

Who is the chronic pain service for?

The chronic pain service is for people who have been experiencing pain for greater than 3 months. The effects of pain can be overwhelming. It can affect your daily activities, mood, work and social life.

The aim of the pain clinic is to help alleviate the effects of your pain. We will help you learn how to manage the impact chronic pain can have on both your physical and emotional health. This may be by a variety of options (see treatment options below).

The pain cycle

Pain can make you angry, anxious and frustrated, making the muscles tense up, which in turn may increase your pain. This increase in pain can cause difficulty with sleeping and carrying out activities. This may leave you feeling more anxious and frustrated. As a result you may feel tired and lethargic, which can further lower your mood and increase your pain. This pattern is known as a 'chronic pain cycle'. The pain clinic can enable you to break this cycle.

The aim of the pain clinic is not to cure your pain but to help YOU learn how to manage the effects that this cycle can have on both your physical and emotional health.

Who will you see at the chronic pain clinic?

At your first appointment, you will be seen by a healthcare professional that specialises in pain management. This may be a consultant in pain medicine, a chronic pain nurse specialist or a GP with special interest in chronic pain.

Other members of the pain team that you may see are; a clinical psychologist, a physiotherapist or an occupational therapist.

Chronic pain is a challenge for you and for those who are trying to treat it as it cannot be seen. The best way to manage pain is to form a partnership between yourself and the health professionals working with you.

What can you expect?

You will be asked questions about your pain, what the pain feels like to you and how it is affecting your life. The best treatment options will be discussed with you.

Treatment options may include

Education sessions

Injections

Psychological therapy

Physiotherapy

Medications

TENS/Acupuncture

Occupational therapy

Pain management programme

Where can I get further information about pain management?

The staff at the pain clinic will provide you with information on pain management, however here are a couple of websites that you can look up:

www.paintoolkit.org

www.controlpainlivelife.com

Points to remember

- We may not always be able to 'cure' your pain but we can help you control it through pain management
- Healthcare professionals may not always find a cause for your pain – this does not mean that the pain is sinister or life threatening
- A physical cause may not always be found for your pain but this does not mean that the pain is 'in your head'
- Painkillers can be used safely to keep active. Paced exercise is more beneficial than constant rest and inactivity.