Regional Affective Disorders Service (RADS)
The **Regional Affective Disorders Service (RADS)** is a tertiary level specialist service that has been in existence for over 30 years. The service continues to be at the forefront of innovation in the provision of care and management of mood disorders. This is supported by the service’s historic and on-going links with Newcastle University and the role clinical academic links play within the service.

RADS is one of a limited number of specialist / tertiary level affective disorders services in the UK providing both out-patient and in-patient care for patients with difficult to treat mood disorders.

RADS clinicians are members of the Northern Centre for Mood Disorders (NCMD), which is a collaboration between Newcastle University and Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust. NCMD provides public and professional education around mood disorders and supports a wide range of research. Patients attending RADS may be approached about ongoing research opportunities.

See [mood-disorders.co.uk](http://mood-disorders.co.uk) for more information.
Regional Affective Disorders Service (RADS) provides:

• Assessment service for any patient aged 18 and over in secondary care with complex and/or treatment refractory affective disorders including patients in older peoples’ services.

• We are happy to advise on other treatment refractory conditions complicated by an affective component eg. obsessive compulsive disorder with associated depression.

• It is expected that patients will have failed to respond to, or not tolerated, interventions recommended for use in routine secondary care mental health services by current guidelines (NICE and BAP).

• RADS assessment will include:
  - case formulation
  - diagnosis
  - risk assessment
  - symptom severity rating
  - recommendations for future treatment
Treatment recommendations fall into 5 broad categories:

1. Treatments within existing guidelines.
2. Treatments out-with guidelines but within secondary care competency. (e.g. Agomelatine, Lurasidone, Maintenance ECT)
3. Treatments out-with guidelines and beyond normal secondary care practice (e.g. pramipexole, anticholinergics)
4. Treatments that are only provided by tertiary level services such as RADS. These are novel pharmacological treatments, rTMS and specialist multi-disciplinary inpatient assessment and treatment (see below)
5. Treatments provided by quaternary services (e.g. DBS, cingulotomy, VNS)

Most patients referred have already had treatments in category 1, and we most often recommend treatments in category 2.

Inpatient unit

Gibside ward is the inpatient unit of RADS where all admissions are planned with predefined assessments periods and interventions:-

- Diagnostic evaluation in a controlled setting, at a distance from perpetuating environmental factors.
- Pharmacological regimes not possible in an outpatient setting such as treatment transitions in potentially unstable patients, treatment initiation in those sensitive to adverse effects and treatments requiring specialist monitoring such as high dose Monoamine-oxidase inhibitor (MAOI).
- None standard treatments beyond existing guidelines that require careful evaluation for instance, acetylcholinesterases for psychotic depression, pramipexole for severe depression and transdermal selegiline for unipolar and bipolar depression.
- Therapeutic group work
- Healthy living and eating
Referral pathway and flowchart

How to Refer

Referrals are accepted from specialist mental health teams regionally, nationally and internationally.

All referrals are reviewed initially as outpatients.

Referrers are requested to provide a comprehensive review of previous treatments (psychosocial interventions, pharmacotherapy and physical non-drug treatments eg. ECT) including duration, tolerability and response.

Referrals are accepted in writing, by hard copy, fax or email.

Referral pathway

Referral received at:
Regional Affective Disorders Service
Wolfson Research Centre
Campus for Ageing and Vitality
Westgate Road
Newcastle Upon Tyne
NE4 5PR
Tel: 0191 246 8606
Fax: 0191 208 1193
email: RADS@ntw.nhs.uk

MDT review of referral within 5 working days.
Allocation to an assessor.

Appointment arranged and communicated to patient and referrer. Usually within 2-6 weeks.

Assessment appointment.
Formulation and recommendations reviewed in MDT.

