

VOICES CLINIC

How to make referrals to the Voices Clinic

Referrals can be made by writing to:

Professor Philip McGuire

Voices Clinic

**PO 67, Department of
Psychological Medicine**

Institute of Psychiatry

De Crespigny Park

London SE5 8AF

In most cases, clients remain under the care of the referring clinician, and are seen on an outpatient basis at the Maudsley Hospital.



South London
and Maudsley
NHS Trust



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A clinical service offering
assessment and treatment
for people with auditory
hallucinations.

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Introduction

Voices (auditory verbal hallucinations) are one of the most frequently reported symptoms of psychotic disorders. They can also be experienced by people who have no formal psychiatric diagnosis.

The form and content of voices varies from person to person: they can be experienced inside or outside the head, they can be commentary or imperative, and either pleasant or derogatory. People can hear a number of different voices, and sometimes a voice can be recognised by the voice hearer as a familiar or famous person. Voices can cause considerable distress and disability.

The first line of treatment is medication, but not everyone responds to this. Psychological interventions can be effective and there are new treatments, such as transcranial magnetic stimulation, which also look promising.

Aims of the Voices Clinic

This is a specialist service offering assessment, formulation, and treatment for people experiencing auditory hallucinations.

The clinic has been operating for the last four years, and has developed methods of assessment and treatment informed by clinical research on hallucinations.

The service aims to:

- Reduce the frequency and intensity of voices
- Reduced associated distress and disability
- Improve understanding of voices by clients
- Enhance general functioning
- Help the referrer to manage clients with voices

Who would benefit from the service?

- People with voices or voice-like symptoms that are difficult to evaluate, and who would benefit from detailed assessment and investigation.
- People who are experiencing distressing voices.
- People whose voices have been resistant to conventional treatment.
- We accept referrals for people aged between 18 and 65 years.
- The service is not restricted to patients with a particular diagnosis, and is available to people with no formal psychiatric disorder.

What the service offers

People referred to the clinic will initially be seen by a psychiatrist and a clinical psychologist for a detailed clinical assessment.

A range of further investigations may be subsequently employed, including questionnaires, symptom diaries, psychological tasks, and brain imaging.

We take a broad approach to assessment, formulation and treatment, considering a range of biological, psychological, and social factors that may be important in the development and maintenance of a person's voices.

The following treatments are available:

**Individual psychological therapy
(cognitive behaviour therapy; CBT)**

Group cognitive behaviour therapy

Pharmacological treatment

Trans-cranial magnetic stimulation (TMS)

Some of these treatments are being evaluated in clinical trials; participation in clinical trials is entirely optional.