



Clinical Health Psychology

Pain Management Service

Information for our service

What is the Pain Management Service?

- We are a specialist psychological support service for Whittington Health patients who are experiencing chronic (long-term) or persistent (continuing) pain.
- This service will only see patients who have been assessed and referred to us by a Pain Consultant or Pain Physiotherapist at the 'Whittington Secondary Pain Clinic', based at the Whittington Hospital.
- Our service is suitable for people who have completed all investigations into the potential medical causes of their pain.
- Our aim is to help our patients understand how pain is caused and how to make slow and steady changes to cope with their pain, reduce emotional stress, and improve their quality of life.
- We follow a self-management approach. Patients learn new skills to help reduce the impact of pain on their life by building on their existing skills and working towards personal goals.
- Our service endeavours to be inclusive and we welcome voices from different backgrounds and all walks of life. We can be flexible in offering remote attendance options (video), and are able to arrange interpreters if needed.

What is Chronic or Persistent Pain?

- Chronic or persistent pain is pain which lasts more than three months.
- As well as the physical effects, pain can affect a person's self-confidence, create feelings of isolation, prevent a person from doing exercise or activities that they enjoy, feel anxious, irritable or in a low mood.

What support can I receive?

We offer pain management psychology in two forms:

- **The Pain Management Program**
 - A 12-session program that is jointly run by the Psychology and Physiotherapy teams.
 - Currently run this program online for 12 weeks, the sessions are 2.5 hours long.
 - We run two groups a year that begin in February and October.



- The aim is to develop your skills and knowledge and help you deal with and manage your pain.
- This includes the physical mechanics (what is happening inside your body) of chronic pain and how it impacts your nervous system, and the psychological effects (your mental health) of pain, and what you can do to support yourself.
- It provides you with the opportunity to meet other people in a similar situation to you, to learn from each other, and perhaps reduce your own feelings of isolation, by making connections with others.
- **Individual 1:1 Pain Management Psychology**
 - 6 individual sessions with a psychologist.
 - Flexible weekly or fortnightly sessions.
 - This can be a face-to-face session, or can take place online, depending on your preference and availability.
 - Aims and therapeutic approaches are flexible, depending on your specific needs and goals.

Is Psychology the right service for me?

- Psychologists specialise in understanding behaviour, thoughts, and feelings.
- Persistent pain can affect our behaviour (we feel less able to do things), our thinking (we tend to have more negative thoughts) and feelings (we may feel low, anxious, or angry).
- All these reactions are very normal and common responses to experiencing pain, but can unfortunately also have a negative impact.
- Psychologists are trained to work with complex issues like chronic pain.
- They can help people to identify potential changes that can improve their ability to live well with pain and reduce factors that contribute to pain.
- If you are ready and motivated to make changes in your life, we are here to support you.
- To attend psychology sessions, you will need to be willing to try new things and consider new perspectives.
- We understand that pain can be unpredictable and can get in the way of many things, including attending appointments.
- If you miss multiple appointments, then it is unlikely that you will benefit from the support.
- Therefore, we ask for a commitment during your sessions with us and if you regularly miss appointments without letting us know in advance, we may need to close your referral. If this is the case, we would aim to discuss this with you first.

How can I get referred?

- You can be referred by your Pain Consultant or pain management physiotherapists in the Whittington Pain service.



What happens after I am referred?

- Once we receive your referral, you will be invited to attend a **one-off 1.5-hour workshop** (*options for online and face to face*)
- Here you will receive more information about the pain management psychology service to give you a chance to consider if it is right for you.
- After the workshop, you will then be asked to “Opt-in” to the service.
- If you decide to “Opt-out” or not respond, you will be discharged from the service, but you can be referred again in the future, as long as you are under the care of Whittington Pain service.
- If you “Opt-in”, a member of our team will give you a brief phone call to get a better understanding of your pain and individual circumstances. They will support you to decide whether the Pain Management Program or 1:1 individual support is best for you.

Useful resources

- If you would like to find out more about chronic pain and pain management, these websites have very good resources based on the latest research evidence:
<https://www.tamethebeast.org/>
<https://www.paintoolkit.org/>
<https://painconcern.org.uk/>
<http://www.action-on-pain.co.uk/>

THIS LEAFLET IS BASED ON GUIDANCE BY THE BRITISH PAIN SOCIETY'S 'Participant Information for Pain Management Programmes' (2013).

Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern please contact our PALS team on 020 7288 5551 or whh-tr.PALS@nhs.net

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet please email whh-tr.patient-information@nhs.net. We will try our best to meet your needs.

Twitter.com/WhitHealth

Facebook.com/WhittingtonHealth

Whittington Health NHS Trust

Magdala Avenue

London

N19 5NF

Phone: 020 7272 3070

www.whittington.nhs.uk

Date published: 11/10/2023

Review date: 11/10/2025

Ref: ACS/ClinHealPsych/CHPPMS/02

© Whittington Health

Please recycle

