

The Kent Centre for Pain Medicine and Neuromodulation

Psychological services and pain management

Information for patients

You have been referred to the psychology team at the **Pain Management Clinic** at The Kent Centre for Pain Medicine and Neuromodulation as an outpatient. The purpose of this leaflet is to provide some information about this service and what will happen when you attend. If you have any questions, please speak to your GP or other relevant healthcare professional.

Psychological services and pain management

Your clinician may ask you to see a member of the psychology team. This is **not** because the pain is “all in your head” or because your pain is not real. The clinician that referred you to this team will explain why it is important for you to receive support from the psychology team.

The psychology team are **not** psychiatrists. Psychiatrists are doctors able to prescribe medication, and diagnose and treat mental illness. The Psychological Services team do not prescribe medication, their job is to support you by assessing your needs, listening, and offering help and advice about managing your pain.



Why might it help me if I speak to a member of the psychology team?

- Psychology team members specialise in helping people find ways to manage and adjust to the effects of living with chronic pain.
- Pain is complex and can affect people in many different ways. Living with the effects of chronic pain can affect all areas of your life. It may make you feel depressed and anxious. It may put a strain on your relationships and cause you to lose confidence in your ability to manage your daily activities.
- The Psychological Service team will work alongside other members of the pain team, to find the best ways to help you manage your pain.

Psychological services for chronic pain cannot offer a cure for your pain but psychologists in the pain management team can help you with the following.

- Help you talk about how you may be feeling and about some of the ways in which your pain is affecting your life.
- Help you understand the way in which your feelings may affect your mood, which may then affect the way in which you are able to manage your pain.
- Identify key issues in your current and past life which are affecting your way of dealing with your pain.
- Offer you support and identify ways to build up your confidence in managing day to day life despite your pain.
- Suggest talking therapies such as cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT). These therapies offer an explanation of the way in which negative thoughts can affect mood and behaviour, and can support you in challenging and changing negative patterns of thinking.
- Explore how changing your patterns of thinking and behaving can help you develop better ways of managing your pain and the impact on your life.

What will happen during my sessions?

- In your first session we will discuss the purpose of psychological support in the chronic pain service. We will talk about how your chronic pain is affecting your life and try to identify goals you might wish to achieve.
- You may also want to talk about other issues which you feel have a bearing on how you are feeling and how you are managing.
- You will be offered a maximum of 10 sessions with a member of the psychological services team. However most patients benefit from fewer than 10 sessions.
- We will decide together when it is time to finish, and you may be referred to a pain management programme. The purpose of this programme will be fully explained to you (see next page for more details).

- Once your sessions finish, a letter will be sent to the clinician who referred you to the team and they will decide how best to proceed with your treatment.

Are the sessions confidential?

- Members of the Psychological Services team follow the same rules of confidentiality as all staff, and regularly communicate with others involved in your care.
- If there is information which you do not wish shared with other members of the chronic pain team this is not a problem, unless there is a risk of harm to yourself or others.
- After your first appointment a letter will be sent to your GP and your referring clinician, outlining the main issues that were raised at this appointment.
- A final letter will also be sent to your GP and your referring clinician, which will sum up what has been covered in your sessions with the team member.

What if I need to cancel my appointment?

If you cannot attend one of your appointments, please phone and tell us. Please give us at least 48 hours notice, so we can offer your appointment to another patient. If you need to cancel or change your appointment more than once, we will not be able to offer you a further appointment.

If you do not attend for your appointment and do not cancel it beforehand, we will have to return your referral to your GP. You will then need to see them and ask to be referred again.

What is the Pain Management Programme?

The Pain Management Programme is a group programme which brings together people who have chronic pain. The group meets one morning a week for four weeks, at a location in the community. You will be referred to a group nearest to your home.

The purpose of the group is to help people with chronic pain to meet together and explore a number of issues. Each session is run by a member of the chronic pain clinical team and covers such things as medication, sleep, mood, relaxation, and exercise. The group is a supportive and positive environment for chronic pain sufferers.

Further information

If you have any concerns regarding the information in this leaflet, please phone the Pain Clinic.

Kent Centre for Pain Medicine and Neuromodulation (direct lines)

- Kent and Canterbury Hospital, Canterbury Telephone: 01227 78 30 49
- Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother Hospital, Margate Telephone: 01843 23 50 94
- William Harvey Hospital, Ashford Telephone: 01233 61 66 91

Useful information

For further information on chronic pain and its treatment options please go to the East Kent Hospitals Chronic Pain web page www.ekhufft.nhs.uk/chronic-pain-leaflets

This leaflet has been produced with and for patients

If you would like this information in **another language, audio, Braille, Easy Read, or large print** please ask a member of staff. You can ask someone to contact us on your behalf.

Any complaints, comments, concerns, or compliments please speak to your doctor or nurse, or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01227 78 31 45, or email ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net

Patients should not bring in large sums of money or valuables into hospital. Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property had been handed in to Trust staff for safe-keeping.

Further patient leaflets are available via the East Kent Hospitals web site www.ekhufft.nhs.uk/patientinformation