

**Action for Pain Project Worker – Additional Information:**

The Health All Round (HAR) chronic pain course (AFP) is based on the Mind / Body movement focusing on the psychology of pain and emotions, helping participants to understand the link between emotional well - being and chronic pain. It is an empowering approach which helps people to understand the differences between chronic and acute pain. It explains why medical model or pharmacology solutions for acute pain do not always work for chronic pain. The course helps participants to:

* Change their internal dialogue to 'quieten down' their symptoms
* Understand what drives chronic pain and how it affects the nervous system
* Learn about the newest research on chronic pain and self management techniques
* Develop a more positive attitude towards their body and their condition
* Develop self management techniques: CBT exercises; meditation; relaxation; mindfulness; journaling etc
* Develop self compassion and give participants the confidence to manage their own health and well being for the long term
* Encourage a healthier, more active lifestyle with increased social engagement

This model is fairly popular in America and Australia. It is less well known in the UK but interest is developing and in 2024 our AFP team were invited to talk at the National Pain Conference.

**In addition to maintaining the current service we are adding some new strands to this service:**

* Developing the service to include the management of chronic fatigue.
* Taking a more formal approach to the peer support aspect of the service, with people who have been through the course and benefitted, participating in course delivery (for example sharing their personal journey and the changes they have experienced).
* Setting up peer to peer groups e.g. a Living Well Café/ Walking groups etc
* Setting up a participant/ lived experience led approach to promoting this service, to potential new beneficiaries and to potential referrers – GP’s; Physio’s; Neurologists etc (Operation NAN)

**Why do we want to do this?**

We have been delivering the AFP course for five years now and we know that it works. We have statistically significant evidence for the effectiveness of the course using before /after measures of participant’s confidence in managing their own health condition (\* Patient Activation Measure). We also know from our evaluation that people who join our courses really value meeting others who are experiencing similar issues to them. This comes up again and again in feedback and is one of the most powerful aspects of the service. People feel ‘less alone,’ they feel ‘understood’ and they feel ‘believed’ (often for the first time) - like it’s not just ‘all in their head.’

Participant numbers are growing but we would like to support more people. We welcome self-referrals but currently it is GP’s who tend to refer. We are beginning to receive some people via Neurology and Rheumatology but none from Physio/ OT’s/ Psychiatry etc. Many clinicians are unaware of the value of the approach that we use and we believe that people who have benefitted from the model are the best ones to tell them about it.

AFP is a model which works very well within our organisation because the approaches we promote for long term recovery are included in our ongoing portfolio of services: Social connectivity; Psycho-education courses for anxiety and depression; One to one counselling/ CBT; Spending time in greenspace; Arts & creativity activities; Healthy eating; Increased physical activity; Peer support; Volunteering. Our stats show that a high number of participants accessing AFP go on to use other Health All Round services.

\*The Patient Activation Measure (PAM) is a validated tool which measures how actively involved a person is with their own healthcare and self management. Improved scores indicate increased knowledge, skills and confidence to manage your health condition; an increased sense of control; ability to adopt new behaviours to maintain healthy lifestyle.

**How we deliver the service:**

Currently, AFP is a 7 week psycho-education course. This course is delivered by a GP and a Community Development Worker (DW) with expertise in chronic pain.

This intervention currently includes:

* One to one assessment to ensure that the course is the right thing for each person presenting
* Signposting to additional/alternative services if required
* Managing expectations
* Supporting each individual into the programme.
* 7 week psycho -educational course.

**Outcomes:**

* Participants have increased knowledge, skills and confidence to manage their own health and wellbeing
* Participants have a better understanding of their health condition
* Participants are less dependent on medication
* Participants experience improved mental well being
* Participants are more physically active
* Participants feel less isolated/ lonely