



Ataxia UK accredited Specialist Ataxia Centres – Sheffield

Ataxia UK accredited Specialist Ataxia Centres are centres of excellence, where people with ataxia receive the best possible quality of care and a co-ordinated service combining diagnosis, treatment, support and research. They have been set up in direct response to needs identified by people affected by ataxia, as well as clinicians with expertise in the condition.

To achieve accreditation, centres have to comply with criteria devised following consultation with patients with ataxia and clinicians with an expertise in ataxia, to provide 'excellence of care for the diagnosis and management of the ataxias, and access to a wide range of integrated services, as well as links to research programmes'.

The Sheffield Ataxia Centre

The Sheffield Ataxia Centre (SAC) at the Royal Hallamshire Hospital, Sheffield is the first Ataxia UK accredited Ataxia Centre in the North of England. It is a national ataxia centre that offers a highly specialised service for people with ataxia. They aim to provide:

- specialist expertise in the diagnosis and management of all ataxias
- signposting to the allied specialty services and local multidisciplinary teams
- research opportunities and offer links and collaboration with other ataxia centres and allied specialties
- An MDT approach with input from both the Doctors and Nurses

Specialist ataxia clinics

Specialist ataxia clinics are held at the Royal Hallamshire Hospital, Sheffield led by Prof Hadjivassiliou and Dr Shanmugarajah. All new referrals are seen by Consultant Neurologists. Diagnostic investigations available are dependent on the clinical presentation and may include blood tests, genetic testing, MRI brain including spectroscopy of the cerebellum, neurophysiology assessments, muscle biopsy etc. The specialist nurses offer follow up support with patients, providing specialist input, advice and support with ataxia symptoms and aiding appropriate referrals onto local therapy services if needed.

Other specialist clinics

- Multi-system atrophy (MSA) clinic
- Gluten ataxia clinic
- Combined paediatric ataxia clinic (working closely with the Ataxia UK-accredited Children's Ataxia Centre at Sheffield Children's Hospital)
- Paediatric to adult transition ataxia clinic

Allied specialty services and multidisciplinary therapy teams

The Sheffield Ataxia Centre has links with a number of other specialists at Royal Hallamshire Hospital, with expertise in managing ataxia related symptoms, and established referral pathways in the following disciplines:

- Diagnostic Genetics Service

- Inherited Cardiac Conditions Service
- Neuro-Ophthalmology Clinic
- Neuro-Outreach Therapy Services (physiotherapist / occupational therapist / speech and language therapist / specialist dietician)

Involvement in research

The SAC has international reputation for research expertise under the Academic Directorate of Neurosciences, Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and University of Sheffield. The SAC is research active (especially in the field of immune mediated ataxias) and has collaborations with allied specialties in the UK and abroad. Patients may have the opportunity to take part in research studies.

The Clinic team

The SAC was established in 1996 by Professor M Hadjivassiliou and was accredited by Ataxia UK as a Centre of Excellence in 2007. The SAC has expanded since and now consists of two consultant neurologists with specialist expertise in the ataxias, a GP with specialist interest (wSI) and two ataxia clinical nurse specialists.

Consultant Neurologists:

Professor Marios Hadjivassiliou
Dr Priya Darshni Shanmugarajah

GP wSI:

Dr Karen O'Connor

Clinical Nurse Specialists:

Emma Foster
Suzanna Duty

Anyone interested in getting an appointment to attend the ataxia clinic should ask their doctor or neurologist for a referral. Referrals are accepted from GPs (by NHS e-Referral Service) and neurologists throughout the UK.

Contact details for referrals:

Professor Marios Hadjivassiliou / Dr Priya Shanmugarajah
Sheffield Ataxia Centre
Department of Neurology
Royal Hallamshire Hospital
Glossop Road
Sheffield S10 2JF

Contact details for telephone enquiries:

Clinic appointments: 0114 271 1598
Secretary to Prof M Hadjivassiliou: 0114 271 2502
Secretary to Dr P Shanmugarajah: 0114 271 3708
Specialist ataxia nurses: 0114 271 3946