

Bexley cardiology service

This leaflet provides information about the Bexley cardiology service to patients with heart problems who live in the borough.

If you have any further questions, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.

What is the Bexley cardiology service?

The Bexley cardiology service has been designed to allow you access to local care. Clinics are provided in the borough for you to:

- have your heart investigations
- see a cardiologist (doctor that specialises in the heart) or heart failure nurse specialist
- attend cardiac rehabilitation, a programme of exercise and information sessions to help you get back on your feet again after a heart attack, heart surgery or procedure.

Sometimes you may need a hospital appointment, and you can ask for your treatment to be arranged at a hospital that is most convenient for you.

Who can attend the service?

To be able to use this service you need to be 19 years or older and you need to be registered with a GP based in the London Borough of Bexley.

The normal route into the service is via your GP although you may be referred by your local hospital or a specialist nurse practitioner.

Where do I need to go for my local cardiac clinic appointments?

You can go to the places listed below for your local clinic appointments. Here you can also have some tests done to investigate your heart problem.

- Sidcup Kidney Treatment Centre, Queen Mary Hospital, Frogna Avenue, Sidcup DA14 6LT (Bexley Cardiology outpatient appointments are held in the Kidney Treatment Centre)
- Bexley Medical Group, 171 King Harold's Way, Bexleyheath, DA7 5RB

If you use a wheelchair or have mobility problems, please contact us using the appointment contact details at the end of this leaflet. Patient transport is available for those patients who are eligible.

What do I need to bring with me to my appointments, and does it cost anything?

It is useful to bring a list of your usual medication when seeing a consultant and you are welcome to arrive with a friend or escort. This service is provided by Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust, and patients are not charged to attend.

Useful information

The Bexley cardiology service, along with your own GP practice, can provide the cardiology diagnostic investigations described. These are undertaken by appropriately trained healthcare professionals and most can be performed in the GP practice setting, though cardiac CT scans and invasive coronary angiography will always be arranged at a nearby hospital.

Type of test	What the test involves
Blood tests	There are a variety of tests to monitor the activity of your heart which can be carried out by taking just a small sample of blood from a vein in your arm or by pricking your finger. For example, we can measure your cholesterol levels and cardiac enzymes, which show if there has been recent damage to your heart muscle.
Blood pressure (BP) monitoring	Blood pressure can be measured using a manual or automatic device. A cuff is placed around your arm and pumped up to restrict the blood flow. The pressure is then slowly released, as your pulse is checked, which allows a measurement to be taken.
Electrocardiogram (ECG)	The heart beats in response to an electrical signal generated in the heart. An ECG records and analyses this activity. A number of electrodes (small sticky patches) are put on your arms, legs and chest. The electrodes are connected to a machine that records the electrical signals of each heartbeat. Although an ECG can detect problems with your heart rhythm, an abnormal reading does not always mean there is anything wrong. Similarly, a normal reading does not always rule out heart problems.
X-rays	An X-ray may be used to look at the heart, lungs and chest wall. This can help rule out any other conditions that may be causing your symptoms.
Echocardiogram	An echocardiogram is similar to an ultrasound scan used in pregnancy. It produces a detailed picture of your heart using sound waves. The test can show the structure and pumping function of your heart. It can also identify the thickness of the heart muscle and the movement of each heart valve (a flap inside the heart which keeps blood moving one way).
Cardiac computerised tomography (CT) scan, also called CT coronary angiogram	A CT scan is a type of X-ray carried out in a scanner shaped like a ring donut. During the scan your head remains outside and you remain awake. This scan is used to get detailed pictures of your coronary arteries (the blood vessels that supply your heart with oxygen). A special dye is injected into your arm which shows the blood vessels on the scan.
Invasive coronary angiogram, also called cardiac catheterisation	In this procedure, a catheter (narrow hollow tube) is inserted in your blood vessel, usually in your groin (upper thigh). The catheter is inserted under local anaesthetic which numbs that area of the body but you remain awake during the procedure. The catheter is then passed through to your heart using X-ray images as guidance. We inject special dye through the catheter to show up any narrowing of your coronary arteries or disease.

Contact us

For general enquiries, please contact our secretary on **t:** 020 7188 5613.

If you have any queries or concerns about your appointments, please contact:

t: 020 7188 8952 for the consultant cardiologist appointment helpline

t: 01691 676 496 (option 1) for the cardiac diagnostic test appointment helpline

Both cardiac rehabilitation and heart failure nurse-led services are provided for us by Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust. Once you have been referred you will be given contact details for the heart failure or rehab nurse caring for you personally. You can call their office for general enquiries on **t:** 020 8319 7060.

All the above telephone numbers operate Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit **w:** www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets

Pharmacy Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline. **t:** 020 7188 8748, Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS) **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk

t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints) **e:** complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language and accessible support services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch. **t:** 020 7188 8815 **e:** languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day. **t:** 111

NHS website

Online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you take control of your health and wellbeing. **w:** www.nhs.uk

Was this leaflet useful?

We want to make sure the information you receive is helpful to you. If you have any comments about this leaflet, we would be happy to hear from you, fill in our simple online form, **w:** www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets, or **e:** patientinformationteam@gstt.nhs.uk

Leaflet number: 4193/VER2

Date published: January 2019

Review date: January 2022

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A list of sources is available on request