

What is Persistent Pain?

Persistent pain is defined as pain that persists longer than 3 months.

In some cases, persistent pain can be influenced by other health conditions such as fibromyalgia, arthritis, and diabetes. This is called chronic secondary pain and this pain can be explained by a medical condition. In other cases, there are no underlying health conditions associated with the pain experience. This type of pain is called chronic primary pain.

Persistent pain can have a significant impact on a person's life, including their mood, ability to be independent and overall quality of life. It can also limit a person's social interactions and activities, making it difficult for them to fully participate in daily life.

If you have had pain for more than 3 months, you can be referred to the Persistent Pain Service by your GP. It is important that you are not waiting for any more interventions or investigations from other services and want to learn skills to help you manage your pain.

What is the Persistent Pain Service?

The Barts Health NHS Trust's Persistent Pain Service is provided by consultants in pain medicine, specialist physiotherapists and clinical psychologists based at the Mile End Hospital.

The focus of the service is to teach patients skills and strategies to enable them to manage life in the presence of a long-term pain condition. We put improving quality of life at the centre of our approach. Our pain management programmes do not focus on pain reduction or eliminating the pain experience.

Important Information

If you have been accepted into the service, you will receive a letter to confirm your appointment. Please ensure that you reply to it promptly or call the department to confirm your appointment.

It is important that you attend your appointments as scheduled or inform the service in advance if you need to cancel.

If you need to change your appointment, or no longer want an assessment, please call the service at least 48 hours before your appointment so that it can be offered to someone else. If you are late for your appointment, it may be rescheduled for a later time.

If you do not attend your appointment without notifying the service, you may be discharged from the programme.

If you need a translator or transport for your appointment, please contact the service at least 1 week in advance and let them know the assistance you require.

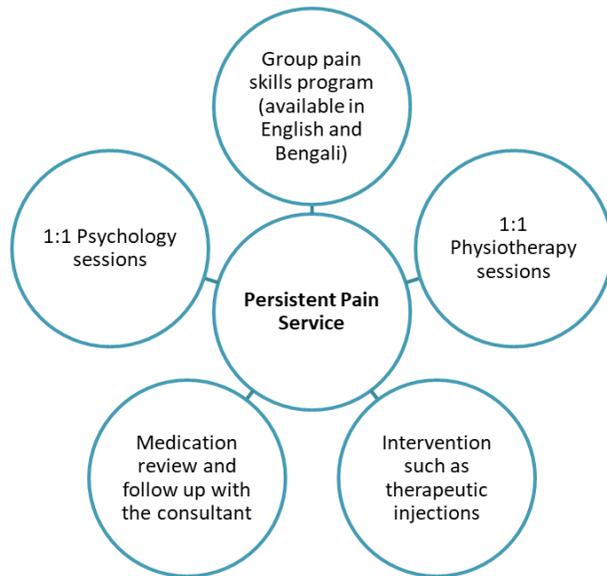
If you have any questions, comments, complaints, or suggestions about your care, please contact the support team at BHNT.BartsHealthTherapies@nhs.net or call 0207 377 7872.

What to expect at your first appointment?

Your first appointment will be a multidisciplinary team (MDT) assessment (meaning that you will meet a mixture of professionals such as a pain consultant, physiotherapist, or clinical psychologist) to determine the best course of action for managing your pain. The MDT may also review any medications or interventions and consider whether changes or adjustments to these are needed.

The appointment will last approximately 30 mins, and it is an opportunity for us to jointly come up with a comprehensive treatment plan that works for you, your needs, and goals.

Below are the different interventions that we offer and may be considered:



The assessment is also an opportunity for you to ask questions and learn more about these treatment options. After the assessment, you and the team will decide on a treatment plan that is tailored to your needs and goals.

In some cases, the service may recommend or provide medical interventions, such as spinal injections or medication reviews, while also encouraging patients to actively engage in self-management strategies. These interventions are only offered to patients who meet the criteria laid out in national guidance and will not be suitable for everybody.

Understanding pain

The following resources may help to support your understanding and management of persistent pain.

Websites:

British Pain Society	www.britishpainsociety.org
Pain Toolkit	www.paintoolkit.org
Health Talk	www.healthtalk.org/peoples-experiences/long-term-conditions/chronic-pain/topics
The Retrain Pain Foundation	http://www.retrainpain.org/

Videos:

Understanding Pain in Less Than 5 Minutes [Understanding pain & what to do about it in less than 5 minutes - YouTube](#)

Tame The Beast: Rethinking Persistent Pain by Professor Lorimer Moseley [Tame the Beast — It's time to rethink persistent pain - YouTube](#)

Low back pain myths: Professor Peter O'Sullivan uses real patient interviews and stories to debunk common low back pain myths. [Back pain - separating fact from fiction - Prof Peter O'Sullivan - YouTube](#)

Services offered within the Persistent Pain Service (PPS)

Physiotherapy

Our pain physiotherapists work in collaboration with the MDT to assess, treat, support, and educate patients with persistent pain.

1. Our physiotherapists support patients to build on and develop pain skills to help reduce the negative impact of persistent pain on their quality of life and to identify and work towards meaningful goals.
2. Physiotherapists can work with you to set goals based on what is important to you. The purpose of this is to help you engage in the things that matter to you and in turn improve quality of life. The aims are to understand persistent pain, pacing activities, flare up planning, exploring movements and sleep hygiene.
3. We do not offer passive therapies such as massage or manipulation, but rather focus on active approaches to rehabilitation and empowering patients to manage their persistent pain condition. The goal is to help patients build confidence in their ability to self-manage their pain and take an active role in their own care.

Psychology

There is a strong connection between physical pain and emotional and mental wellbeing. Psychology plays a significant role in persistent pain service and the psychologists focus on developing three primary skills to help individuals manage their pain:

1. Developing self-soothing and self-care skills that can benefit an oversensitive nervous system.
2. Taking a step back to reflect on your current lifestyle, including routines, habits and relationships, to identify the direction you want to go in.
3. Acquiring practical skills to manage difficult thoughts, feelings and sensations as you work toward behaviour change. The emphasis is on skill development, and it is essential to set aside time between sessions to practice the exercises.

English and Bengali Pain Skills Programme

This is a six-session group programme designed to provide you with the latest understanding of pain science, as well as a variety of physiotherapy and psychology techniques to help you live well and engage in life in the presence of an ongoing pain condition.

Participants often report that while their pain is still present, it no longer dominates their life. They also note that they are making decisions based on what they want to do, rather than avoiding pain, and that they are finding joy in the smaller things in life again.

The programme is offered in English and Bengali, and each session is two hours long with breaks and movement exercises. Participants are encouraged to practice the skills at home and work towards goals they set at the beginning of the programme.

After completing the programme, follow-up is provided in the weeks after to help participants continue to track their progress and maintain their skills in the long term.

Medication Review and Interventions

During your initial assessment, you may have a review of your pain medication with the consultant as part of your referral to the pain service. In some cases, the consultant may suggest an intervention to help manage your pain.

At Mile End Hospital, these interventions may include facet joint injections, nerve root injections, epidurals, infusions, and nerve blocks.

Some patients may not be suitable for these interventions and medication. Interventions will only be offered to patients who meet the criteria set out in national guidance.