

**Persistent Pain Team**

**Information for referrers**

Portsmouth

**What does our Service offer?**

Our Service is comprised of physiotherapists, psychologists and an exercise and rehabilitation instructor. We are all highly trained specialists in helping people manage persistent pain. Our aim is to help people to live as well as possible with persistent pain, rather than focusing on pain reduction. We do not have any medically qualified members of our team and do not offer any advice about medication or medical treatments for pain. It is important that prior to being referred to our service, patients have had all appropriate investigations and treatments to establish the cause of their pain and to gain relief where possible.

We use evidence-based physical and psychological techniques, to support people to find effective ways of living with 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.

If you are referring someone to our service it is important to make them aware of the above information and to check that they are open to this approach.

Our pathway includes:

* An **in-depth assessment** to establish how pain is impacting on the person’s life, how they are coping with it, and to begin to look at how our service could be of 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 people to find out more about what we offer in order to decide if they want to opt in for further intervention.
* A **10-session group-based Pain Management Programme (PMP)**
* A supported online PMP can be offered if it is felt a group approach is not appropriate.
* There is the option of a limited number of individual sessions where required
* We also offer a group-based Tai Chi programme

We aim to give people the choice of remote or face to face appointments where possible

**What are our inclusion/exclusion criteria**

We accept referrals for people aged 18 and over who have pain that has persisted for over three months and which is non-malignant. It is important that all medical and surgical investigations and treatments are complete.

The person needs to be able to commit to an in-depth self-management programme that involves attending regular appointments and making psychological and behavioural changes. Any other physical or psychological conditions need to be stable enough to allow the person to prioritise their treatment with us and to make the necessary changes. Drug or alcohol dependence may need to be addressed first if this is at a level that would interfere with their engagement. Our treatments are not suitable for people with moderate or severe cognitive impairment.

**How do I make a referral?**

We accept referrals from GPs within Portsmouth. We also accept referrals from secondary care consultants and from the Specialist MSK pathway.

**What is the difference between our service and the Pain Clinic?**

Pain Clinic based at Queen Alexandra Hospital consists of medical consultants and specialist nurses. They can discuss options for medical management of pain, including medication and injections, whereas our service focuses on the self-management of persistent pain and does not offer any medical treatments.

Although the clinicians at Pain Clinic focus on the more medical side of managing pain, they are very supportive of a self-management approach. They can advise on reducing people’s reliance on strong pain killers which are often not effective in reducing persistent pain.

**Key points**



We help people to live as well as possible with pain. We do not focus on pain reduction or offer any medical treatments.



If you are unsure of the difference between our service and Pain Clinic, please read the section on page 2 to make sure you are referring to the correct team

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

*“It has helped me live closer to the kind of life I want to, despite my pain. It has helped me understand my life better and accept my pain for what it is”*

*“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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