



Pathway through Pain with Somerset NHS Foundation Trust

Community Pain Management Service scales self-management support with high-quality, cost-effective digital delivery

THE SERVICE



NHS Somerset Community Pain Management Service

Contact: Dr. Alf Collins, Consultant in Pain Medicine

CHALLENGE

Reorientate service to focus on effective self-management support (SMS)

Provide a high-quality digital Pain Management Programme (PMP)

Improve quality at scale while staying within budgetary constraints

SOLUTION

NHS-approved digital PMP that integrates with the existing Pain Service

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

Clinicians can monitor patients' progress and clearly measure effectiveness

OUTCOMES

22% average health improvement
18% average anxiety reduction
18% average depression reduction

Significantly reduced waiting times for patient engagement

87% agree or strongly agree that the on-line programme was easy to fit into their daily routine



"Pathway through Pain is a core element of our service. Patients don't have to wait for treatments to fail before they are offered the programme - very often they go on the programme after just 1 or 2 sessions of seeing us."
Dr. Alf Collins, Consultant in Pain Medicine, Somerset NHS Foundation Trust

Summary

The Somerset NHS Foundation Trust Community Pain Management Service has been offering Pathway through Pain to patients since 2012. Due to the persistent, long-term nature of chronic pain, the Community Pain Management Service had begun to orientate itself to become primarily a self-management support (SMS) service. As it did so, the need to find a cost-effective method of delivering a high-quality intensive pain management programme (PMP) to a large population base became apparent.

One of the Pain Management Service's core strategies focused on ensuring patients who developed chronic pain were offered effective, high-quality SMS strategies as quickly as possible. Several key factors of Pathway through Pain's digital PMP led to its selection as an integral part in realising this strategy and of the Trust's overall Pain Management Service.

The programme is designed by experts in the field of Pain Management and was in complete alignment with the ethos of the Somerset Community Pain Management Service. It informs patients about their condition and how to manage it, covering the elements they would receive if they had attended a formal, face-to-face, group PMP. In addition, attending face-to-face PMPs is not always possible for those who need support, so an effective digital PMP greatly increases accessibility, while also reducing costs.

After the programme has been completed, follow-ups are carried out to find out if there is anything further that can be offered to reinforce the techniques and strategies learned.

Pathway through Pain is a core element of the Somerset Community Pain Management Service, allowing it to improve quality at a population level while also focussing on value.

Patient Feedback

"Since doing the course I have been doing my exercises every day and found that I'm managing my condition a lot better. The pain never goes away but I can get on with my everyday life. So a huge thank you to you all." June

"I have found the course really helpful and often use the techniques I have been shown." Caroline

"The breathing exercises really help me reduce the pain that makes me so panicky. Now I am much calmer and do not get anxious at all." Leonie

"The course is very well constructed and I wish I had been offered this 5 years ago instead of being told by my doctor that there's nothing more they can do so I need to just accept the pain and live with it. This is a much more positive approach and could help people get their lives back again." Susan

"Very good for people with chronic pain." Barbara

"Pathway through Pain is now integral to our pain service. It improves the quality of life of the patients we serve - and its improved my quality of life no end; I don't tell patient after patient the same thing time and again in my clinic - the course does it for me!"

Dr. Alf Collins, Consultant in Pain Medicine

