



Pain Management Programme



History of Pain Management Programme

The Walton Centre Pain Management Programme (PMP) is a leading pain management service in the UK and delivers a variety of pain management support options. The PMP is one of the outstanding features of the Trust's wider Pain Service, which has an international reputation for its expertise in treating and managing pain caused by a wide range of conditions.

The PMP was first established in 1983 at Liverpool's former Walton Hospital on Rice Lane. This was developed by Pain Consultant Chris Wells and Clinical Neuropsychologist Eric Ghadiali who designed a rehabilitation programme involving physiotherapy, psychology, occupational therapy and pain medicine, becoming the first pain management programme in Europe.

The PMP is now based in The Walton Centre's Sid Watkins Building. The service has gone from strength to strength, expanding to treat over 50 people at any one time and also developing a range of specialised services to meet the needs of those with complex and long standing chronic pain conditions.

What is Chronic Pain?

Chronic pain is defined as pain that lasts for more than three months. In the context of injury or surgery, chronic pain is pain that continues after the normal healing process is complete.

As well as its physical impact, chronic pain can influence a person's wellbeing in many different ways. These can include reduced activity, fear of further damage, worries about the future and general feelings of unhappiness. Other problems may include loss of confidence, isolation and relationship difficulties as well as impact on sleep and ability to work.

Pain Management Programmes are designed to help people cope with the impact of chronic pain and improve their quality of life.

What is a Pain Management Programme?

The Pain Management Programme is a group based rehabilitation programme that aims to reduce pain related distress and disability and improve quality of life. The Walton Centre PMP is a national service and so is able to accept referrals from anywhere in England and offers both outpatient and residential PMP services.

The Walton Centre's Pain Management Programmes help people to have a better understanding of chronic pain and the impact it can have on their lives. Each year, over 400 patients with chronic pain benefit from the team's support and guidance on how to adjust to life with their pain condition. The PMPs are designed to help people understand the wider impact that chronic pain can have, and to equip them with the tools and skills to help make positive changes in their lives.

Lauren Nixon

“The course has given me some of my life back”



Lauren Nixon says the Pain Management Programme gave her the confidence to move away from home to go to university.

When Lauren was 14, doctors discovered she had a brain condition called Chiari Malformation which causes part of the brain to protrude down towards the spinal cord, hydrocephalus (excess fluid on the brain) and a cyst on her spinal canal. Multiple surgeries followed but she was still limited by significant pain. Her consultant told her about the Specialist Young Adult Pain Management Programme which she said she found very beneficial.

Lauren said: “The pain was debilitating. To be honest, I didn’t have a life for quite a while. And for me this was quite a formative time of my life. I was 17, a time when you’re finding out who you are. I spoke to my surgeon and talked about an alternative route.

“The effect of the course is difficult to put into words. It really gave me confidence. I applied for university which is something I didn’t think I could do, and live away from home. It’s surprising the things you learn on the course; you realise there is no magic pill but there are things you can do to help yourself - you can take control of this. To be honest, the course has given me some of my life back”.

How does the Pain Management Programme help?

Pain Management Programmes help people to cope with pain by introducing and guiding individuals through a range of self-management strategies. At the end of a Pain Management Programme, you might expect to see the following positive changes:

- Increased physical fitness
- Increased flexibility & stamina
- Know more about how chronic pain works in the body
- Improved self-confidence to manage your chronic pain condition
- Improved mood and wellbeing
- Returning to enjoyable activities, such as socialising
- Better overall quality of life



Types of Pain Management Programme

The Walton Centre offers a range of Pain Management Programmes for people experiencing chronic pain. These include:

5 Day PMP

The course runs every Monday for five weeks starting at 9am and finishing at 4.30pm. There is also a half day introductory session before the start of the five week PMP, where people are able to meet staff and hear about the content of the programme in more detail and what will be involved.

16-day PMP

This course runs from Monday to Thursday for the first two weeks. Following this, it then runs two days a week for four consecutive weeks on either a Tuesday/Wednesday or Thursday/Friday. We ask patients to arrive for 9am and finish at approximately 4.15pm, with regular breaks throughout the day.

Specialised PMP

Our specialised PMP services include, but are not limited to:

- Chronic Pelvic Pain Management Programme
- Young Adult Pain Management Programme (18-25 years)
- Facial Pain Management Programme
- Individualised Pain Management Programme (for complex needs that cannot be met in a group based PMP setting)

The Walton Centre also offers a specialist fibromyalgia/chronic widespread pain assessment service, that links with rheumatology, as well as specialist pelvic pain and endometriosis clinics, run together with gynaecology services.

