

## The Pain Chain: Guidance for Clients

### What is the Pain Chain?

The Dorset Pain Management Service (DPMS) is offering a peer support approach to help you on your self-management journey. All of our Pain Mentors have a persistent pain condition and have participated in one of our Pain Management Programmes (PMP) or have completed other forms of pain management therapy. They have volunteered to be Pain Mentors with DPMS due to their passion for supporting others currently going through their pain management journey. The Pain Chain is embedded within the service and all of our Pain Mentors are trained and regularly supervised by DPMS clinical staff. The Pain chain and our Pain Mentors are here to harness their own learning and skills in managing persistent pain to support others in their journey, creating a strong chain of support that sits side by side with your clinical input.



### Who is it for?

Anyone who is part of the Dorset Pain Management Service and is currently attending a PMP or individual therapy with us can request a Pain Chain Mentor. The Pain Chain is also available to anyone who has been through the DPMS and feels in need of some peer support to refresh or enhance their pain management skills. Please note that the Pain Chain will not be offered whilst someone is undergoing psychological therapy for severe mental illness or where there are active risk concerns such as self-harm or suicidal behaviour. However, this does not preclude anyone from the Pain Chain where such issues have been addressed and stabilised.

### Who are Pain Mentors?

Our Pain Mentors are people who have lived experience of persistent pain and have learned skills, strategies and approaches to managing life with pain, through the DPMS or previous pain management services. They are not people who have it all sorted and are no longer in pain or affected by pain. However, through perseverance and trying out the advice and knowledge they have received, they have gained a greater sense of control over their pain and seek to live to their strengths and values despite the pain. All of our Pain Mentors have successfully completed the application process to become DHUFT (Dorset Healthcare University Foundation NHS Trust) Expert by Experience – people who use their own lived experience in their voluntary role with the Trust. This process includes Enhanced DBS clearance (previously CRB) and DHUFT Induction as well as DPMS Pain Chain training.

### The Role of the Pain Mentor

1. To support people in understanding and applying pain management principles.
2. To encourage and motivate people to practice pain management principles.
3. To explain pain management principles where there is confusion.

| Pain Mentors offer....  | Pain Mentors do not offer...   |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• peer support</li> <li>• friendly and empathic support</li> <li>• a relationship focussed on you</li> <li>• a safe, respectful relationship with mutually agreed boundaries</li> <li>• a listening ear</li> <li>• personal experience of pain management to support the client in their management of pain</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• professional counselling, treatment or advice</li> <li>• a friendship</li> <li>• a relationship focussed on the Mentor</li> <li>• an emergency or crisis service</li> <li>• advice on what you should do</li> <li>• support with matters unrelated to pain</li> </ul> |

## Developing your relationship

**Communication:** A meeting with your Co-ordinator (a member of staff e.g. Therapy Assistant or TA), Mentors and new clients will initially be offered – this will either be in person at a DPMS venue that suits them, alternatively via a video link or phone. Ongoing face-to-face contact is an option; however, it is most likely that communication will take place by any of the following means: secure messaging on the DPMS website (see below), telephone, text, email or video call (e.g. Skype, FaceTime, etc.).

We would like to encourage the use of the Dorset Pain Management Service website ([www.dorsetpain.org.uk](http://www.dorsetpain.org.uk)) as a key means of communication; using the messaging function between Mentor and client; although we appreciate that talking in person via phone, video or face-to-face is often preferable. If you require any support with this, please contact your Pain Chain Coordinator (see your personalised Pain chain agreement for details).

**Contact:** During the first contact, the co-ordinator, Mentor and client should discuss and agree what form the Mentor/client contact will take including *how, how often, time of day* and *an agreed focus along with specific goals*. This information will be captured in the “Client and Mentor Agreement” form that will be completed at this initial meeting.

We recommend that a ‘settling-in’ period is agreed, during which either party can request a change of Mentor/client without need for explanation. This will allow for the real possibility that a beneficial Mentor/client relationship is not being achieved in the first instance, for whatever reason.

We also recommend that a review date is agreed. This will provide the flexibility to consider how much longer to continue and start to plan and work towards conclusion if that is appropriate. This review date could be for example after 3 months.

## Establishing boundaries

For any Mentor maintaining their own health and effective pain management should be their first priority. Therefore it is important that a comfortable set of boundaries is established in the Mentor-client relationship. Agreeing the mode and format for communication as per the previous section and using the form included will help in achieving this.

### Confidentiality

As DHUFT Volunteers, Mentors will have received training and information, as part of their induction training, on NHS codes of conduct concerning confidentiality and protection of patient information. This is supported by along with ongoing supervision and ad hoc support from trained clinicians (typically psychology/Occupational Therapist/Physiotherapist). With specific regard to the Pain Chain please note the following:

- Mentors are not expected to keep a personal record of any information provided by their client or of their conversations. Brief notes and contact details are kept within our secure Dorset Pain Management Service website.
- Personal and contact information provided between the client and Mentor should only include what is necessary and they are happy to share. This information should not be shared with anyone else.
- If communication by email takes place it is with the understanding that information exchanged will not be secure. Email accounts used should not be ones which are shared



with or viewable to other people; such as a family member. Communication via the Dorset Pain Management Service website provides a secure means of e-communication.

- Privacy during communication, whether at home or in a public place, should be considered and maintained to an acceptable level.

*Clients should be aware that where Mentors have any concerns for the welfare or safety of their client, they will pass on such concerns to the Pain Chain Coordinator or DPMS clinician.*

### **Dealing with risk concerns**

Clients joining the Pain Chain will do so with the understanding that this does not include support in emergency situations.

If a Mentor has any concerns about their client, for example if their mood appears to be consistently low, they miss 2 or more arranged contacts or there are concerns for their safety they will advise their client to discuss this with their GP and key DPMS clinician. Mentors will also contact their Pain Chain Coordinator or DPMS clinician.

Mentors may also encourage their client to make use of other support services available to them. For example, if they have access to mental health services, including crisis services (i.e. Connection, 0800 652 0190). If not, the Samaritans are there 24 hours a day as a service to anyone; whether in crisis or not. Their contact number is 116 123. Text or phone this number for free or visit their website at <https://www.samaritans.org/>. For any non-emergency physical health problems, they should contact the NHS via the 111 service.

You are also welcome to contact our DPMS volunteer-manned Helpline on 01202 858361 between Mon-Fri 11:00 - 17:00 (Wed 14:00 - 17:00 only).

### **Contact information**

Office hours are generally between 8.30am and 4.30pm and there should be the option to leave an answerphone message. You will have the capacity to message your staff co-ordinator via Dorset Pain Management Service website if you have any enquiry about your Pain Chain experience. Alternatively you can contact the DPMS central admin team on 01305363019 or [dhc.dorset.cps@nhs.net](mailto:dhc.dorset.cps@nhs.net).