

Your Guide to Having a Joint Assessment

With an Advanced Practitioner in Pain & a Pain Psychologist

Persistent pain (also sometimes called chronic pain) refers to pain that lasts beyond 3-6 months. Often persistent pain does not get better with physical or medical treatment. Research indicates some form of persistent pain affects one third to half of all adults in the UK.

What is the Pain Management Service?

Pain management aims to improve your understanding of your pain and reduce the problems that pain can cause. The team is made up of psychologists, advanced practitioners, clinical pain specialist practitioners and nurse specialists who are all skilled in helping you to live better with your pain.

Why am I having a joint assessment?

Pain is a complex problem that often has numerous physical, psychological and social consequences. When living with persistent pain, it's important to recognise its impact on various aspects of your life as well as the factors that can contribute to your experience of pain. By developing a better understanding of pain and using a variety of physical and psychological strategies, the pain may have less of an impact on your life. A joint assessment appointment gives you the opportunity to discuss your pain problem with two professionals specialising in working with persistent pain, exploring both the physical and emotional factors.

How can a pain psychologist help me?

As part of your appointment you will have a full assessment carried one by one of the psychologists in the team. Pain is an individual experience, with many factors involved. Our emotions, thoughts and beliefs all impact on the way we process and are able to regulate pain. Persistent pain can be frustrating, depressing and can cause anxiety. A pain psychologist can help you with these associated problems. Seeing a pain psychologist does not mean that the pain is all in your mind, but recognising that emotions impact on your pain may help manage the pain.

How can an advanced practitioner in pain help me?

As part of your appointment you will have a full assessment carried out by one of our advanced practitioners in pain. This gives us time to understand your story to include the origin and development of your pain, any investigations and treatment carried out so far and the levels of your pain.

Assessment will also be made of the effect pain is having on your daily activities, work, sleep, mood and emotional well-being, which may mean asking you questions of a personal nature. It is important to tell us about any medical conditions you have, as they could be contributing to your pain. Some appointments may include a full physical examination and further investigations, such as scans. The advanced practitioner in pain will be able to answer your questions and help you find out more about what you can do to manage your pain in the long term.

What will happen during the joint telephone appointment?

Please allow 90 minutes for the appointment. The advanced practitioner and pain psychologist will have met before your appointment to consider the pain problems outlined in the referral letter. They will then have a telephone discussion with you for about 60 minutes, asking you about your pain history, how the pain impacts on your activities and quality of life, and what strategies you are currently using to manage the pain.

The advanced practitioner in pain and the pain psychologist will then end the call with you and have a 15 minute discussion together about the problems you have discussed and formulate ideas for your care plan.

They will then call you back and have another 15 minute discussion with you outlining possible options for your ongoing care; you will then decide together which options you would like to take forward.

What options might I be offered?

Following your assessment you might be offered individual sessions with the pain psychologist, further review with the advanced practitioner or an online programme to consider pain management strategies.

What happens at the end of the assessment?

Whenever possible, at the end of the assessment we will make a clear plan about what will happen next. After the appointment we will write to you summarising what we discussed and agreed, and copy the letter to your GP and referrer.

What if I need to change or cancel the appointment?

Please contact the service on 0300 303 8063 Option 5, if you are not available for the appointment. Please tell us as soon as possible so that we can give your appointment to another patient and ensure we do not have wasted NHS appointments.

Confidentiality

We value your confidentiality. Our assessments begin with a discussion about confidentiality. It is your decision about the information you disclose to us. In line with NHS guidelines, we sometimes need to share information with other professionals involved in your care, this will be discussed with you at your assessment. It is a legal requirement for the service to record clinical notes and information. These are stored on a secure and protected clinical system.

The Persistent Pain Team

Pain Lead

Mrs Karen Cox: Senior Advanced Nurse

Pain Psychologist

Dr Catherine Cameron: Principal Clinical Psychologist

Dr Claire Elphick: Principal Clinical Psychologist

Dr Sarah Edwards: Highly Specialist Clinical Psychologist

Dr Olivia Hirst: Highly Specialist Counselling Psychologist

Dr Judith Bird: Clinical Psychologist

Dr Kinza Janjua: Clinical Psychologist

Advanced Practitioner in Pain

Mr Chris Miller: Advanced Practitioner

Ms Kirsty Pendleton: Advanced Practitioner

Mr Robin Williamson: Advanced Practitioner

Ms Sam Maund: Advanced Practitioner

Clinical Specialist Practitioner in Pain

Ms Cathryn Lord: Clinical Specialist Practitioner

Mr George Prudden: Clinical Specialist Practitioner

Clinical Nurse Specialist in Pain

Ms Cathy Clawson: Clinical Nurse Specialist