****The Pain Management Programmes are offered within an outpatient or residential setting.***

The Pain Management Programme Assessment Clinic

The Pain Management Programme service accepts referrals from across England, from both GP and hospital specialists. At the assessment clinic you will be assessed by a clinical psychologist, physiotherapist and occupational therapist. If you have not already seen a pain consultant from The Walton Centre pain clinic you will also have a medical review during your assessment.

At assessment you will be asked to complete a booklet of questionnaires which are designed to help us in your overall assessment and rehabilitation planning. Our assistant psychologist will be available throughout the clinic to guide you through this process and answer any queries you may have about the questionnaires.

If you are selected for a PMP you will be provided with an information pack explaining what to expect on the course, and you will also be able to ask any questions you may have about your participation and attendance on the programme.



Stephanie Neill

“Without the PMP I would be really down and I’d just be sitting there not going out, just not doing anything. It gives you some control back”



Businesswoman Stephanie Neill was at the peak of her career, coaching senior directors of large corporations when she began to experience severe pain that significantly impacted her ability to walk. Severe ongoing problems with her neck and back led to her deciding to take early retirement. An operation managed to stop the condition from getting any worse but did not resolve her pain and she was referred to a 16 day Pain Management Programme.

Stephanie said: “I think the PMP is life-changing. I think I would find it difficult or virtually impossible to learn the skills and strategies on my own without the support given. It really helps being in a group with other people who have chronic pain which made a huge difference to me. There’s lots of discussion between group members, and you learn such a lot from other people, how they feel, how they cope, what they use.

“The course is evidence based and you can see the results as you progress through the course. When I started the programme it was a big struggle for me to get about. Gradually I’ve been able to build up my walking. I have seen changes in the last six months and now feel able to do more. Without the PMP I would be really down and I’d just be sitting there not going out, just not doing anything. It gives you some control back.”

Pain Management Programme Content

All PMP sessions are group based and are run by an experienced multidisciplinary team of physiotherapists, clinical psychologists, occupational therapists, nurses and pain consultants.

The specific content of the PMPs varies depending on which specialist programme you are attending, but the main areas covered include:

1) *Physiotherapy sessions*

The programme's physiotherapists help people living with chronic pain to exercise appropriately at a comfortable level, which is seen as fundamental to physical management of chronic pain. Group members are given the support they need to establish, and gradually increase their levels of activity and exercise, leading to improved physical functioning and a better quality of life.

2) *Clinical psychology sessions*

Clinical psychologists help people on the programme to explore the impact of chronic pain on their mood, thinking and behaviour. Group members may be facing difficulties such as depression, anger, anxiety or loss of identity and role. These sessions provide an opportunity for people to make sense of the difficulties they are experiencing and to learn practical techniques and coping strategies.

3) *Occupational therapy sessions*

The programme's occupational therapists help people with chronic pain to manage their day-to-day activities, and to consider returning to activities that are important to them. These activities may include personal care, household tasks, work, leisure and social activities.

The sessions focus on setting personal goals and learning pacing and activity management skills, with a strong focus on making and maintaining positive changes. There is also a focus on developing techniques of mindfulness. A new development within the service is offering 1:1 employment and work support, which can take place either during the programme or afterwards.

4) Pain consultant sessions

The programme's pain consultants explore with group members how chronic pain can develop and continue, helping people to understand their pain condition in more detail. Sessions also highlight how medications work and the most effective way to use them alongside other self-management techniques.

5) Volunteer programme

One of the unique aspects of our Pain Management Programme is our team of volunteers who have been through the PMP and are happy to share their experiences. They provide support around break times and are a valuable support and resource for patients and the PMP service.



Terry Wakefield

“I would have no hesitation in recommending the PMP”



When Terry Wakefield came to the end of a successful career in local government several years ago, he was looking forward to a long and active retirement.

Terry started to suffer from constant pain in his lower back as a result of a spinal condition that did not respond effectively to surgery and impacted on his mobility. Terry struggled with his chronic pain for more than three years and was referred to the PMP, which he feels gave him a new outlook on life.

He explained: “Before I was referred to the PMP I felt like most people with chronic pain do - frustrated, irritated and angry for much of the time because the pain was stopping me doing the things I wanted. All that changed after I went on the 16 day programme. The key thing to remember about the PMP is that it doesn't cure your pain, instead it strengthens your mental ability to cope with your long term condition.”

Terry said he is getting out and about more, and has taken up his hobby of DIY again. “I would have no hesitation in recommending the PMP,” he said. “It shows you that it is possible to enjoy a good quality of life, in spite of the pain.”



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