**Living with Pain and Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Service: Information for people who use our service**

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| Welcome to the Living with Pain and Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS) Service at Harrogate District NHS Foundation Trust. This leaflet gives you some information about our service and what we do. |
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| **What are chronic pain and chronic fatigue syndrome?** |
| *Chronic pain* means pain that lasts for longer than 3 months (which is the usual amount of time body structures take to heal). It may be as the result of a chronic condition, it may start following an injury or come on gradually, or even for no obvious reason. It can be in a specific part of the body or felt throughout the body. Chronic pain is complex and is often to do with changes in the body’s pain signalling system – which means that it doesn’t often respond well to medical treatments like injections, medication and surgery.  *Chronic Fatigue Syndrome* (CFS) is also sometimes known as myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME). It is identified by fatigue that is severe and disabling, which is not improved by sleep or rest and is not caused by another physical or mental health condition. People who have it usually have a wide range of other symptoms as well, including problems with sleep, thinking or memory (sometimes called ‘brain fog’), pain throughout the body or in one specific area, and flu-like symptoms. |
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| **About our service** |
| Our service accepts referrals for those who have chronic pain or CFS/ME, or both. Some may have a diagnosis (a medical label) which explains why they experience their symptoms; others may not have a clear diagnosis in spite of investigations carried out before being referred to our team. This is quite common – the symptoms are real, but doctors cannot find a medical explanation. The care received from our team is the same for everybody, whether they have a diagnosis or not.  Living with chronic pain and fatigue affects people in many different ways. In addition to the physical symptoms, people referred to our service often have difficulties carrying out daily activities, and relationships, work and social activities have often been affected too. This can be very distressing, and people can often feel low and anxious as a result.  We work together to help people to understand their symptoms of chronic pain and/or CFS and to manage all aspects of living with them, with the goal of enabling people to live well with their long-term condition. |

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| **Who is in the team?** |
| Our team is made up of several different professionals:   * *Physiotherapists*, who deal with the movement and functioning of the body * *Occupational therapists* who focus on the impact that your symptoms have on what you do, activities such as self-care, day-to-day tasks, work or leisure * *Clinical Psychologists*, who specialise in the psychological and social aspects of pain management * *Administrative staff,* who are responsible for booking appointments and administration within the service   Living with ongoing pain and fatigue can be a real challenge and it is therefore important that you and your healthcare team work together to treat you as a whole person who has pain and fatigue. |
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| **What we do** |
| When pain and CFS are well managed, people feel more able to cope, their condition feels less of a problem, and they are able to do more of what matters to them. Often as a side-effect their symptoms take up less of their life.  Our team will help you to learn skills and make long-lasting changes to what you do and how you do it. Evidence shows this is the most effective approach for helping to tackle pain and CFS. It is often not possible to cure long term pain/fatigue, but with help you can return to a higher quality of life in spite of the pain/fatigue.  Everyone’s care will look a bit different, but our input is likely to involve things like:   * Understanding more about the nervous system and how it works differently when you have long-term pain and/or fatigue * Learning new skills and ways of doing things * Identifying ways of getting back to doing the things that matter to you * Changing how you cope with, think about or respond to pain/fatigue * Changing unhelpful patterns you might have got into because of pain or fatigue * Learning skills for coping with the sadness, worry, anxiety or anger associated with your pain/fatigue and the ways it may be affecting your life * Using movement or activity to help retrain the body’s pain system * Helping you to manage some of the problems that come with pain/fatigue such as communicating with people about pain, dealing with good days and bad days or sleeping badly. * Help to understand the role and limitations of medication for chronic pain. * Support to reduce the use of unhelpful pain medication.   The interventions we offer may be delivered one to one or in a group setting, depending on what would suit you best. You may see a physiotherapist, occupational therapist or clinical psychologist depending on what areas you need help with.  ***Please note:*** The Living with Pain and CFS Service does not accept referrals for people under 18, or those who are under the care of another pain team. We do not provide any medical input, such as blood work, injections or investigations. These would need to be carried out by a GP or another pain clinic before you come to our service. |
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| **What our patients say about us** |
| “I found my sessions with this team extremely helpful and useful. My daily life is more bearable as I have a better understanding of my illness and using their strategies and techniques to help me through my days.”  “It was good to be myself and not pretend everything was fine. I feel I was given a ‘light at the end of the tunnel’”.  “I now see I need to take myself out of being run by pain and fear. I'm learning my limits and not feeling guilty for needing help. I am so grateful for all the help and can't thank you all enough.” |
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| **Your assessment appointment** |
| To help us work out how to help you and what mix of interventions is best suited to your needs, the first step is to gather further information from you in a questionnaire. You will then be invited to attend an assessment appointment.  Your assessment appointment is an opportunity to meet with a mix of people from the team who will carry out a full assessment of your symptoms according to their specialism. We look at the origin and development of your pain/fatigue, any medical conditions which may be contributing to your problems, and investigations and treatments you’ve had previously. We will also explore the effect pain/fatigue is having on your daily activities, sleep, work, relationships, and emotions, which may mean asking you questions of a personal nature. This first appointment therefore can be lengthy, but people usually find it worthwhile.  At the end of the appointment team members meet to discuss their findings. They will then meet with you to discuss their recommendations, and you will leave with a care plan which has been agreed with you. We will write to the person who referred you to let them know the outcome.  Long term pain and CFS are relatively common, and the high demand for our service means there will often be a wait to see us. We understand how hard it can be to wait for input when your symptoms affect every area of life, and we do our best to reduce waiting times as much as possible. |
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| **More information** |
| For more information, including links to helpful information, please see our website  **www.hdft.nhs.uk** |
| **How to get in touch with us** |
| Postal Address: Living with Pain and Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS) Team, Harrogate District Hospital, Lancaster Park Road, Harrogate,  North Yorkshire, HG2 7SX  Telephone: 01423 553526  Email: [hdft.livingwithpainandcfs@nhs.net](mailto:hdft.livingwithpainandcfs@nhs.net) |