Pain Support Plan (PSP)
For Adults with Persistent Pain

Making Decisions With My Healthcare Professional

Sharing Information About Me and My Condition

Name: _____

My pain story: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

I think my pain problems are due to: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

One thing I have tried to cope with my pain, is: _____

_____

Options for Persistent Pain Care

If your GP or healthcare professional has diagnosed you with persistent pain (also known as chronic pain) the following pages will help you discuss your options with them, to find out what's right for you.

Understanding Pain and Small Lifestyle Changes

Persistent pain is common in the UK, with one third to one half of adults living with it, but how they experience pain and how it affects their lives varies greatly. Understanding more about pain and how the body responds to it can help, alongside knowing more about how to manage with simple treatments and pain self-care. Small lifestyle changes and accessing community support can also be beneficial, for example, with things like sleeping and eating better, being active, managing stress and low mood, relaxation, emotional wellbeing, managing relationships and having a fulfilling social life.

Options for Persistent Pain Care - Continued

Tests and Scans

If a person's pain problems do not get better, or get worse, there is very little evidence that requesting tests and scans make any difference to the pain experienced. Most people do not need more scans to be diagnosed with persistent pain or to start managing their pain.

Injections or Nerve Blocking Procedures

Injection therapy should generally be avoided in persistent pain management. This is based on evidence confirming a lack of long-term benefit.

Medication

Medications haven't been shown to be effective in the long-term management of persistent pain. The most up-to-date advice is to reduce down pain relief medications you take regularly over a period of time with help from your GP and primary care team, including the practice pharmacist. Overuse of pain medications can cause you to feel significant side effects, including addiction. Side effects are common with pain medications, which can include constipation, weight gain, sleep and concentration difficulties, problems with breathing and even death. Some medications can be useful for a short time if the pain worsens suddenly (a flare up). It is important to ask for your medications to be reviewed regularly.

Movement Therapies

It's natural to be hesitant when moving more if exercise has felt painful in the past or if you're worried about doing more damage. But if you become more active gradually, it's unlikely you'll cause any harm. The pain you feel when you start gentle exercise is because the muscles and joints are getting fitter and stronger. Movement matters because being active helps lessen pain by stretching stiff and tense muscles, ligaments and joints, and in the long term, the benefits of moving more and exercising outweigh any temporary increase in pain. In fact, it has been shown that for some people who exercise regularly, their experience of daily pain decreases and they can do many more everyday tasks. You can be ask to be referred to a physiotherapist, if appropriate.

Weight Management

Excess body fat can increase inflammation in the body and being heavier puts extra strain on muscles and joints, both of which can increase experience of pain. If you are overweight or obese, losing weight may help. Discuss options with your healthcare professional.

Psychological Therapies

Low mood, anxiety and depression can make pain worse and harder to manage. Some people may get help from talking therapies, such as cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), which focus on how your thoughts, beliefs and attitudes affect your feelings and actions.

**Some people's persistent pain may be caused by conditions that need other kinds of treatment. Your healthcare professional will explain options recommended by the National Institute of Health and Care Excellence (NICE).*

Considering Your Options

From the options below, choose 1 or 2 things where a small change may help with your pain care. Circle your selection.

Being active

House and home

Physical therapies

How I feel

At work

Mental health support

Community groups

Managing with money

Family and friends

Healthy diet and lifestyle

Getting around

Medicines and other treatments

Small Change #1

Write your first small change here:

How could action in this area help with your pain management?

What may stop you from doing this?

What practical things could you do? What support could help?

Approximately when could you make some progress by?

Small Change #2

Write your second small change here:

How could action in this area help with your pain management?

What may stop you from doing this?

What practical things could you do? What support could help?

Approximately when could you make some progress by?

Sharing Decisions

Complete this section with your GP or healthcare professional

After completing this Pain Support Plan and reflecting on the information provided, how do you feel about your next steps? *Please tick one.*

- ◯ **I have made some decisons today and feel ready to act**
- ◯ **I would like to talk to my friends/family before deciding**
- ◯ **I would like another appointment to progress my Pain Support Plan**
- ◯ **I would like more information before deciding what to do**

We agreed that:

I will: _____

_____

_____

My healthcare professional will: _____

_____

_____

I should come back to see a healthcare professional if: _____

_____

If I have a problem or concern, I should contact:

_____

_____

Additional Pain Support

Rethinking Pain	www.rethinkingpain.org
Live Well with Pain	www.livewellwithpain.co.uk/resources-for-people-with-pain/ten-footsteps-to-living-well-with-pain
NHS Pain Support	www.nhs.uk/live-well/pain
Mind	www.mind.org.uk
Living Well	www.mylivingwell.co.uk
Pain Concern	www.painconcern.org.uk
Versus Arthritis	www.versusarthritis.org
Citizens Advice	www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/contact-us/contact-us/contact-us