Individual sessions in pain rehabilitation:

This factsheet aims to give you information about individual sessions within the pain rehabilitation service so you know what to expect should you choose this option.

Why am I in pain?

Persistent pain can occur with certain conditions, after surgery or illness, or sometimes with no clear cause. It is known that the body's nervous system does not function predictably anymore. This system can become over sensitive, meaning people experience significant pain with very little movement or everyday activity.

Many factors can influence your pain system sensitivity. These include reduced activity and deconditioning, but also muscle tension, static postures, over activity and anticipation of pain. Stress hormones are also a big contributor to pain sensitivity. This stress can be from fear of the pain, the consequence of living with pain, as well as from general life stressors. Some people find it useful to think of these factors as "turning up the volume switch" of your pain system.

The wider impact of pain

Living with pain can impact life in many ways. You may find it harder to complete everyday tasks consistently as pain levels can vary. It can start to affect your activity levels, work life, home life, social life, sleep, hobbies, communication and relationships, eating, drinking and smoking habits, and also your mental health and wellbeing, contributing to anxiety and depression, frustration, anger and feelings of guilt and shame.

Usually, people try lots of treatments and strategies to feel better, and take pain away, even if just for a short time. Often this can begin to contribute to the problem of pain, as it teaches the nervous system to become more sensitive. For example, many people push through to complete tasks but pay later in the day with more pain or fatigue. This can help in the very short term but is not usually workable longer term. This cycle alone can lead to people feeling very stuck, and unsure how to move forwards.

1:1 Pain rehabilitation sessions:

At your initial appointment we will explore the bigger picture of life with pain, its impact, your knowledge, expectations, beliefs, and goals.

Discussions will include supporting you to make steps to improve your function, wellbeing and quality of life.

We will agree 3-6 sessions of 30min in duration. These can be in person, by telephone or virtually.

Individual sessions involve focussed education and learning skills and strategies that can help if regularly practised.

There will be gaps between sessions so you can practise putting knowledge and skills into practice.

We will provide information, so you do not have to remember everything, but you might find it useful to have a folder or notebook.

Pain Rehabilitation knowledge and strategies include:

Understanding the body and diagnosis
Exploring the impact of pain in my life
Goal setting and returning to value-based activity
Understanding pain science
Pain acceptance concept and skills
Pacing and managing activity
Understanding fatigue and quality rest
Movement knowledge and skills
Relaxation skills
Mindfulness practice
Sleep knowledge and skills
Stress management and the influence of thoughts and feelings on pain
Communication skills and pain
Managing setbacks and flare ups

What is expected of me?

You will need to identify the most important things for you to focus on and set a goal.

Be prepared for each session, having looked at any resources you have been sent.

Make time each day to work towards your goals in between sessions.