

# Service User Evaluation Outcomes of supported self- management 2022/23

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Pain Association Scotland provides professionally-led supported self-management education and training in the community providing key coping strategies and helping people explore new ways forward leading to an improved quality of life. These groups have enabled chronic pain sufferers to make changes to their everyday lives in a positive and practical way, resulting in improved levels of coping and well-being.

We have developed expertise in an effective interactive person-centred approach which helps to engage people in the principles of self-management and motivates them to adopt new ways of thinking based on a better understanding of their health and themselves.

Chronic pain is a major personal, social and economic issue. For the majority of those suffering from chronic pain, it is not about the length of time they have had the pain, it's about the loss of function, loss of identity, loss of mental health and indeed for many, a loss of hope (Eccleston, 2011, 2016).<sup>1</sup>



1130

Hours of self-management training



2835

People registered for the monthly group meetings



418K

Social media activity

## Methods

People who had accessed the on-line monthly self-management group meetings were invited to complete a questionnaire via Survey-Monkey so that we could see the difference it had made to their quality of life.

We had 64 responses with the majority of respondents (55%) being of working age. We can therefore no longer treat chronic pain as an older person's disease. Interestingly, 83% of those surveyed were not currently on any NHS waiting list for treatment. The questions were based on the following categories:-

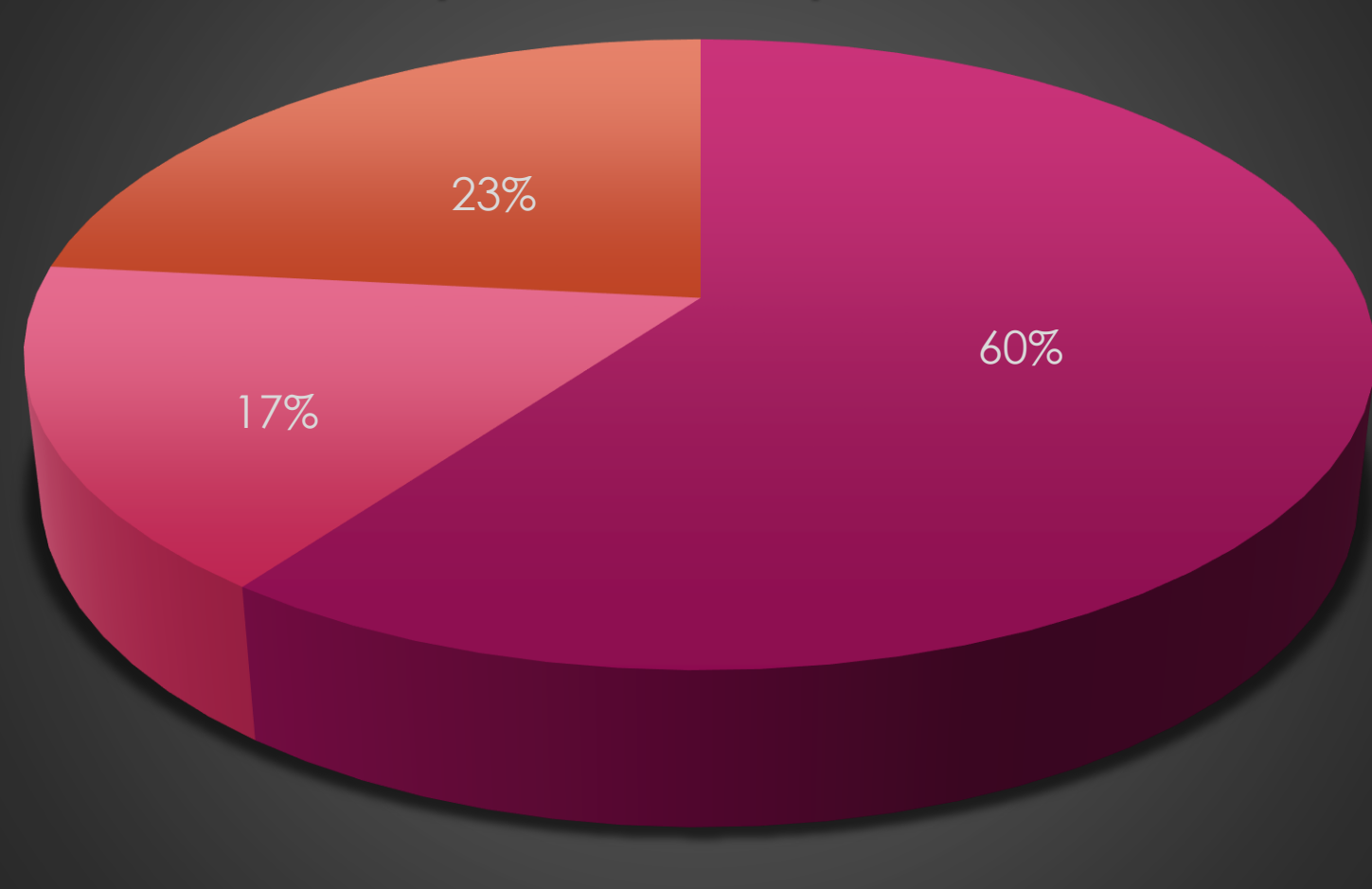
- Length of time they had the pain
- What benefits they experienced from attending the groups
- The impact on their quality of life
- Whether they had seen their GP less regarding their pain
- Coping on a day-to-day basis.

