

So what does coming to the chronic pain service involve?

Chronic pain is a recognised long-term condition, the pain service cannot make it go away. It needs to be managed. Pain medication, at best, helps only a little bit and it is learning different ways to approach activities you do that helps the most. The aim of the Chronic Pain Service is to help you live as well as you can with a long-term painful condition.

Within our Chronic Pain Service you may see our Chronic Pain doctors, Physiotherapists or Psychologist.

Patients have told us that pain impacts their lives in multiple ways, struggling to do day to day activities that we take for granted. Pain impacts on your quality of life flaring up at the worst possible times.

We know that pain doesn't come alone – it's like a vicious cycle of:

- Reduction in activity
- Loss of fitness
- Low energy and tiredness
- Stress, low mood, frustration
- Unhelpful thinking
- Impacting on relationships, work and money
- Persistent pain

Perhaps this cycle is recognisable to you.

We know that trying to avoid pain to control it or trying to fight the pain to defeat it doesn't help. This is a tug of war you can't win.

At the Chronic Pain Service, we will work with you to look at realistic ways to pursue the activities that are most important to **you**, factoring in the pain that you are living with.

We know that pain impacts on how you feel about yourself. At the pain service we will help you manage the different thoughts and feelings that are associated with pain.

We also know that exercise is good for people with chronic pain, it's not a cure but those who do exercise report a better quality of life. Exercising with pain isn't easy, however, at the pain service we will help you get started and advise you on the best way forward.

What do we mean by learning to live well with a painful condition, well some of our previous patients have said this after attending our service:

- I've learned that life is worth living-differently- but it can still be enjoyed. It can be managed in a different way. I don't feel as useless and worthless anymore.
- I am not alone
- I have started exercising more, socialising with my family. Before, I was basically housebound. I have more confidence now. I have changed the way I look at my illness.

Even though we can't make your long term pain just go away – pain management can and does improve people's lives.