

# An introduction to the Gloucestershire and Herefordshire Pain Management Service



## Introduction

All of us suffer pain at some time in our lives but our experiences of pain are very individual. Here at the Gloucestershire and Herefordshire Pain Management Service we try to tailor your treatment to your experience of pain. We want to support you to live as well as you possibly can.

## What is pain?

When we talk about pain there are 2 different types. The first, which we have all experienced, is acute or short-term pain. This is what we feel when we stub our toe or have appendicitis. It is there to tell you about an injury and usually goes away as the injury heals.

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**Pain  
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 Service**

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## Patient Information

The other type is persistent pain. This is long-term, chronic pain lasting more than a few months. This type of pain can be caused by many different things and can create problems in many, if not all, areas of your life. Chronic pain is complex and that is why we have a team of people with different skills to work with you.

“Knowing more about my pain helped me to make changes in my life and I got stronger because of that. Learning about it stopped me fearing my pain.”  
Adele

## Your first appointment

We understand that your pain is what you say it is, that it is real and we are here to listen to you and to understand things from your point of view.

When we first meet you, we will ask lots of questions to find out about your pain and how it affects you. We want to know how it affects your movement, daily life and how you feel in yourself. We will also want to know where your pain is, what makes it better or worse and how you are dealing with it.

Once we understand you and your pain, we will be able to guide you to the most suitable members of our specialist team. We have doctors, nurses, psychologists and physiotherapists who will work together with you to understand your pain and work out a plan to help you manage it.

“I met lots of different people, I can’t remember one who didn’t want to help, or who didn’t help.”  
Patrick

**Patient  
Information**

## What we do

This may be the first time you have heard of pain management and you may have been referred after a long period of having persistent pain.

We can do a great deal to help improve your understanding of pain and how to cope with it. We will work alongside you to build on the coping strategies that you may have already developed. We hope to improve your sense of living well with the pain.

Learning to manage your pain better allows you to be more active and return to things that are important to you. We need you to be involved with what we have to offer and this might mean changing the way you deal with the pain and how you think about it.

By learning to manage your pain effectively, alongside appropriate medical treatments, you will have the best chance of feeling more in control and being able to lead a full life.

Learning to manage your pain will take commitment and it is important that you feel ready to make changes to your lifestyle. Sometimes talking it through can be helpful; we are here to listen and to give you the encouragement and help boost your confidence to build on your skills and take control.

We run groups and individual sessions to help you to:

- understand your pain
- get fitter and stronger
- manage and build up your activities in a way that is less likely to cause your pain to flare up
- access appropriate medical treatments
- find the best mix of medication which may involve reducing medications that are not working well for you
- develop strategies for managing low mood, anxiety and poor sleep
- communicate better with friends, family and health care professionals about your pain
- make a plan for managing flare ups and setbacks

## Patient Information

However, we work with you, you can feel reassured that it will be in a safe and relaxed environment, where we will support you to become expert in managing your pain.

As the weeks went by I was encouraged do a little more exercise each week. I have increased the distance of my walking, and even been out to walk with my husband on a couple of occasions.  
Christine

We can also refer you on to appropriate community services in your local area and give you details of relevant online resources, books and apps.

If you have been referred to the Gloucestershire and Herefordshire Pain Management Service you should expect to hear from us about an appointment.

If you have not been referred but would like to talk to us about your pain, please contact your GP and ask for a referral to the Gloucestershire and Herefordshire Pain Management Service.

## Contact information

### Gloucestershire and Herefordshire Pain Management Service

Tel: 0300 422 8469

Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 4.30pm

Website: [www.gloshospitals.nhs.uk/pain](http://www.gloshospitals.nhs.uk/pain)

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## Making a choice

### Shared Decision Making

If you are asked to make a choice, you may have lots of questions that you want to ask. You may also want to talk over your options with your family or friends. It can help to write a list of the questions you want answered and take it to your appointment.



### Ask 3 Questions

**To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions if you are asked to make a choice about your healthcare.**

1. What are my options?
2. What are the pros and cons of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?

These resources have been adapted with kind permission from the MAGIC Programme, supported by the Health Foundation

\* Ask 3 Questions is based on Shepherd HL, et al. Three questions that patients can ask to improve the quality of information physicians give about treatment options: A cross-over trial. Patient Education and Counselling, 2011;84: 379-85



<https://aqua.nhs.uk/resources/shared-decision-making-case-studies/>