

PainPals Helpline

As chronic pain sufferers we all need a little extra help from time to time. Would you like to speak with someone who understands what it's like? Don't feel alone anymore - the PainPals Helpline is here to lend an ear! A helpline manned by volunteers who know what it is like to be in pain and have developed ways to manage it.

**Call us on 01202 858361 - Mon-Fri 11:00 -16:00
Wed 14:00 - 16:00 only.**

PainPals offers confidential, anonymous telephone and email services to individuals in Dorset through our helpline. It is supported by Dorset Healthcare Pain team staff and all volunteers have regular support and supervision from the Pain services Clinicians. Calls and emails are answered by trained and skilled Helpline volunteers with the aim to support and empower callers.

What to expect when you contact us:

- An empathetic listener
- Information about pain and self-management techniques
- Directions to local and national pain-related services

We however do not offer clinical or medical advice – the helpline does not replace medical services.

Operating Hours

We are available:

- Days: Monday - Friday (except on bank holidays)
- Hours: 11:00 – 16:00 (Wed 14:00 - 16:00 only)

We aim to answer all calls within five rings during our core operating hours, and to respond to all email contacts within a week, but this depends on our volunteers' availability. As a guide, we tend to keep calls to a 20 minute limit.

We do not currently operate an answerphone service nor can we return peoples calls so people use the email below if contacting outside the opening hours.

What help can we give?

The helpline is primarily here to offer you a compassionate ear from someone who knows what it is like living with persistent pain. The helpline can provide:

- A safe space to talk about pain
- An empathetic listener with lived experience

We can also offer

- Information about pain generally
- Shared experience of self-management techniques
- Directions to local and national pain-related services
- Directions to reliable information and resources about pain.

Our helpline volunteers cannot:

- Give advice
- Attempt to diagnose or offer any specific medical advice
- Offer any legal opinion or advice
- Provide personal opinions (although volunteers may speak from personal experience)
- Become personally involved with any caller
- Stay on a call when they feel threatened or abused by a caller.

The PainPals Helpline is not a substitute for medical care or advice. We always suggest that you check with your healthcare professionals if you have any concerns about your condition or treatment.

In an Emergency

We are volunteers and not trained clinicians and we are therefore not able to take crisis calls. If you feel you are unable to cope and feel you are at risk of harming yourself or others, please use the following resources:

- Contact your GP and request an emergency appointment
- **Walk in to your nearest A & E department”**
- **Call “Connection” - Access to Mental Health**
 - 24/7 helpline open to all ages.
 - 0800 652 0190 or access via NHS 111
 - <https://www.dorsethealthcare.nhs.uk/access-mental-health>

If you would like psychological support with anxiety or depression there is also the following primary care NHS service:

- **Steps2Wellbeing (pan Dorset)**
 - Bournemouth & Christchurch - 0300 790 0542 / dhc.bc.s2w@nhs.net
 - Poole Purbeck & E. Dorset - 0300 123 1120 / dhc.pped.s2w@nhs.net
 - West Dorset - 0300 790 6828 / dhc.west.admin.s2w@nhs.net

If our lines are closed and you want to speak to someone, you can contact:

The Samaritans Helpline (116 123) is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free. Their trained volunteers offer a supportive listening service to anyone whatever the issues they are facing.

For 24-hour medical advice dial 111 or visit [nhs24.com](https://www.nhs.uk/111).

The PainPals Helpline or Dorset HealthCare is not responsible for advice given by outside organisations.

Feedback to the Pain Service

Have you contacted our Helpline recently? This voluntary service is managed by Pain Management Service and has been set up with the aim of offering support from people who have lived experience, this is a unique offering and something the pain team clinicians are unable to offer in the same way. We are interested in how you have experienced this service and we welcome any feedback you are willing to share. Please call on **01305 363019** or email on dhc.dorset.cps@nhs.net.