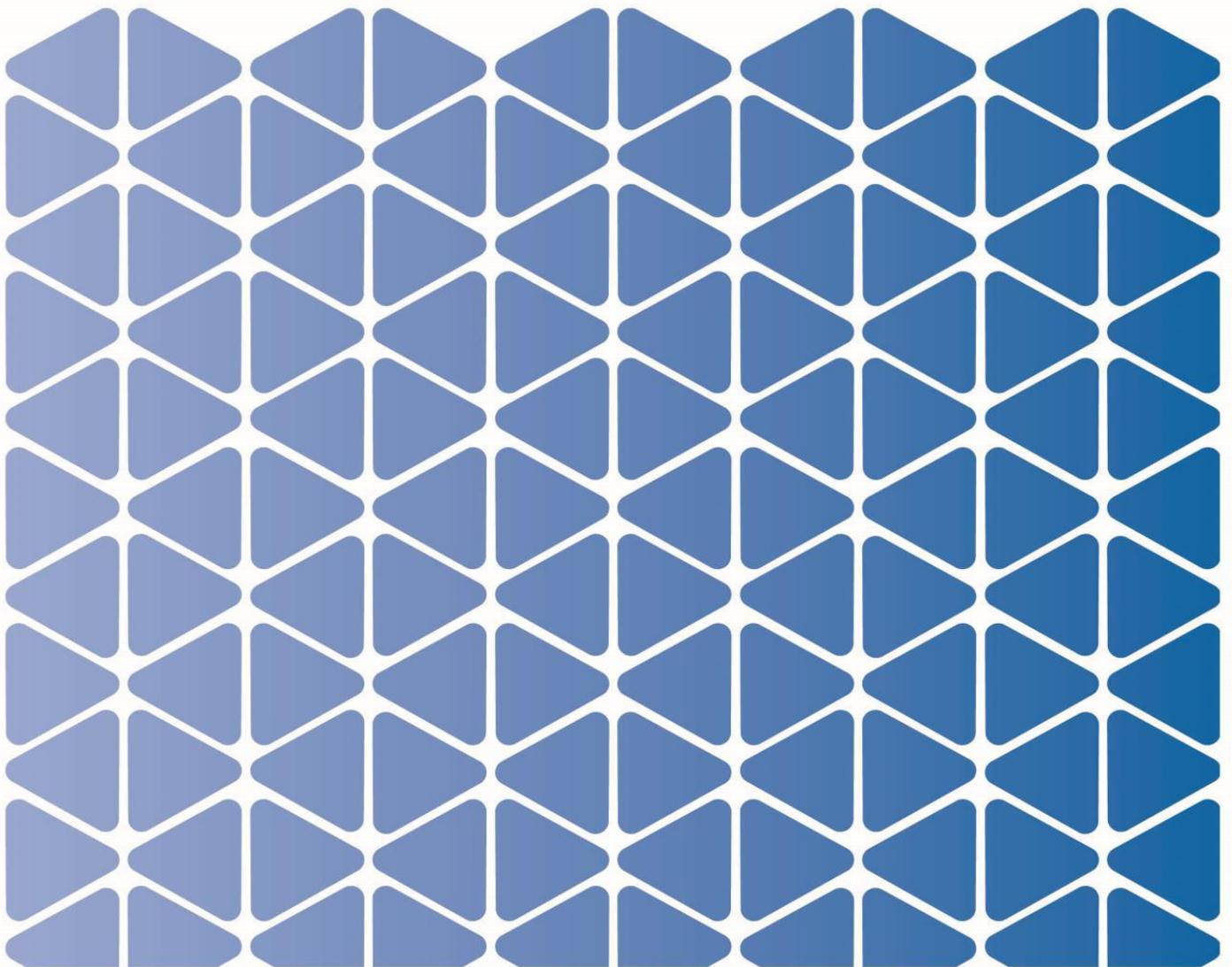




## PATIENT INFORMATION

# PERSISTENT PAIN: WHAT IS IT?



## **Introduction**

We have all suffered from pain at some point in our lives, usually it goes away by itself. Unfortunately, sometimes it doesn't go away and becomes long-term pain. Health professionals call this "chronic pain" or more recently "persistent pain".

## **What is persistent pain?**

Chronic or persistent pain is pain that lasts more than 3 months after healing of an injury or can occur spontaneously without an injury at all! It is pain that lasts beyond the expected time of healing. It is important to rule out serious/ "nasty" conditions. Sometimes a cause can be found but often this is not the case and a diagnosis of persistent pain is made. It is a nuisance and not a clear indicator of what is happening in the body tissues. The pain can be constant or intermittent, often varying in intensity. It can have a big impact on a person's life causing:

- Fatigue
- Poor sleep pattern
- Low mood or anxiety
- Difficulty working and socialising
- Reduces mobility
- Reduced quality of life

## **If I have pain, there must be something wrong?**

X-rays and scans do not usually reveal the cause of persistent pain. They may show age related changes but we can't say for sure they are the cause of your pain as studies have shown similar changes in people who have no pain.

