

# Herts Valleys Integrated Musculoskeletal (MSK) Service

## Chronic Pain and Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Service A patient guide

### Our service

Connect provide a large integrated MSK Service on behalf of the NHS across multiple locations in West Hertfordshire. We accept referrals from any hospital (providing your registered GP practice is within the Herts Valleys CCG catchment area), local GP's and other community services.

Connect Health's specialist services cover:

- Physiotherapy
- Hand Therapy
- Podiatry
- Orthopaedic (CATs)
- Pain Services
- Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Services
- Rheumatology
- Postural Stability

### Overview of the Chronic Pain/Fatigue Management Service

It provides a specialist multi-disciplinary service to support people aged 18 and over who suffer with the problem of chronic (persistent) pain/fatigue.

The team consists of specialist therapy staff, psychologists and medics/consultants.

### Problems Addressed by Service

Chronic Pain and Chronic Fatigue are complex problems because they are often difficult to treat medically. This can lead to a sense of frustration and despair for many people, particularly when this problem starts to impact negatively on their overall quality of life.

Many people notice that because of their pain/fatigue, they have started to withdraw from other people or activities that they use to enjoy.

Our team supports people who may be experiencing one or more of the following problems associated with their pain/fatigue:

- Difficulties understanding why pain/fatigue persists and why medical treatments offer little benefit
- Fears of movement and exercise
- Reduced confidence in managing activities
- Mood changes (e.g. anxiety, depression, frustration) which may lead to withdrawing from others
- Difficulties explaining pain/fatigue to others and/or avoiding other people regularly

## What to expect if I am being referred to Connect

Your referral will be sent to Connect electronically and registered on Connect's system within 2 working days.

Within a further 2 working days this referral will be reviewed by a member of Connect's specialist team to decide how quickly you should be offered an appointment, and by what medium.

On day 5 (or sooner) you should expect a phone call from Connect to make your appointment (the call may come from a withheld number):

- Urgent patients will be offered an appointment within 2 weeks
- Routine patients will be offered an appointment within 4 weeks

Based on the information provided in your referral and following review by Connect's specialist staff, you will be offered either:

- A telephone appointment (PhysioLine). This will be a consultation with a qualified physiotherapist, to provide early advice and guidance on how to manage your current condition
- A face to face appointment in the service at a location of your choosing.

Please note: some locations have longer wait times than others, therefore some flexibility for initial appointments is required to ensure you are seen in a timely fashion

If we are unable to contact you successfully we will do one or more of the following;

- Leave you a voicemail if able
- Send you a text message requesting you contact us ("MSK Service")
- Send you a contact request letter

## What to expect in the service

When you have been referred to our Team, we will offer you an assessment appointment. During this appointment, we will ask you about your pain/fatigue and the different ways in which this impacts on your life.

Based on the information provided, we may recommend that you join our seven week Chronic Pain/Fatigue Management Programme. Our Programme consists of:

- One two-hour group-based Chronic Pain/Fatigue Introduction Session (provides a general overview of chronic pain/fatigue, coping strategies and the role of our service).
- Six weekly group-based pain management sessions

The Chronic Pain/Fatigue Management Programme consists of educational sessions covering the following:

- Detailed information about chronic pain/fatigue and why these problems persist
- Strategies from Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) to support you in managing the emotional impact of your pain/fatigue.
- Understanding flare-ups of pain/fatigue and developing flare-up management plans
- The importance of movement and exercise and skills. Developing mindful movements to help increase confidence with moving, despite pain/fatigue
- Activity management (developing skills in pacing and planning).
- Improving communication with friends and family about pain/fatigue
- Managing sleep problems

At the end of the programme we will offer you an individual one-hour follow-up review. This allows us to review your progress with understanding and developing your pain/fatigue coping strategies and provide some guidance to support your longer-term management skills.

We will also offer you another group-based follow-up review session at two and six months after completion of the Pain/Fatigue Programme.

After you have completed the entire programme and follow-up reviews, we will write you a summary of your progress, which will also be copied to your GP.

## What if a Chronic Pain/Fatigue Management Programme is not suitable for my needs?

It may be that based on the information you provide at assessment, our group-based programmes may not adequately meet your needs. This can be for different clinical reasons. In this case, we may recommend another agency that will best address your concerns or provide you one-to-one based management. These recommendations will always be discussed with you.



If you have any concerns or you cannot make your appointment date, or if your planned surgery has been re-scheduled, please contact Connect on **01442 913356**



Further advice and guidance can be found online via **[hertsvalleys.connecthealth.co.uk](https://hertsvalleys.connecthealth.co.uk)**