Face to Face Group Clinics: Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What are Face to Face (F2F) group clinics?
A: Face to Face group clinics are a way for you to spend more time with your specialist, community or practice nurse, your GP or clinical pharmacist to get your planned one-to-one review and answers to your questions. You see the clinician alongside others living with similar health issues. You may also get advice from physiotherapists, dieticians, social prescribing link workers and health coaches in this way.

You spend longer with the clinic team than you would in a one-to-one appointment. People often find that having more time to ask questions and the opportunity to learn from others' experiences enhances their understanding. This, in turn, improves their ability to cope and helps them manage their health more effectively.

Q: What happens at a F2F group clinic?
A: At your F2F group clinic you get the clinical review and the support you get in a one-to-one appointment. There is group discussion about shared concerns and questions. You get answers to all your specific questions. Your F2F group clinic lasts between 60 and 90 minutes. There are usually 8-10 people in the group.

When you arrive at the group clinic location, the group's facilitator – a member of the clinic team - greets you. The facilitator's job is to support the group and make sure the group clinic stays on track.

They will check you and everyone else is happy to consent to take part and will set the group up, explaining how the group session will flow. Then they will remind everyone in the group to keep what they hear about others confidential and ask everyone to follow some simple group rules or understandings so that everyone gets the most out of the clinic and their time with the clinician.

Each member of the group introduces themselves. Then you each come up with a question for the clinician who joins the group after about 15 minutes. When the clinician joins, the group discuss and get answers to common questions. There is more time so that you better understand your health issues. Each person has the opportunity to speak one-to-one with the clinician in turn while the rest of the group benefit from listening to the conversation. The facilitator starts to wrap up the clinical session after 45-60 minutes. Then there is a chance to reflect on what you have learnt and what you want to do next to keep well.

Click here for a short video of people talking about group clinics and their experiences: https://youtu.be/GDOBY_05Jjk

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 the benefit of a F2F group clinic?
A: F2F group clinics are very engaging for people with a whole range of health care issues. F2F group clinics are up and running all over the country. They have proved popular. People say that they enjoy hearing about others' experiences and getting advice from people in a similar situation. They also like having longer with the clinician to talk about their concerns and questions. They enjoy sharing what has worked for them and hearing about others' successes. They say after the group, they feel less isolated and alone. People find that meeting others F2F is very helpful. People who attend F2F group clinics see their health improving and may end up in hospital less.

Q: Can I still have a one-to-one telephone or F2F appointment with my doctor or nurse?

A: Yes you will be informed by the clinician if they feel that a follow up 1:1 review is required after the group session.

Q: What happens if I arrive late?
A: Our policy is we ask all participants to arrive at least 5 minutes before the start of the group clinic to allow time for check-in.

If you arrive **more than 5 minutes after the clinic has started**, you will not be able to join the session and will need to be re-booked into a future group clinic. This is because all participants must be present at the beginning of the session to complete registration, provide consent, and agree to the group confidentiality and participation understandings. Late arrivals can also be disruptive to the group and may impact the experience of other participants. If you think you will be late or are unable to attend, please contact us as soon as possible and we will arrange another face-to-face group clinic appointment.

To re-book, please email **nsicb.mmpgroupclinics@nhs.net**
Practice Policy: Attendance more than 5 minutes after the advertised start time will be recorded as a non-attendance for that session, and entry to the clinic will not be permitted. Patients will be offered the opportunity to book onto a future group clinic where available.

Q: How do I join my F2F group clinic?

A: You turn up 5 minutes before the start time on your invitation and check in at reception in the usual way.

This is how we recommend you prepare for your F2F group clinic:

1. **Before the group, read the group clinic agreement**

   In the F2F group clinic, you will be asked to confirm that you are happy to participate on this basis, and that you agree to keep all information that group members share confidential

2. **Make sure you will feel comfortable**. The F2F group clinic lasts 90 minutes. Make sure you have what you need to be comfortable. You will be able to stand up and move around if you are prone to aches and pains. You can bring any medication or snacks you need and water to drink if that is important to keep you going.

3. **You can bring a family member or carer along if you would like**. We understand you might want to bring someone with you for support. For safety and seating purposes, we need to know in advance. Please contact nsicb.mmpgroupclinics@nhs.net or call 01603 475555 to leave a message for the menopause clinic coordinator as to who will be attending with you.

Q: How do I know a F2F group clinic is for me?
A: You won't know until you give it a go! People tell us they really enjoy the experience. F2F group clinics might not suit everyone. If you are feeling anxious beforehand, let the facilitator know. It is also OK to attend a group and just listen and see if it is for you. You can even join and then decide to leave if it doesn't work for you.

Q: What happens if I don't want to say anything in a F2F group clinic?
A: It is OK just to listen. Let your facilitator know if you are feeling worried about being in a group. Even if you 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 F2F group clinic?
A: Please give the group clinic a fair shot and if you feel the group clinic isn't working for you, let the facilitator know. You can leave at any time. The team always asks for feedback at the end of every F2F group clinic so let your facilitator know if you think they can make future group clinics even better.

Q: Can my partner, friend or carer join me in my F2F 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 just like other participants. Ideally you should just invite one person to join you. Otherwise, groups get too big. Please let the clinic team know ahead of the time so we can add their details to the register and send them the group agreement in advance.

Q: Can I record my F2F group clinic?
A: No. To ensure all information shared in the session is kept confidential and your privacy is fully respected, you sign up to the Group Agreement. This

means you promise not to record, share or post in public what other people say about themselves at the session. It's in everyone's interest to respect this.

Q: Are under 18s allowed to attend and do they need to consent?
A: Group clinics are run for those under 18. People aged 16 and over will consent on their own. Those under 16 will be supported by a parent or guardian who will consent with them.

Q: Can I share my F2F group clinic details with someone who wants to join in?
A: No. Please inform the clinic team in advance if you would like a relative or carer to accompany you to the group clinic. They will assist with registering them.

Q: How is my health information kept confidential during a group?
A: We assure this in three ways. First, before the group, all participants are sent a Group Agreement that sets out what happens at the group clinic and confirms that you understand that you are not to share any personal information outside the group. As all participants share personal information, it is in everyone's interests to respect this.

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

Third, the group clinic team makes a record that you have consented and agreed not to share outside the group. This note is kept on your in medical record for future reference.

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 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 F2F group clinic?
A: Yes. Some people find that they get on 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 local support groups that already exist if you are interested or prefer this.

Any other questions?

If you have other questions or if you have been to a F2F 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.

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