

**Persistent Pain Team**

**Information for service users**

Portsmouth

**What is persistent pain?**

Persistent pain is also known as chronic pain. This is pain that persists for more than six months. For some people the pain may have started after an injury but for others it may have come on for no apparent reason.

Research has shown that pain continues because of changes in the nervous system, causing it to become highly sensitive so that it produces ongoing pain signals. Persistent pain can be confusing and difficult to understand because we don’t expect pain to continue in this way.

People with persistent pain have often seen a number of doctors and/or healthcare professionals who have carried out investigations and treatments, which unfortunately haven’t resulted in curing the pain. Persistent pain can also have a major impact on your home life, work, mood, sleep and social life.

**Who are we?**

We are a team of psychologists, physiotherapists, and an exercise rehabilitation instructor. We are all highly trained specialists in helping people manage persistent pain.

**What does our Service offer?**

Our Service is designed to help people to live as well as possible with persistent pain rather than focusing on curing it. In our experience, you will probably have tried many ways of curing or reducing your pain, without success. So instead of trying to alleviate pain, we use proven techniques that can help you cope more effectively with your condition, allowing you to live better with pain.

The approaches we use to help you cope with your pain are non- medical. We teach you physical and psychological techniques, which have been demonstrated through research to be the most effective way of helping you to live with persistent pain.

The service we offer includes:

* An in-depth assessment of how pain is impacting on your life and to start to look at how our service might help
* A **group-based** pain Education Session, which explains how the body and brain work in relation to persistent pain and how pain impacts on peoples’ lives. This session allows you to find out more about what we offer and to decide if it is right for you.
* A 10 session **group-based** Pain Management Programme (PMP) in which we cover physical and psychological tools to support people to live well with pain
* A supported Online Pain Management Programme is available for people who cannot attend a group
* There is the option of a limited number of individual sessions where this is required
* We also offer a group-based Tai Chi programme

Where possible we offer the choice of remote or face to face appointments.

**What does attending the Pain Management Programme involve?**

The PMP involves 10 weekly sessions. There is a follow-up session a few months later. There are usually up to 12 people in each group. The group lasts for 2.5 hours. Don’t worry if you think you can’t sit for that long; you are encouraged to move around and there is a break.

Each week different topics are covered. Discussions take place as a group but there is also time for breaking into smaller groups. Many people get worried when they think about attending a group programme. If you do feel uncomfortable about talking in a group, there is no pressure for you to speak; you can just listen. However, many people find that they start to feel very comfortable in our groups and want to get involved in discussions.

The content of sessions builds on what has been covered previously. Between each session you will have things to take away and try at home. For example, doing some simple movement/stretches or trying mindfulness techniques.

**What we ask of you.**

Getting the best out of your treatments requires commitment. The techniques we teach are designed to help you self-manage your condition, so you will gain more benefit if you are willing to do the physical and psychological exercises between sessions, and to try out changes to your lifestyle. It is also very important that you can commit to attending regular appointments.

Whilst you are with our service, we ask that you do not pursue other treatments for your pain, unless this has been agreed with your GP as medically necessary. If you are having other treatments please let us know.

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**Key points**



We help people who have been in pain for a long time.





We help them find ways to cope with the pain.

**What have people said after coming to our service?**

*“I have this course to help me. It has not taken away the pain but it has certainly helped me to live with it. I don’t feel guilty any more”*

*“This has helped me accept my pain and change the way I am thinking about everyday things”*

*“They gave us so much useful information and were genuinely enthusiastic about their task - encouraging us to take a fresh look at our lives and how we cope with our pain”*

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