

## **The Community Pain Management Programme (PMP)**

*“Living well and coping with long-term pain”*

### **Why come to the PMP group?**

- To enable you to enjoy life more
- To empower you to cope with pain
- To increase your fitness
- To learn strategies for relaxation
- To learn how to manage daily tasks more easily
- To understand about pain
- To increase confidence and wellbeing
- To meet and share ideas with others

Attending groups can be very helpful to many people in creating changes they want in their lives. For some people, this can be quite dramatic. By their own efforts, and with the help of other group members, people can make significant improvements to their lives.

### **What is it?**

- The group programme is led by a team of pain clinicians from different professions. Research has shown that groups facilitated by multidisciplinary professionals are an effective way of assisting people to manage pain in their daily lives.
- The aim of the programme is not to cure pain but rather to help you manage and cope better despite the pain – to “live well” despite pain.
- The programme runs for eight weeks, with 3 sessions per week of which 1 is an education and discussion morning, plus 2 gym-based exercise sessions. There are also 2 hydrotherapy pool-based sessions towards the end of the programme.
- Usually about 10 people attend the group, who have long term pain in common – as well as their other defining qualities
- We aim to help you think about your “best hopes” for the programme and also, importantly, tap into your existing expertise with regards to “living well”.
- The programme also includes a significant proportion of exercise and relaxation, both of which have been shown to be effective components of pain management for lots of people.
- The atmosphere within the group is supportive and encouraging. People say as little or as much as they feel comfortable with and confidentiality is respected.
- There is also a chance to talk to individual clinicians during break times or at the end of sessions and/or make a 1:1 appointment if necessary.

- There are breaks and the opportunity to walk around, stretch and change position at anytime. People often bring small items from home that increase their comfort e.g. cushions, footrests.

There are various educational elements to the programme. Topics covered include:

- Pain mechanisms – What is pain? How might it become long term?
- Pacing and targeting
- Goal setting
- Maximising energy
- Managing flare ups and set backs
- Mood
- Sleep
- Communication
- Acceptance
- Adapting your lifestyle
- Managing stress
- Medication

### **Exercise**

People in pain tend to stop exercising or at least reduce what they can do. The main reason for this is often concern that exercise will increase the level of pain. This in turn can lead to muscle weakness, joint stiffness and general deconditioning, which can further increase pain. The exercise component of the programme is designed by our specialist physiotherapist for people with long term pain, so that you won't need to sit or stand for long periods of time. The exercises are gentle and graded, so that by gradually working at your own pace you can build up on what you can do, and consequently over the 8 weeks your fitness will improve and you will be able to do more. If you have any concerns about the exercise component, there will be lots of opportunity to ask questions and discuss this with our physiotherapist.

### **Relaxation**

Long term pain is known to be stressful both physically and emotionally. Research has shown that planned, purposeful relaxation can help to break the pain-stress cycle by lowering heart rate and blood pressure, relaxing tense muscles, reducing anxiety and inducing a sense of control and wellbeing. We will explore your own ideas around relaxation and help you to learn relaxation techniques that you can use in your everyday life.

### **Life after the group**

Our patients tell us it is important that the 8-week programme is not viewed in isolation, so during the programme we also encourage you to think about continuing to "live well" in the longer term. Again, this will probably look

different for each person. As well as exploring your own ideas, we can also signpost you to a range of services in the community.

Services such as Pain Clinic Plus, which is run by volunteers who themselves have long term pain will attend some of the sessions and will explain what kind of support they offer. In addition, there are many other services in the community which people may not be aware of such as Active Sefton, Creative Alternatives, Life Matters and Job Centre Plus programmes.

### ***Want to find out more?***

The first step is usually an appointment with a clinician in the Community Pain Service (accessed via your GP). If you and your clinician think the programme might be helpful for you, you will then be invited by letter to attend an informal information session. This session gives you the opportunity to learn more about what the programme entails, meet some of the staff, and ask any questions. It will also give us the opportunity to ensure that your expectations of the group are in line with what we hope to achieve.

Places, although free on the NHS, are expensive and in demand, so please only sign up if you can commit and attend regularly. Regular attendance is crucial to gain the most benefits! Our pain patients tell us it is worth attending even when they are having a bad day.

Once the programme has been completed, there will be a follow up session approximately 2 months later to review your progress. After this, you are then left with an open appointment for 12 months within the Community Pain Service, which means you can re-access the service directly without going through your GP.

### ***What other people with pain have said about the PMP***

“The team approach to managing long term pain is right and the exercise was at the appropriate level. I’ve spoken to my GP about recommending it to other patients”

“I learnt a great deal about how to manage my pain in a friendly environment”

“It’s helpful for people who feel isolated, who would like to get moving again, socialise and become more positive about their condition”

### **Education and discussion session - once a week:**

Venue: Ainsdale Centre for Health and Wellbeing  
164 Sandbrook Road  
Ainsdale  
Southport

PR8 3RJ

Day: Wednesday morning

**PLUS**

**2 exercise sessions per week:**

Venue: LA Fitness  
109/111 Liverpool Road  
Formby

Day: Tuesday and Friday afternoons

**2 hydrotherapy sessions towards the end of the programme:**

Venue: Southport District General Hospital  
Town Lane  
Kew

**Group Facilitators:**

Dr Becky Simm – Principal Clinical Psychologist  
Dr Chris Barker – Clinical Director and Specialist in Pain Medicine  
Deanne Barrow –Advanced Specialist Occupational Therapist  
Kate Maguire/Lynsey Laird – Advanced Specialist Physiotherapist  
Jo Iddon – Clinical Psychology Assistant

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