

**Information for service users**

**What is persistent pain?**

Persistent pain is also known as chronic pain. This is pain that persists for more than 6 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 persists 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 cured the pain. Persistent pain can have a major impact on your home life, work, mood, sleep and social life.

**What do we offer?**

Our aim is to help people to live as well as possible with persistent pain. In our experience, you will probably have tried many ways to reduce your pain, without success. So instead of trying to reduce or cure pain, we use well established techniques that can help you cope more effectively with your condition, allowing you to live better with pain.

The approaches we use are non-medical. We teach physical and psychological techniques, that have been demonstrated to be the most effective way of helping people manage persistent pain.

The service we offer is **group-based** and includes:

* An initial session which explains how the body and brain work in relation to persistent pain. This session also allows you to find out more about our service and whether it is right for you. This session lasts for two hours. At the end you will be given the opportunity to opt in to the service.
* A telephone consultation with one of our clinicians to find out more about you and to make a decision about whether our approach is right for you.
* A 9 session Self-Management Programme in which you will learn about:
  + identifying goals that are important to you and how to make them achievable
  + managing activity with persistent pain
  + how thoughts and feelings impact on chronic pain and how to manage this
  + mindfulness techniques
  + Tai Chi and movement
* A supported Online Programme may be offered if it is felt a group approach is not appropriate.

**Who are we?**

We are a team of psychologists, physiotherapists, psychology assistant and an exercise rehabilitation instructor. We are all highly trained and specialised in helping people to manage persistent pain. Psychology underpins our approach as it includes managing the emotional effects of living with pain as well as helping people to make lifestyle changes.

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

The programme consists of 9 weekly sessions. There is a follow up session a few months later.

There are usually up to 12 people in each group. The sessions last 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 in the larger group, in small groups and sometimes in pairs.

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 soon start to feel comfortable in our groups and want to get involved in discussions.

The sessions build on what has been covered previously. Between each session you will have things to try at home, for example, doing some simple exercises or using mindfulness techniques.

**What we ask of you**

Getting the best out of your treatment requires considerable commitment from you. The techniques we teach are designed to help you self-manage your condition, so you will find greater benefit if you are willing to do the physical and psychological exercises we give you at home between sessions, and to explore changes you may make to your lifestyle. It is also very important that you attend every week.

During attendance on a programme 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 we ask that you let us know.

South East Hampshire, Fareham and Gosport

**Persistent Pain Team**

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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.

**Service Pathway**

**What have previous patients said about our service?**

‘I am extremely grateful for all the help and support I have received. I can honestly say it has made a huge difference to my life. I thank you all.’

‘All the tuition has been so wonderful, I don’t recognise myself as the person I was when I first started. Thank you to all the tutors – you have changed the journey I was taking.’

‘It was fantastic. All the teachers are so lovely. They make you feel calm and relaxed. Just want to say a big thank you’

**Contact Details**

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