

Online mental health services

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- Big White Wall
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- Sleepio

Introduction

- Lots of people have found talking therapies helpful for mental health problems such as depression, anxiety and stress.
- Evidence confirms that talking therapies such as [cognitive behavioural therapy \(CBT\)](#) can be as effective as medication for some mental health problems.
- While CBT and other face-to-face talking therapies are widely available privately, you may have to wait to get them on the NHS.

Online help for mental health

- NICE has approved the use of computerised cognitive behavioural therapy (CCBT) for the treatment of [depression](#), [generalised anxiety disorder](#) and [panic disorder](#). CCBT is the name used for delivering CBT via computers, tablets and phone, usually online. Research suggests it can be just as effective as having face-to-face therapy with a therapist if you are supported by a remote therapist.
- As well as CCBT there are a range of other online mental health services available to support people with their mental health.
- You may be able to use CCBT and other online services for free on the NHS. Ask your GP or mental health professional, or contact the services themselves directly to find out.
- You can also pay for some online mental health services privately if they are not available on the NHS in your area. Or you can ask your GP about [face-to-face talking therapies](#).

Benefits of online mental health help

You don't need a lot of experience with computers or the internet to use online mental health services. They are available around the clock and are easily accessible via a computer, tablet or smartphone, wherever you are. Other advantages include:

- suitable for anyone who doesn't want to work face to face with a therapist
- helpful for people who find it difficult to leave home because of [agoraphobia](#) or [social anxiety](#)
- shorter waiting times for NHS referrals
- no need to travel to a particular location
- discreet and confidential

If you need help with getting online, the [Online Centres Network](#) can help.

The following online mental health services have all been approved for use by the NHS.



Big White Wall is an anonymous digital service that supports people experiencing common mental health problems such as depression and anxiety. It's available around the clock and is staffed by trained "Wall Guides" who make sure that the community is safe and supportive.

Big White Wall is available on the NHS in some areas, or you can join by paying a subscription of £25 per month.



FearFighter is a CBT-based online self-help course for treating panic and [phobias](#). It consists of nine computer-based sessions lasting about an hour each. The course explains how anxiety affects the mind and body and helps you to face the things you fear and avoid.

FearFighter is available on the NHS in some areas with a referral from your GP or another health professional. You can also pay to do the course privately.



ieso digital health offers live, confidential one-to-one cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) with a therapist via secure instant messaging. It's available to anyone with common mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, [pain management](#), [obsessive compulsive disorder \(OCD\)](#), phobias and [stress management](#).

ieso is available to NHS patients in some areas. You can also buy private CBT sessions directly through Thinkwell, Ieso's website for paying clients.



SilverCloud is a safe, secure online space offering personalised programmes to help people experiencing mental and behavioural problems including depression, anxiety, [eating issues](#) and obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD). Members can complete modules specially tailored for them by an online supporter.

SilverCloud is available via NHS hospitals, trusts and clinics, plus some non-NHS organisations. It's not available to private clients.



Sleepio is an online programme that helps people overcome [sleep problems](#). It's based on [cognitive behavioural therapy \(CBT\)](#) and evidence suggests it can even help people with long-term sleep problems. Sleepio works on desktop computers, tablets or via an iPhone app. It's also compatible with some of the tracking devices you can use to track your daily lifestyle habits.

The course lasts six weeks, but you get one year's support from the Sleepio online community. Throughout the course you will have weekly online meetings with "The Prof", a virtual sleep expert who is there to guide you.

Sleepio is being used by the NHS in a few areas as a self-help therapy for people who have a combination of poor sleep and depression or anxiety.