## Results

Some of the key outcomes are:-

- 95% advised that attending the group helped them maintain their self-management skills.
- 82% felt more in control.
- 90% felt more able to cope on a daily basis
- 60% had fewer visits to their GP as result of attending the groups.
- 43% have been living with chronic pain for over 10 years.
- The top 3 topics include: Pacing, Stress and Flare-ups

Have you seen your GP less regarding your chronic pain?



## Discussion

Our unique model of community based education and support programmes, delivered in collaboration with referring Health and Social Care professionals has been developed to improve quality of life and well-being. Key features are:

- ✓ **Person-centred and outcomes focused**
- ✓ **Enables people to live independently in the community by improving quality of life for people with chronic pain and their carers**
- ✓ **Collaboration and joint working amongst and within agencies and organisations to improve outcomes for service users**
- ✓ **Co-operation with service users and carers in assessment and support as well as in the planning, development and delivery of services.**



Our service delivery is person-centred and based on a bio-psycho-social model. This means that the work is not just about pain, but rather deals with pain in the wider context of life, health and well-being. We provide a combination of education, training and support in a group setting that encourages peer support and thereby engenders normalisation. Working with people in this group context means that they can hear from others in a similar situation, discuss ideas, benefit from mutual support and thereby integrate self-management into everyday life.

## Conclusion

One of the mechanisms responsible for the improvements in health status, demonstrated by those attending self-management programmes, is self-efficacy. Adherence, or more precisely, concordance with medical treatment is closely linked to the patient's ability to self-manage their chronic pain and is shown to be an important factor in determining increase in self-efficacy.

The self-management programs do not claim to change pain levels but rather aims to reduce the suffering component and change maladaptive habits. As a result of understanding more and changing behaviours, some people do report a change in their pain levels or fewer flare-ups or reliance on medication, but most report a change in how they feel about their condition and their life. For many this is a shift away from being a 'victim' which is often characterised by the move from focusing on what they can't do to what they can. Others talk about feeling less isolated and more in control, these are significant issues that herald an improvement in health and well-being

I was somehow lost somewhere in the dark where I didn't see any lights. But this program has given me some light of hope in my life. I am thankful to the Pain management association, Scotland for organizing this kind of program



The pain association sessions have been so beneficial to me that I don't know what I'd do if it was no longer available, as there is very little support of any kind within healthcare.

I haven't had a reduction in number of flare-ups but my attitude towards them and how I manage them has changed. I'm less panicked by them. I also feel a reduction in fear around my pain which is a huge thing as it broadens my experience of life and I just feel more normal. I am hugely appreciative of the group.

## Contact

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## References

1. Eccleston C, A normal psychology of chronic pain. The Psychologist 2011;26(6): 422-5