Disorder Recovery: Information and Skills Workshops', aims to support family members and/or supporters of a person with an eating disorder through education and skills development.



Participants of the programme attend an online group workshop once a week for four weeks in a row. The workshops are run by members of the multidisciplinary Eating Disorders Service team and take place over two hours in an afternoon session.



The programme is open to family members and supporters of service users, with two participants per service user welcome to attend; they can each be either a family member or supporter of the service user.

# How to access the Eating Disorders Service at St Patrick's Mental Health Services

To access the Eating Disorders Service at SPMHS, individuals need to be referred by a GP or other healthcare professional, for example a consultant psychiatrist.

Upon receipt of a referral, the service user will be assessed prior to admission at the outpatient service, which is located at the Dean Clinic in St Patrick's University Hospital. When the Dean Clinic team receives this referral form, the GP and the service user will receive confirmation of an appointment.

St Patrick's Mental Health Services is an independent service, with our services covered in three key ways: private health insurance, self-funding or via the Health Service Executive in certain circumstances.

**Our Referral and Assessment Service is available to help with any queries related to accessing services.**

**Tel: 01 249 3635.**



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