



Your outpatient appointment with the Pain Clinic

Information for patients from the Kent Centre for Pain Medicine and Neuromodulation

You have an appointment with the **Pain Management Clinic** at The Kent Centre for Pain Medicine and Neuromodulation. This leaflet explains:

- the aim of the Pain Clinic
- what will happen during your appointment
- what treatment options are available; and
- what to expect from the treatment.

We hope the leaflet will help to answer some of the questions you may have. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to your GP or other relevant health professional.

Welcome to the Pain Clinic

The Kent Centre for Pain Medicine and Neuromodulation offers help to patients suffering from long-term (chronic) pain. We aim to improve the quality of our patients lives by helping them to control and manage their pain. We encourage our patients to help us to make decisions about their treatments. We may not offer you a cure for your pain, but we will try to help you to manage it. Patients are referred to the service by their GP or hospital specialist.

The best results for treating chronic pain conditions are usually achieved by a team of several different healthcare professionals. The Kent Centre for Pain Medicine and Neuromodulation runs a multidisciplinary service. A multidisciplinary team (MDT) is a group of trained staff from different areas of healthcare. The team meets every week, to discuss the care of individual patients. Our team is consultant-led. We also have clinical nurse specialists, a pain psychologist, and an occupational therapist.

Working with all members of the pain team, we develop a management plan that addresses your emotional and physical well-being.

We aim to provide you with the skills you need to manage your pain and symptoms more effectively. This may be achieved in a number of different ways. Each patient will have a plan to suit their individual needs.

A consultant specialising in chronic pain management will assess you. Your first appointment may include a physical examination. Please bring a list of all your current medications to every appointment.

Will I need to come to hospital for my appointment?

You may need to come to hospital for your appointment. However, your first appointment may take place by video link or by telephone.

What treatment options are available to me?

After your first assessment, we will discuss a treatment plan with you. Long-lasting pain can be complex. Single treatment methods will generally not be enough to control your pain, and usually result in short-term relief at best. Taking painkillers only or having injections only, will in most cases not have satisfying medium- or long-term effects. It is important to address all contributing factors.

We will offer you a series of treatment options. These may complement (work with) each other or follow each other, in case a treatment is not successful.

This involves:

- various treatments to reduce and stabilise pain intensity
- allowing you to actively self-manage your condition
- allowing you to continue with your life in the best possible way
- supporting you physically and mentally to adapt to the changes in your life; and
- helping you challenge or change beliefs and habits that may contribute to unnecessary suffering and create barriers to improvement.

Your consultant will decide with you which treatments will best suit you. Not all therapies are suitable for everyone. Treatments offered may include:

- medicines
- education and counselling
- injections
- psychological support
- a pain management course; or
- Spinal Cord Stimulation (SCS).

What can I expect from the treatment?

The main goal of our treatments is to **help you regain the balance to manage your life yourself.**

- Treatments can include medicines, injections, and psychological support.
- Treatments are not meant to make you reliant on healthcare professionals. Do not expect them to take over responsibility for you. You will need to continue to be responsible for yourself.
- We will help you to find solutions to enable you to continue with your life even whilst in pain.

In most cases, total pain reduction cannot be achieved. A realistic treatment goal is to **reduce your pain to a level that you can cope with. This will enable you to do most of the things in your life that are important to you.**

Referral to the Community Chronic Pain Service

We work alongside our colleagues in the community to help improve the quality of life for people who suffer from chronic pain. We may decide that your pain can be managed better by the community chronic pain service. If this is the case, we will refer you to them to continue your pain management.

How long will I have to wait for treatment?

In line with the NHS Constitution, all patients who meet the 18 week referral to treatment criteria have the right to be treated within 18 weeks.

You have the right to access services within maximum waiting times, unless:

- you choose to wait longer; or
- it is clinically appropriate for you to wait longer.

The NHS will take all reasonable steps to offer you a range of alternative providers if this is not possible.

Points to remember

1. Please bring your glasses if you need them for reading.
2. Always bring a list of all your current medication.
3. Take all your regular medication on treatment days, unless told not to.
4. If there is any possibility you may be pregnant, please tell your doctor or nurse.

What if I need to cancel or rearrange my appointment?

If you need to cancel your appointment, 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 may not be able to offer you a further appointment.

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

Further information

If you have any concerns about the information in this leaflet or your procedure, please phone the Pain Clinic. You will find the number at the top of your appointment letter. Or you can email the team. (ekh-tr.painservices@nhs.net)

Useful information

For further information on chronic pain and its treatment options, please go to the East Kent Hospitals' Chronic Pain web page. (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/services/pain-services/>)

This leaflet has been produced with and for patients.

Please let us know:

- If you have any accessibility needs; this includes needing a hearing loop or wanting someone to come with you to your appointment.
- If you need an interpreter.
- If you need this information in another format (such as Braille, audio, large print or Easy Read).

You can let us know this by:

- Visiting the Trust web site (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/ais>).
- Calling the number at the top of your appointment letter.
- Adding this information to the Patient Portal (<https://pp.ekhuft.nhs.uk/login>).
- Telling a member of staff at your next appointment.

Any complaints, comments, concerns or compliments, please speak to a member of your healthcare team. Or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service on 01227 783145 or email (ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net).

Patients should not bring 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 has been handed into Trust staff for safe-keeping.

Further patient information leaflets are available via the East Kent Hospitals' web site (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patient-information>).

Reference number: EKH154

First published:
December 2012

Last reviewed:
January 2025

Next review date:
May 2028

Copyright © East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust.