

Persistent Pain Service

Making a decision about pain self-management

This leaflet aims to help you to decide which of the different options for self-management within the Community Pain service is right for you.

1. What is pain self-management?

Persistent pain is pain which lasts for more than three months. It can be distressing and disabling. There are different options of support available to you.

Learning to manage your pain better can improve your quality of life and get you back to doing the things you enjoy. Managing long-term pain usually involves a combination of understanding your body and your pain, managing stress and low mood, building up activity and exercise, practicing mindfulness and pacing yourself. These are skills which you can develop. The Community Pain team is here to support you in this process.

2. What are my options?

We offer various options within the service, and hope that one of these will provide the support you need.

Pain Management Programme – a group programme with other people with long-term pain, facilitated by a psychologist and a clinical specialist physiotherapist from the Community Pain Team. The sessions run twice a week for six weeks.

These sessions cover a wide variety of topics including how pain works, getting back to valued activities, pacing and becoming more active, the impact of pain on thoughts and feelings, learning mindfulness skills and managing setbacks.

Previous group participants have found meeting other people with similar experiences very helpful and have enjoyed making connections with others.

Clinical Specialist Practitioner sessions – a limited number of one-to-one sessions with a physiotherapist or osteopath who specialises in persistent pain, focussing on issues such as learning how to pace yourself, getting back to valued activities and managing setbacks.

Pain Psychologist sessions – a limited number of one-to-one sessions with a pain psychologist, focussing on topics such as managing the impact of pain on mood and relationships, learning mindfulness skills and building up activity levels.

You Matter Community Pain Hub - a dedicated time to meet for conversations in the community, to enable, empower and support people living with long term pain. Offering clinical, peer and community support designed by you and for you, with the opportunity to meet others who are living with pain, discuss what is going on and what can be done.

External community or online programmes – you could choose to engage with a local group or online programme run by another service, with other individuals with long-term health conditions, facilitated by healthcare staff or expert patients

Things you can do for yourself - there are lots of pain management and self-care organisations, websites and apps which can help you to build up your skills in your own time. You could choose to use this information to try to manage independently. See the links below for some trusted websites that offer good self-management advice.

<https://painconcern.org.uk>

<https://livewellwithpain.co.uk/resources-for-people-with-pain/ten-footsteps-to-living-well-with-pain>

<https://healthtalk.org/introduction/chronic-pain>

Option to do nothing at this time – if this is not the right time for you to commit to building up your pain self-management skills, you can re-refer yourself back to the Persistent Pain service in the future.

3. Comparison table of the options

	Pain Management Programme	Pain Psychologist	Clinical Specialist Practitioner	You Matter Community Pain Hub
Group or one to one Sessions	Group sessions.	One to one	One to one	Community group meetings
Duration	6 weeks, with 2 3-hour sessions a week and a 3-month follow-up	4 to 8 sessions	Variable according to need. Max 6 sessions	2-hour time frame. Ongoing support available
Total hours	39	4-8	Variable	Variable
In person vs remote	In person	According to need and preference	According to need and preference	In person