



# Pain Management Psychology Service Patient information factsheet

# 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.
- 'Psychological support' means helping someone with their thoughts, feelings, and emotions, especially when they're going through something difficult.
- This service only sees 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 for people who have already had all the medical tests and investigations to find out what might be causing 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 help patients learn ways to manage their pain on their own. Patients build on what they already know and learn new skills to make pain affect their life less.
   They also work towards their own personal goals.
- We want our service to be inclusive, and we welcome patients from different backgrounds and all walks of life.
- We can be flexible in offering remote appointment options (video) and can 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 loneliness, and prevent a person from doing exercise or activities that they enjoy. It can also cause feelings of anxiousness, irritability or low mood.

## What support can I receive?

We offer pain management psychology in two ways:

## The pain management program

- A 12-session program that is jointly run by the Psychology and Physiotherapy teams.
- This program runs online for 12 weeks, and 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.
- You get to meet other people in a similar situation to you, learn from each other, and perhaps reduce your own feelings of loneliness by making connections with others.

## **Individual 1:1 pain management psychology**

- Six 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 personal needs and goals.

# Is Psychology the right service for me?

- Psychologist 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 and can have a negative impact on your life.
- Psychologists are trained to work with complex issues like chronic pain.
- They can help people to identify changes that can improve their ability to live well with pain and reduce factors that contribute to pain.
- If you are ready and want 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 think in different ways.
- We understand that pain can be unpredictable and can get in the way of many things, including attending appointments.
- If you miss multiple appointments, you will not benefit from the support.
- We ask you to commit to your sessions.
- If you regularly miss appointments, without letting us know in advance, we may need to close your referral.
- If this happens, we will discuss it 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 single one-hour information session online.
- Here you will receive more information about the pain management psychology service to give you a chance to think about if it is right for you.
- After the session, 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.
- You can be referred again in the future, if you are under the care of the 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).

## Contact our service

Email whh-tr.painpsychology@nhs.net

Tel: 020 7527 1538 (if you leave a message, please provide your NHS number and your telephone number)

#### Contact our Trust

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern, please contact our Patient advice and liaison service (PALS) on **020 7288 5551** or <a href="whh-tr.PALS@nhs.net">whh-tr.PALS@nhs.net</a>.

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

**020 7272 3070** | Whittington Health NHS Trust, Magdala Avenue, London, N19 5NF www.whittington.nhs.uk | x.com/WhitHealth | facebook.com/WhittingtonHealth

## **Document information**

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