Detailed assessment (with rating scales) formulation and recommendations sent to patient and referrer within 2 weeks.
Our multidisciplinary team includes:

- Consultant Psychiatrists with particular expertise in the management of affective disorders, particularly related to psychopharmacology all of whom hold substantive or honorary appointments with Newcastle University. The team is actively engaged in research into the pathophysiology and treatment of affective disorders. This ensures awareness of up-to-date evidence and current research within the team.

- Senior doctors in training
- Mental Health Nurses
- Occupational Therapists
- Support Workers

The team are all highly skilled and experienced in the treatment of mood disorders, with up to date and relevant training ensuring patients receive treatment tailored to their individual needs.

- Administration Staff
- Access to other specialist services within Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust including Cognitive Therapy, Dynamic Psychotherapy, Eating Disorders and Psychology.

The range of treatment options includes:

- Extensive pharmacological expertise
- None drug physical treatments eg. TMS and VNS
- Family and Other Systemic therapies
Meet the multidisciplinary team:

Hamish McAllister-Williams
Professor of Affective Disorders (Newcastle University) and Honorary Consultant Psychiatrist (NTW)

David Cousins
MRC Clinician Scientist (Newcastle University) and Honorary Consultant Psychiatrist (NTW)

Alan Currie
Consultant Psychiatrist

Karen Newton
Ward Manager

Kelly Heath
Clinical Nurse Lead

Samantha Bulmer
Community Mental Health Nurse

Pamela Taylor
Administrator

Samantha Mcgregor
Specialist Occupational Therapist

Laura Whittaker
Service Manager

Aisling Molloy
Advanced Pharmacist Practitioner
What our patients say...

Angela’s* story

Angela is 67 and is a retired teacher. She had experienced severe recurrent psychotic depressive episodes since her early 30s. Angela was referred to RADS in her mid-40s after a particularly severe episode where she had needed emergency ECT (inspite of prophlactic antidepressant medication). ECT had to be continued for her to remain well. Her past treatments were reviewed carefully. The outcome was a trial of high-dose Venlafaxine (over 375 mg) plus lithium and this proved successful.

Angela has experienced many health problems but says that depression has been the worst. She is adamant that attending RADS has helped her to find the right treatment and says that specialist services for conditions such as hers are “essential”.

John’s* story

John was referred to RADS in his late 30’s. He had developed a severe and chronic depressive disorder 10 years previously. Treatment (medication) had often been either ineffective or intolerable although ECT had been helpful.

He was referred to RADS for consideration of maintenance ECT. At an out-patient assessment his previous treatments were carefully reviewed and discussed with him. It was agreed that maintenance ECT might be helpful. However over the next two years he relapsed four times despite twice-weekly ECT. This prompted a further treatment review with RADS, John and his local consultant. The outcome was to try Vagus Nerve Stimulation (VNS). John was briefly admitted to the RADS inpatient unit prior to and immediately after having the VNS device fitted (relatively minor surgical procedure performed as a day case).

Over the following seven years, John continued with two-weekly ECT. He has needed a ‘top-up’ course of ECT once. However for the most part his depressive symptoms have been mild and his quality of life has improved considerably. He attends RADS regularly to have the VNS device monitored but his treatment and care is otherwise provided by his local mental health team.

* All names have been changed and library photos used to protect identity.
Patient outcomes and referrer satisfaction

Patient seen by RADS
How would you rate the quality of the service you received?
92% said it was good or excellent

In an overall, general sense, how satisfied are you with the service you received?
89% said they were satisfied or very satisfied

Feedback from doctors referring to RADS
How would you rate the quality of the service you received?
96% said it was good or excellent

How satisfied are you with the recommendations?
94% said they were satisfied or very satisfied
For further information please contact:

**RADS Outpatient Service**  
Wolfson Research Centre  
Campus for Ageing and Vitality  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE4 6BE  
Tel: 0191 246 8606  
Fax: 0191 208 1193  
Email: RADS@ntw.nhs.uk  
www.ntw.nhs.uk

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Gibside Ward  
St. Nicholas Hospital  
Jubilee Road Gosforth  
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