Regardless of the type of pain you feel or where in your body you feel it, research has shown that persistent pain is the result of the nervous system becoming over sensitive or being set in a highly reactive state. It can be likened to a car alarm that keeps going off even though no-one is breaking in.

A light breeze or someone just walking by can set the car alarm ringing. Likewise, with minor activities or doing nothing at all pain can increase. The car alarm can be fixed but unfortunately there is no quick "fix" for persistent pain. It is very complex and not fully understood. One thing is certain, persistent pain is very real and never "just in the mind".

## **Is there a cure for persistent pain?**

Unfortunately, persistent (chronic) pain is common and millions of people suffer from it in Britain.

Most people find the treatments or medications in the pain clinic help to reduce their pain to some extent and for a variable length of time but they are rarely a cure.

The health care professionals in the Chronic Pain Team can work with you to help you understand the complicated nature of persistent pain and to teach you strategies on how to manage it better. We know, for example, that stress can increase pain levels and in learning how to manage this with relaxation and other strategies, can turn the pain volume down. There are a number of ways that you can learn to do this, and live with your pain condition. In so doing, your quality of life can certainly improve and it is possible for your pain to reduce over time too.

## **USEFUL INFORMATION ON PERSISTENT PAIN**

### ***Useful Websites with downloadable leaflets on Persistent Pain:***

- [knowpain.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/TazzyPersistentPainBooklet.pdf](http://knowpain.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/TazzyPersistentPainBooklet.pdf)
- [www.swft.nhs.uk/application/files/9914/6590/4878/Explain\\_Pain\\_Leaflet.pdf](http://www.swft.nhs.uk/application/files/9914/6590/4878/Explain_Pain_Leaflet.pdf)

### ***Useful Youtube Videos clips:***

- [“Understanding pain and what to do about it in less than 5 minutes”](#)
- [TEDxAdelaide – Lorimer Moseley – “Why things hurt”](#)
- [“Tame The Beast — It's time to rethink persistent pain”](#)

### **Other useful websites for persistent pain:**

- Pain Toolkit - [www.paintoolkit.org](http://www.paintoolkit.org)
- British Pain Society - [www.britishpainsociety.org](http://www.britishpainsociety.org)
- Exercise Works - [www.exercise-works.org](http://www.exercise-works.org)
- Mindfulness Pain management - [www.breathworks-mindfulness.co.uk](http://www.breathworks-mindfulness.co.uk)
- Healthtalkonline-  
[www.healthtalk.org/peoples-experiences/long-term-conditions/chronic-pain/topics](http://www.healthtalk.org/peoples-experiences/long-term-conditions/chronic-pain/topics)
- MIND confidential help and advice- [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)
- Pain Concern - [www.painconcern.org.uk](http://www.painconcern.org.uk)
- My pain management - [www.mypainmanagement.net](http://www.mypainmanagement.net)

**If your symptoms or condition worsens, or if you are concerned about anything, please call your GP, 111, or 999.**

## **Patient Experience**

We know that being admitted to hospital can be a difficult and unsettling time for you and your loved ones. If you have any questions or concerns, please do speak with a member of staff on the ward or in the relevant department who will do their best to answer your questions and reassure you.

## **Feedback**

Feedback is really important and useful to us – it can tell us where we are working well and where improvements can be made. There are lots of ways you can share your experience with us including completing our Friends and Family Test – cards are available and can be posted on all wards, departments and clinics at our hospitals. We value your comments and feedback and thank you for taking the time to share this with us.

## **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

If you have any concerns or questions about your care, we advise you to talk with the nurse in charge or the department manager in the first instance as they are best placed to answer any questions or resolve concerns quickly. If the relevant member of staff is unable to help resolve your concern, you can contact the PALS Team. We offer informal help, advice or support about any aspect of hospital services & experiences.

Our PALS team will liaise with the various departments in our hospitals on your behalf, if you feel unable to do so, to resolve your problems and where appropriate refer to outside help.

If you are still unhappy you can contact the Complaints Department, who can investigate your concerns. You can make a complaint orally, electronically or in writing and we can advise and guide you through the complaints procedure.

## **How to contact PALS:**

**Telephone Patient Services: 0300 123 1732 or via email at: [wah-tr.PET@nhs.net](mailto:wah-tr.PET@nhs.net)**

## **Opening times:**

The PALS telephone lines are open Monday to Thursday from 8.30am to 4.30pm and Friday: 8.30am to 4.00pm. Please be aware that a voicemail service is in use at busy times, but messages will be returned as quickly as possible.

If you are unable to understand this leaflet, please communicate with a member of staff.