

INFORMATION ABOUT THE WEST ESSEX COMMUNITY MSK PAIN MANAGEMENT SERVICE (WECPMS)

About the West Essex Community MSK Pain Management Service structure

The West Essex Community Musculoskeletal (MSK) Pain Management Service is provided by the NHS. It is a working collaboration with Princess Alexandra Hospital NHS Trust (PAH), Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (EPUT) and Stellar Healthcare. Our Service supports people with long term pain, which you might know as 'persistent' or 'chronic' pain. Your GP or hospital consultant can refer you to our Service and our administrative staff will contact you to arrange an appointment. We currently offer our Service from four different locations across West Essex. These include Epping, Harlow, Bishop's Stortford and Saffron Walden. We also offer virtual appointments using the Microsoft Teams platform for workshops and video conferencing apps or telephone for some consultations where face to face meetings are not possible.

What happens after I'm referred to the Pain Management Service?

Once we have received your letter of referral and you have been accepted into our Service, a member of our administration team will contact you invite you to our Pre-Assessment Workshop. This workshop is about 45 minutes to an hour long and is delivered via the Microsoft Teams platform or in small face to face groups when possible. You will need an internet connection, an email address and a laptop or tablet to access the workshops. If you do not have internet access, please do not worry – our administrative team will assist you. The Pre-Assessment Workshop has been designed to help you understand the key principles of pain management and prepare you for your journey with us. The science and research around chronic or persistent pain has changed a great deal over the last 30 years and approaches to managing pain have changed in line with the research and science. Our Service ethos embraces these changes and our approach reflects all the national, international and NICE guidance for the management of chronic /persistent pain.

Following the Pre-Assessment Workshop, you are able to opt in or opt out of the Service. If you opt in, our administration team will offer you an assessment appointment in one of our four locations preferred by you. We will send you a letter confirming the date, place, and time of your appointment, as well as a self-assessment form. This should be completed by you before your appointment and brought with you. The information provided will help us understand more about your pain and how it affects you. We understand that pain is a unique and individual experience and that the management plan for each person will be different. You can expect the assessment to last between 45

and 60 minutes. You may undergo a clinical examination during the assessment, so please wear comfortable clothing. At the end of the assessment, you will have time to discuss what you would like us to help you with, and together we will support you to decide what is best for you.

After the assessment, you may be invited to attend our Next Steps presentation. This presentation summarises the different education and pain management group workshops we offer, and gives you a chance to choose the workshops you feel will be most beneficial to you. Some of the subjects covered by our workshops include understanding and managing pain, sleep and relaxation, diet and nutrients, getting fit to stay or return to work, and medication and opioid use. None of the workshops are mandatory; however research has shown that the more people are actively involved in the management of their long term condition, the better their understanding of and ability to manage it.

What is persistent (chronic) pain?

Persistent (or chronic) pain is a pain that lasts for more than six months. For most people who have been injured, the pain stops within six months as the body's healing process has been completed. This is known as 'acute' or 'short-term' pain. Nonetheless, for some people the pain can continue after six months, even though the body has healed. Over 28 million people in the UK live with persistent pain. While there is no 'one-size-fits-all' or cure for persistent pain, we do know through research that a combination of different treatments, such as physiotherapy, education, and psychology, can be very effective in managing symptoms. For some people, medication may have some short-term benefits. For many people, however, medication has not been effective.

Persistent pain can be very frustrating and can prevent you from doing the things you enjoy. People who have persistent pain often tell us that their pain causes them to feel unhappy and reduce their activities. When assessing how to manage your pain within the West Essex Community MSK Pain Management Service, we look at all of you as one person. Our Service aims to support you to gain a better understanding of your pain so that you feel empowered to self-manage your pain, which will in turn improve your quality of life.

Our team

Our team has senior doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, psychologists, and pharmacists, who have specialist expertise in pain management and work together to help you. You may find you are offered the opportunity to work with one or all of the team depending on your specific needs. The team members work very closely with one another other to ensure that you are receiving the best care according to current research. We also work closely with other groups in the community and other healthcare providers.

Our approach

At the West Essex Community Pain Management Service, we emphasise pain self-management. The aim of pain self-management is to improve your knowledge of your pain so that you gain the confidence to manage your pain independently. To help you achieve this, our team will work with you to provide you with new skills and strategies through group workshops or personal sessions. Many things can affect your pain, such as lack of sleep and stress or worry. The workshops that we offer will teach you to understand the impact that pain has on your body and mind, and how this can negatively affect your activities and lifestyle. During your journey with our team, you will be encouraged to identify your own personal goals and choose something that is important to you that you would like us to help you achieve. The emphasis of our service is on you as an individual, and how we can support you to engage in the things you enjoy and that are of value to you.

What if I feel that the service offered is not for me?

If you are not interested in what we can offer at the West Essex Community MSK Pain Management Service, you do not have to attend. You can opt out before or after the Pre-Assessment Workshop or you may decline following your initial assessment and conversations with one of the Pain Management Service clinicians. We just ask that you let us know. The most important thing is that you feel ready to work in partnership with the Service. We make no judgement on people who do not feel ready to engage with us and your referral will be returned to your GP who will continue to monitor you. If, at a later date, you feel that you would like support from our Service, please ask your GP to re-refer you.

We look forward to meeting you and working with you.

Further information and support about persistent pain you might find useful:

1. Resources explaining persistent pain

- Explaining pain. Understanding more about your persistent pain and how it affects your life. www.livewellwithpain.co.uk/resources-for-your-patients/information-and-worksheets/explaining-pain
- Understanding and managing long-term pain-information for patients. A British Pain Society publication. Members of the public can request a free hard copy by contacting the BPS secretariat on 0207 269 7840 or info@britishpainsociety.org.
www.britishpainsociety.org/british-pain-society-publications/patient-publications
- Flippin' Pain: Flippin' Pain™ is a public health campaign with a clear goal: To change the way we think about, talk about and treat persistent pain. Flippin' your understanding of pain could change the lives of you and your loved ones forever <https://www.flippinpain.co.uk/>
- Understanding pain and what to do about it in less than 5 minutes. A YouTube video for patients. www.youtube.com/watch?v=RWMKucuejIs

2. Resources providing pain management skills, tools and advice

- Pain Toolkit. A simple guide that provides some handy tips and skills to help patients understand and manage their pain better. Available in hard copy, app, and an animated video. The website contains useful links. www.pain toolkit.org
- Pain concern. A website providing support and advice for patients with chronic pain. They also produce a podcast, Airing Pain. www.painconcern.org.uk

3. Further information about specific concerns

- Arthritis
www.arthritisresearchuk.org
- Back pain
www.backcare.org.uk

- Fibromyalgia
www.fmauk.org
- Medication dependency
www.fpm.ac.uk/faculty-of-pain-medicine/opioids-aware
- Pelvic pain
www.pelvicpain.org.uk
- Sleep disorders
www.sleepcouncil.org.uk
- Stress, anxiety and depression
www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mindfulness

4. Local services

- Epping
www.eppingforestfrontline.org.uk/library-of-services
- Harlow
www.harlowfrontline.org.uk/library-of-services
- Uttlesford
www.uttlesfordfrontline.org.uk/library-of-services