

The Chronic Pain Self Management Team

Unfortunately, medical treatments for chronic pain do not always work as well as we would like. People are then left to cope with the difficult problem of pain that persists. Chronic (or persistent) pain can have negative effects on every part of life, including work, relationships, social life, mobility, mood and sleep.

Chronic pain self management is a different approach to how your pain has been treated in the past. Rather than providing treatment to reduce or control your pain, chronic pain self management focuses on helping you cope better with the challenges of living with chronic pain. This means that even though pain continues, we aim to help people:

- Improve physical functioning
- Improve quality of life
- Reduce emotional stress

The Chronic Pain Self Management Team includes clinical psychologists, physiotherapists and a clinical nurse specialist all working together to help you learn new skills to cope with pain. These different team members can support you with both the physical and emotional impact of living with chronic pain.

What happens after referral to our service?

Everyone referred to the Chronic Pain Self Management Team is firstly invited to our **Introduction session**. This session provides more information about chronic pain and self management. This is your chance to understand what we can do and what we cannot do so you can decide if we are the right service for you.

The introduction session is a two and a half hour meeting for up to 25 people with chronic pain. It will also give you an opportunity to meet members of the Chronic Pain Self Management Team and we will:

- Help you understand more about chronic pain
- Offer some ideas about how to manage and cope with chronic pain
- Tell you about our pain management programme and options for individual sessions.

At the Introduction session we will not be able to discuss your personal situation in detail but will be happy to answer questions about our service.

After the introduction session, if you think our service can help, you can arrange an **individual assessment appointment**. You can book this at the Introduction session or you can telephone us within two weeks of attending the session.

The individual assessment appointment

At the individual assessment appointment you will have individual meetings with a clinical psychologist, clinical nurse specialist and physiotherapist. The aim of the assessment is for us to understand more about your experience of chronic pain and the difficulties that you have. We will then be able to advise you on which of our services might be the most helpful.

In some cases, you and the team may decide that our services are not suitable for you. If this happens, we may recommend a different service, which will be fully discussed with you.

Our Services

The **Pain Management Programme** is a three week group based course, with sessions running from Tuesday to Friday. On each programme there are approximately eight adults, men and women, all of whom have chronic pain. The course consists of different sessions including:

- Education sessions on:
 - Understanding chronic pain
 - Managing medication
 - Managing sleep problems
 - Improving communication with others about chronic pain
 - Increasing activity levels and setting goals
 - Practical strategies for everyday living.
- A gentle exercise programme
- Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT or talking therapy), mindfulness and relaxation skills

After the three week course, people are invited back for follow up meetings after one month and four months. These are an opportunity for people to review their progress with managing pain and discuss any difficulties.

Individual sessions with a member of the team

Individual sessions with a clinical psychologist or a physiotherapist from the Chronic Pain Self Management Team may be offered if the team feel this would be of benefit. Sometimes people need some help to think about how they might build up their confidence to attend a full Pain Management Programme. At other times, it is not possible for someone to attend a full programme and they may benefit from a series of individual sessions.

Contact us

If you have any questions about the Chronic Pain Self Management Team, please contact us on 020 8266 6545. **Website:** www.stgeorges.nhs.uk

Chronic Pain Self Management Team
The Phoenix Centre, Perimeter Road,
St George's Hospital
Blackshaw Road
London
SW17 0QT

Additional services

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough Wing (near the lift foyer).

Tel: 020 8725 2453 **Email:** pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

Website: www.nhs.uk