



Wellmind Health

Pathway through Pain with Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust

Community Chronic Pain Service adds digital to the delivery of their Pain Management Programmes

THE SERVICE



Kent Community Health
NHS Foundation Trust

Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust – Community Chronic Pain Service.

Online PMP lead: Colin Bullen, Advanced Chronic Pain Practitioner.

CHALLENGES



Provide support for patients with chronic pain using a biopsychosocial model of care.

A need to deliver safe, cost-effective and clinically approved intensive Pain Management Programmes as part of their pathway.

Little or no face-to-face patient contact due to COVID-19 restrictions.

SOLUTION



NHS-approved digital Pain Management Programme that integrates with the existing Pain Service.

Accessible and on demand web-app, compatible with all devices, including smartphones.

Clinicians can monitor patients' progress and clearly measure effectiveness.

OUTCOMES



Increased use of digital pathway as a direct result of the pandemic.

19% average health improvement, 16% reduction in anxiety and depression for participants.

Especially helpful for patients with commitments or mobility issues, or who find group sessions increase their level of anxiety.



"The online programme enables patients to engage with education quickly. Since COVID-19, it really has been a godsend. Following government guidelines, our face to face programme had to be suspended and having Pathway through Pain to access enabled us to move to a fully digital pathway, while incorporating psychoeducation."

Colin Bullen, Advanced Chronic Pain Practitioner, Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust

Summary

Following a successful pilot of Pathway through Pain, the Kent Community Pain Service has been offering its patients a digital pain management programme (PMP) via Pathway through Pain to complement their existing face-to-face programme that some people were unable to engage with. It also is a helpful refresher programme for those who have completed the face-to-face programme previously.

The initial challenge in 2012 was to fully integrate the online course with the existing Pain Service and the face-to-face group-based work of the multi-disciplinary clinical team to help facilitate patient choice. This was seamlessly achieved.

Pathway through Pain proved to be an effective solution in helping patients who were too unable to attend a group-based pain management programme. Engagement and outcomes of patients following the course are easily monitored by the pain team through a web-based portal, with additional support and advice provided over the phone, as necessary.

In time, suitable patients visiting the clinic were also offered the Pathway through Pain course as an alternative to a group-delivered PMP. Patients opting for the digital route were supported by clinicians throughout the course over the phone as well as by meeting at the clinic in person, and their progress on their overall pain pathway reviewed.

In 2020, the clinic faced a challenge common for clinics in the UK: How to continue supporting patients with chronic pain within the restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. With many patients unable or unwilling to visit, the Pain Service moved quickly to an almost fully digital service, including using video call services for consultations. During the first wave of the pandemic, over 700 patients chose to follow the Pathway through Pain digital PMP.

Patient Feedback

*"This **course was so helpful**, when I started my pain was unbearable, but following the exercise and meditation it is slowly becoming manageable."* Louise

*"Thanks to this course I feel I **understand how to manage my chronic pain**."* Richard

*"I was very happy to take part in this course. I found it **useful and informative**, and I have started to put the things which I have learnt into practice. It takes some work and commitment, but it **beats reaching for a pill every time**. I am looking forward to controlling my pain in a more natural and positive way in the future."* Jennifer

*"Well, I thought that this would not be of any use for me at all - but I was wrong. It has **really helped me in several ways!** I would highly recommend that if you do this course you must make sure that you complete the whole course."* Alison

*"There is no question that the professionals involved are convinced in their actions and only wish to **help enable, empower the participants, to improve their varied conditions**."* Bernice

"Pathway through Pain has opened up a cohort of patients we weren't able to access previously. Housebound patients with internet access are now able to benefit from a virtual pain pathway and PTP is important in their psychoeducation."

Colin Bullen. **Advanced Chronic Pain Practitioner**

