

Pain Clinics, Pain Management and Functional Restoration Programmes

- Pain Clinics and Pain Management Programmes (PMPs) are available on the NHS and there is normally one in each healthcare region.
- Functional Restoration Programmes are not as prevalent as PMPs although they are available on the NHS in some areas of the UK.
- Your G.P. or consultant can refer you to pain clinics and programmes. Some programmes may also be available in the private healthcare sector.
- Information about your local clinics and programmes can be found via your local NHS Trust or Authority.

Pain Clinics

People with persistent pain may be able to attend a specialist Pain Clinic for assessment and possible pain management, together with advice on living an active life despite their pain. The clinics are often based in hospitals, although not all hospitals have one. The treatments offered vary according to which clinic you attend. At some clinics a Consultant with an interest in pain will prescribe drugs or give injections to try to control pain. Other clinics have teams of doctors, psychologists, nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and others. You will need to be referred by your GP or consultant. Details about finding your nearest clinic are shown below in 'Finding your nearest service'.

Pain Management Programmes

A pain management programme (PMP) is a psychologically based rehabilitative treatment programme for people with chronic pain. The programmes can be helpful for people who are experiencing persistent pain which causes distress, disability, and has a negative impact on their quality of life.

The programmes are delivered in a group setting by a multi-disciplinary team of healthcare professionals, and aims to teach approaches to help people cope with, and live an active life despite their pain. It aims to reduce disability and distress caused by persistent pain by teaching physical, psychological and practical techniques for self management. Unlike Pain Clinics, the primary aim isn't necessarily to reduce pain levels; however improvements in pain following Pain Management Programme's have been demonstrated. The length of programmes can vary, but on average last two to four weeks. Some programmes are residential for part or all of the duration.

Traditionally people were referred to a PMP after the lack of success of a number of other treatments. However, it is becoming more recognised that the programmes should be offered when the patient experiences persistent pain that causes distress, disability, and a negative impact on quality of life.*

Pain Management Programmes are available on the NHS and there is normally one in each health region but it may be possible to find programmes in the private healthcare sector. You will need to be referred by your GP or consultant. Details about finding your nearest NHS programme are shown in 'Finding your nearest service'.

Functional Restoration Programmes

A Functional Restoration Programme (FRP) takes a physical therapy or sports medicine approach to helping people affected by persistent pain. The main aim is restoring physical function through targeted increases in physical performance. The programmes are delivered in groups, and often based within orthopaedic or physiotherapy services. FRPs may use some of the psychological

approaches used in Pain Management Programmes but they don't necessarily have the direct involvement of a professional psychologist.

Evidence from a small number of randomised controlled trials indicates lasting benefits in terms of mobility and overall function in patients attending a Functional Restoration Programme. FRPs are available on the NHS in some areas of the UK and it may be possible to find programmes in the private healthcare sector. You will need to be referred by your GP or consultant. Details about finding your nearest NHS programme are shown in 'Finding your nearest service'.

Other Pain Treatment Services

There are a number of other services available to people with persistent pain. These include Back Schools, Return to Work programmes, and Self Management Courses including the 'Expert Patients Programme' and Arthritis Care's 'Challenging Pain'. These courses might involve some of the techniques of the previously described programmes; however they don't use all their methods. Often these courses are community based, are free, and don't require a referral. Anecdotal reports from participants suggest they can be beneficial. To find out more about the courses and their availability please see our information sheet 'Self Management Courses and Pain Support Groups'

Finding your nearest service

Information about local Pain Clinics, Pain Management Programmes, and Functional Restoration Programmes can be found at your local NHS Trust or authority depending on where you live in the UK:

England: You can find out about services in your area by contacting your local Primary Care Trust (PCT). Contact details of all PCT's can be found on the NHS Choices website www.nhs.uk. Choose the 'Find Services' link and select 'find your local primary care trust'. Alternatively, you can find these details by calling NHS Direct on 0845 4647 or visiting www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk. You can also contact Patient Advice Liaison Services (PALS) whose number should be in your local phone directory or visit www.pals.nhs.uk/members/officeSearch.aspx.

Wales: You can find out about services in your area by contacting your local health board. Contact details of all health boards can be found on the NHS Wales website www.wales.nhs.uk. Choose the link 'NHS Wales Directory' then 'Local Health boards' and select your local board for contact information. You can also find these details on the NHS Direct Wales website www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk or by calling 08454647.

Scotland: For information on health services in your area contact your local health branch by visiting the NHS Scotland website www.show.scot.nhs.uk. Choose the 'Organisations' tab and select your local health branch for contact details. You can also find these details the NHS Direct Scotland website www.nhs24.com or by calling 08454 242424.

Northern Ireland: For information on health services in your area contact your local Health and Social Care (HSC) board by visiting www.n-i.nhs.uk. Choose 'The Board' link and select your local health board for contact details.

Relevant Information

BackCare Factsheets – Self Management Courses & Pain Support Groups, Drugs for Pain Relief

BackCare Booklets – Managing Back Pain and Basic BackCare

Useful Associations/Groups – British Pain Society, Action on Pain, Expert Patient Programme,

Pain Concern, Neuropathic Pain Network, Pain Relief Foundation, Pain Support

(Details of other smaller groups and associations can be found on the BackCare website)

*British Pain Society 'Recommended guidelines for Pain Management Programmes for adults (2007)' – www.britishpainsociety.org/book_pmp_main.pdf

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