**What does the Pain Management Service do?**

We offer support to people living with persistent long-term pain. Our ethos is helping you to ‘Live your best life’, even though this may be in the presence of pain. For the majority of our patients pain is an ongoing condition that they are gradually coming to terms with. We are very rarely able to cure pain, but we hope to reduce its impact on peoples’ lives. We hope to help make the pain more ‘livable with’.

We may see learning to cope with persistent pain as a journey, and our role is often to accompany people on their journey. Many people benefit from understanding their pain better, and exploring the physiological processes that cause persistent pain. We offer emotional support to help deal with the distress that pain can cause. Some patients may benefit from learning psychological strategies, such as Mindfulness, to help with this distress.

We will also look at the impact that pain has on activity, and help you to manage your activity to get the best out of life, without unnecessarily flaring up your pain.

Sometimes, we may suggest changes in pain medication, although many people living with persistent pain find that medication is not the answer. It would be helpful if you have up to date information about your medication and doses for each appointment. In a small number of cases, for specific conditions, a single spinal injection may be offered.

Many of our patients benefit from attending our group programmes, where they can explore a range of pain management strategies, while meeting other people who are managing similar conditions. Often patients who attend these groups learn a lot from each other, as well as from the programme itself. We currently run two group programmes:

Pain Education Session: Our Pain Education Session is a single session that takes place for a whole morning. During this session you will learn more about how pain works within the body, be introduced to some of the strategies that are used to manage persistent pain, and have an overview of some of the main medications used for pain. You will be welcome to ask questions and share experiences if you wish too but there is no expectation to do so if you would rather not.

Group Pain Management Programme: Our Group Pain Management Programme is more extensive and takes place over about 6 weeks, with regular half-day sessions. During the programme we practice a range of pain management strategies, including Mindfulness and activity management, and support participants to identify and work towards their own goals and values.

We try to tailor our service to the needs of the individual. Your initial assessment appointment can be with any member of the team and sometimes there may be two members of the team. We try to ensure that each appointment is with the most relevant member of the team. To help us with this, we ask all our patients to complete a questionnaire, prior to attending their first appointment, which tells us more about how pain is affecting their life. We would be very grateful if you could complete and return the enclosed questionnaire and we look forward to meeting you for your assessment.