



Pain Nurse Specialist

Pain Nurse Specialist and Chronic Pain

You have been invited to attend as assessment with a Pain Nurse Specialist. This leaflet explains the role of the nurse, and how they can assist people who live with long-term pain (also known as 'chronic' or 'persistent' pain).

What is a Pain Nurse Specialist?

In our team, we are registered nurses, with a minimum of 5 years general nursing experience. Pain has been elected as an area of great interest and further training has been undertaken. We keep up to date with all new developments in Pain Management and are members of the British Pain Society.

What is the role of the Pain Nurse Specialist?

Living with chronic pain can affect many areas of a person's life; including family, relationships, work, social life, hobbies, and how the person feels about the world, the future and about themselves. For some people, it can lead to feelings of upset, anger, frustration, anxiety, distress, isolation, hopelessness or low mood. We also know that stress caused by life events can make chronic pain feel worse, which in turn can make the pain more difficult to cope with.

The Pain Nurse Specialist will not be in a position to 'cure' your pain, however, they will give advice with medication when required, provide physical interventions when appropriate and be there to offer support to people living with pain, and their carers.

What does seeing a Pain Nurse Specialist involve?

Initially, you could be offered a one hour appointment. You will be sent a questionnaire that should be filled out to the best of your ability. There are no right or wrong answers; it's about how you are feeling at the time. Someone else can fill it out for you if necessary, but it needs to be in your words. The questionnaire gives important information to the nurse and it will be read before your assessment. You will then have a full history taken about your pain. There will be no physical examination, therefore no need to remove any clothing. You will not be given a diagnosis for your pain; you should already have this before coming to us. Once a full assessment has been done, further options will be discussed with you. If you are in agreement, recommendations could be made to you and to your GP for any medication changes, which could include reductions. You could be referred on to other members of the team, offered on-going support or discharged. You are more than welcome to have someone accompany you to your assessment.

PEG Therapy – External Neuromodulation

This is a form of nerve stimulation that can be considered for very localised pain. You should be able to pin point your pain. It is an electrical stimulation. A probe is placed on the painful area and gently moved around the area. You will feel a tingling, pulsing sensation and you may experience some twitching. It should not be painful. The idea of this is to redirect or change the behaviour in the nerves. Depending on where your pain is, you may be asked to loosen or remove some clothing.

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It could take between 10 and 15 minutes and you would normally be offered 4 sessions. If it is helpful, you could be offered further sessions.

Education on Medication

This will be offered as a 'Next Step'; once you have attended psychology based Pain Seminars. It will be in a group situation.

The nurse will talk about the various medications we use and why. We will talk about the long term use of medication, how and when to increase or reduce. We will talk about side effects and the best way to manage these. This will not be the place to talk about individual medication requirements. For this, you should be referred for a medication review.

Medication Reviews

Most people with long term pain will have tried many medications before attending a Pain Management clinic, all with varying degrees of effect and side effects. Medication can certainly play a part in managing pain, but it is not the only option. The longer you take medication, the less effective it could become because your body could get used to it. It is also, not the best option to keep increasing it.

The nurse will take a full history of all your medications and it would be helpful to bring a list of current medications and any previous drugs tried, with you. Recommendations will be made to your GP. We do not prescribe.

It is important to never take over and above what has been prescribed and to never just stop taking your medications without previously seeking medical advice.

Confidentiality and sharing of information

The Pain Nurse Specialist will share only the information which is relevant to your care with other members of the Pain Management Service. They will keep all other information confidential (private). Any letters or reports that are sent out will be with your consent. The only time information is shared whether or not you have given permission is if they are concerned that you or someone else was at a significant risk of harm. If this happens, they would discuss it with you first.

Staff include:

Jackie Doe, Pain Nurse Specialist
Belinda Perkins, Pain Nurse Specialist

If you would like to know more about Pain Management:

You can find more information on the British Pain Society website at www.britishpainsociety.org

Service provided by:

