REFERRALS
We accept referrals locally, nationally or internationally. Referrals from a Consultant require support from the person’s GP. Please send written referrals to Professor Candy McCabe, Consultant Nurse. Referrals can also be made by GP via Choose and Book.

RESEARCH
Research is an integral part of our service. We have a wide range of projects aimed at gaining a better understanding of this complex condition. Patients will be invited to complete questionnaires to assess various aspects of their condition, how it affects their lives and the impact of treatments.

Our specialist areas of interest are the mechanisms behind CRPS, the patient’s experience of living with the condition and novel therapeutic interventions. We have pioneered the use of a new therapy in CRPS (Mirror Visual Feedback) which aids some people to reduce their pain whilst exercising their affected limb. We are supported by an in-house clinical measurement laboratory which enables assessment of autonomic responses to interventions and altered condition states.

Key published research includes:

For further information about our Complex Regional Pain Syndrome service and research, or for referral advice please contact Professor Candy McCabe, Consultant Nurse, on 01225 473462 or email candy.mccabe@rnhrd.nhs.uk
Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS) is a term used to describe a collection of symptoms where pain in a limb (usually a single limb) is the major problem. Commonly affected areas are the hands, feet, knees and elbows. Pain may start for no apparent reason or following injury to the limb (such as a fracture). Whereas pain would normally settle as the injury heals, in CRPS the pain continues and spreads beyond the original site of the injury.

There are two forms of CRPS, Types I and II. The signs, symptoms and treatments are very much the same in both types but Type II always follows an injury and there is evidence of damage to a large nerve in the affected limb. You may have heard the terms Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy or Algodystrophy and these were the old names given to CRPS Type I. CRPS Type II was previously known as Causalgia.

CRPS can be difficult to diagnose as there is no single diagnostic test that can be undertaken. Research has shown that the average timescale between onset of symptoms and diagnosis is currently two years.

Appropriate diagnosis and early intervention from a specialist multidisciplinary team (MDT) is crucial to reduce the long-term effects of this complex condition which can have a significant impact on a person, affecting all areas of their life and that of their family.

WHAT DO WE DO?

At the Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases we offer a dedicated CRPS service, led by a Consultant Rheumatologist.

The service is provided on an inpatient and outpatient basis to adults aged 18+ who suffer with CRPS. The emphasis is on physical rehabilitation with the aim to optimise function and promote self-management. All patients will initially be assessed as an outpatient to identify, in partnership with the specialist MDT and the person with CRPS, whether the inpatient programme is a suitable option for them.

HOW CAN WE HELP?

We can provide appropriate diagnosis and management of CRPS, offering a rehabilitation programme tailored to the individual needs of the person. We have the skills and expertise to help people with CRPS.

WHAT DO WE OFFER?

Our service is evidence based and offered on an inpatient and outpatient basis and includes:

- Specialist Multidisciplinary team assessment, diagnosis and rehabilitation programmes
- Outpatient advice for those with local therapy support
- Inpatient rehabilitation programme - from one to three weeks dependent on need. This consists of working regularly with the therapists on a one-one basis towards achieving agreed goals as part of individually tailored rehabilitation
- Thermal imaging & diagnostic support
- Management and education of this complex condition
- Patient centred goal setting
- Expertise and support to local teams in continuing treatment

The Multidisciplinary team includes:

Consultant Rheumatologist, Nurse Consultant, Health Psychologist,
Occupational Therapist, Physiotherapist, arc Research Fellow,
Clinical Research Occupational Therapist and Physiotherapist,
Secretary/Administrator, Clinical Measurement Personnel

Our Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS) programme was the recipient of the Abbot British Society of Rheumatology Innovations in Rheumatology award in 2005.