

Pain Management Service

COVID-19

The Covid Pandemic has significantly impacted the ability of the NHS to provide elective services. We recognise that patients are waiting longer than we would all like and it is not always possible to identify when treatment will take place. This document provides you with information on how you can support yourself while waiting to attend the hospital. The guidance has been written by clinicians who are responsible for your care.

Introduction

Pain affects us all, when it persists it is often called chronic pain and impacts negatively on all aspects of people's lives. The Department of Health and Social Care in England recognises chronic pain as a long-term condition in its own right, and as a component of other long-term conditions. It is estimated that up to one third of adults in England have chronic pain, with 6-8% of the population reporting severe persistent pain that prevents some or most activities. People with chronic pain at times can experience temporary worsening pain, making it hard to go about normal everyday life. Although there is no permanent cure for chronic pain, treatment can help to control it and help people carry on active and full lives.

What is acute and chronic pain?

- Pain is the term used to describe an unpleasant sensation in the body.
- Pain that has been felt for less than 3 months, for example after injury or operation is called '**acute pain**'. This pain usually recovers over time.
- Pain that lasts longer than 3 months is known as '**chronic pain**'. Pain can occur following an injury, operation or disease which lasts beyond the expected healing time. For some people, chronic pain can develop despite no pathology showing up in examinations or investigations. Chronic pain can be very difficult to manage.

Our Services

Inpatient pain management → The inpatient pain team draw on a multidisciplinary approach to provide specialist pain management recommendations and techniques for people admitted to Aintree University Hospital, Royal Liverpool University Hospital and Broadgreen Hospital for surgery, major trauma or other acute medical episodes.

We provide consultation and training to ward staff including nursing, physiotherapy and occupational therapy across medical specialties.

Outpatient pain service → Situated in the dedicated Pain Medicine unit in the Alexandra Wing at Broadgreen Hospital, members of our multidisciplinary team assess various chronic pain conditions, make recommendations and provide a range of approaches to help improve quality of life living with pain.

We offer several specialist Pain Medicine clinics for specific pain conditions.

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For further information on our services

[Inpatient Pain Team Aintree University Hospital \(aintreehospital.nhs.uk\)](http://aintreehospital.nhs.uk)

[Pain Medicine | Royal Liverpool Hospitals \(rlbuht.nhs.uk\)](http://rlbuht.nhs.uk)

Why have I been referred to the Liverpool University Hospitals Outpatient Pain Service?

You have been referred to the Pain Medicine Unit at Liverpool University Hospitals because you may be suffering from Chronic Pain. Chronic Pain conditions have been shown to have a greater impact on quality of life than almost any other chronic disease, including cardiac disease, respiratory disease or cancer.

People with Chronic Pain often report that the pain impacts upon all aspects of their lives, including their ability to engage in activities such as exercise or work, their relationships with family or friends, social activities, and affecting other aspects such as sleep and mood.

Pain management services such as ours aim to help patients understand their pain and identify ways that their quality of life can be improved. This may involve the use specialist techniques and medicines to ease pain. We work with you to develop strategies to help manage and live well with the pain condition.

Your Outpatient Clinic Appointment

What happens at your clinic appointment?

Your first clinic appointment in our department will involve meeting a member of our clinical team to assist with the assessment of your pain.

After your initial assessment, we will discuss options with you. For some people, we may make recommendations that can be carried out by your GP or another service closer to home. We may also refer you for other treatments within our service to help support you. For some of our patients, we may suggest a follow up appointment to review your progress.

If after your assessment, input from another speciality team is required, we can refer you.

What should you bring?

Please bring a list of all your medications. Generic appointment letters as used across departments may request a urine sample however this is not required for the Pain Medicine Unit.

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Guidance for Patients

We appreciate that you may have waited for a long time before being offered a referral to the Outpatient Pain Service, and that you may still have a wait before you can attend for your assessment.

The following websites offer information about Chronic Pain and its treatments, as well as some general advice about living with your pain condition that you might find helpful.

- Ten Footsteps to Living Well with Pain - online resource developed by Live Well with Pain in partnership with Durham University.



[Click here to read about Ten Footsteps to Living Well with Pain.](#)

- Pain Toolkit- Pain self-management booklet developed by Pete Moore



[Click here to read more about the Pain Toolkit](#)

- painTrainer- online programme for managing Chronic Pain



[Click here to read more about painTrainer](#)

- Cor-Kinetic – booklet on living well with Pain



[Click here to read more on Cor-Kinetic living well with pain](#)

- Royal College of Anaesthetists, Faculty of Pain Medicine: Patient Information leaflets on medications and common pain interventions



<https://fpm.ac.uk/patients/patient-info>

- Chronic Pain flare -ups

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The contents of this information has been reviewed and approved by the Department of Pain Medicine Governance Committee of Liverpool University Hospitals.

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<https://healthtalk.org/chronic-pain/coping-with-chronic-pain-flare-ups>

Opioid medication

Opioid medicines are useful for treating acute pain and usually only need to be given for a short period. The dose of opioid should be reduced as healing occurs.

There is little evidence that opioid medicines are helpful for Chronic Pain.

Only a small proportion of people may obtain good pain relief with opioids in the long-term if the dose can be kept low and especially if their use is intermittent (however it is often difficult to identify if the medication will help long term at the point of starting the medication).

The risk of harm and side effects from opioids increase as the dose increases above the recommended upper dose limit.

If you are prescribed opioid medication and your pain remains severe despite this treatment, it means that they are not working and should discuss with your GP or Pain Medicine Consultant to consider reducing and stopping the medication.

[Click here to read more on opioid medication from the Faculty of Pain Medicine](#)

[Click here to read the ten opioid safety messages](#)

What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

If you are waiting for your first outpatient appointment with the Liverpool University Hospitals Outpatient Pain Service, please speak to your GP who can assess your health needs and offer advice on the most appropriate treatment pathway. They can also contact us and alert us to any changes in your situation.

If you are an existing patient, please contact the Pain Service secretary.