



The Self Care Toolkit



... is for people who live with persistent health condition/s



Local and National resources to help you manage your pain

A persistent pain problem can be difficult to understand and manage on an everyday basis. The accompanying Self Care Toolkit is a simple information booklet that could provide you with some handy tips and skills to support you along the way to manage your pain. It is not meant to be the last word in pain self-management but a handy guide to help you get started - all you need to be is willing to read it and take on board some of the suggestions. This series provides some choices to access support, advice and help in Forth Valley or Nationally.

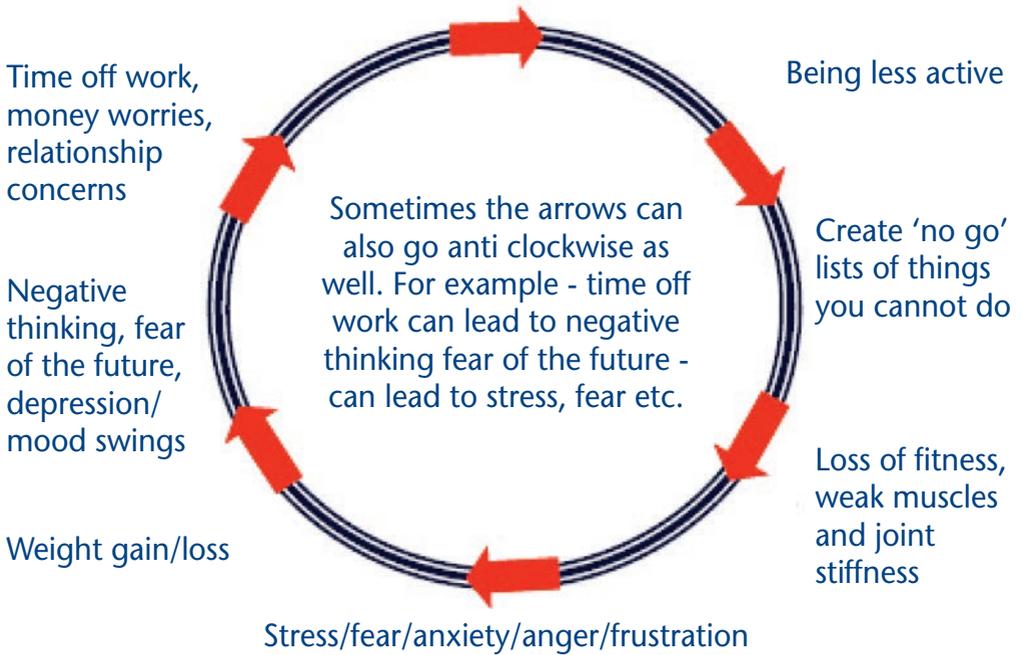
Pete Moore who has persistent pain, asthma and osteoarthritis, has put these tools together with the help of Dr Frances Cole a GP. Special thanks to NHS Kirklees Primary Care Trust for permission to use locally.

Good luck!
Pete Moore

This booklet has been customised for use in Forth Valley by local health professionals and reproduced with the kind permission of NHS Kirklees Primary Care Trust.

The Vicious Health Cycle

Pain Condition



Do you recognise yourself in the Vicious Health Cycle?

If so, ask yourself these three questions

1. Do you do *more* on good days and *less* on bad days?
2. Are you an over achiever – doing more than you have to?
3. Are you a people pleaser? Do you have a problem saying **NO** to others when you are asked to do things?

Could you see yourself in the vicious health cycle and did you recognise yourself in the three questions above? If you did, then this Self Care Toolkit could be for you, so please read on.

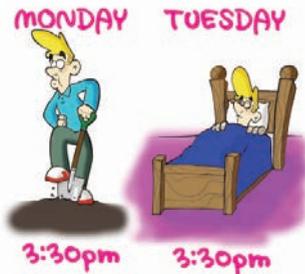
For many people a persistent pain condition can be disabling and frustrating for many to manage. Some people may not respond to standard medical treatment which can add to the frustration. In some cases people are told by healthcare professionals after a diagnosis or assessment: *“I am afraid you have a chronic or long-term health problem. You will have to learn to live with it.”*



To date, your healthcare professionals may have done all that they can to help you and may have used many of the tools available in their toolkit. However there are so many things that you can do to help self-manage *your* health with the support of your health care professional, family, friends and work colleagues. All you need is to be willing to ask for help.

Have you become a ‘can’t do’ person?

A ‘**can’t do**’ person is someone who has tried to carry out or take part in everyday tasks such as going to work, doing the house work, gardening, playing a sport, taking holidays, going to the cinema, eating out or taking part in family activities but has stopped or given them up because of their health condition/s. When this happens is it usual for your confidence levels to reduce. Is this ringing any bells? If you have reached this point you need to stop and take action.



By taking on board and practising the tools in the self care toolkit you could become a ‘**can do**’ person again but it could take time so please be patient with yourself.

Look familiar?



Are persistent health conditions a big problem here in the UK?

The short answer is yes so you are not on your own. Persistent health condition/s affects more (than 17 million people in the UK in their everyday living. They can be disabling, frustrating and unpredictable for many people to deal with. Health problems can also affect the relationships with family, friends and work colleagues.

“But why do I need to manage my pain condition? I see my health care professional and aren't they are supposed to do that for me?”

Many people with persistent pain conditions see their health care professional for treatment, help and support. But have you actually estimated just how many hours during the course of a year you spend with your health care professional?

It has been said that people may spend less than 3 hours a year on average in contact with a health care professional. For the remaining **‘8,733 hours’** in the year they are on their own.

So as you can see, the need to become more involved in your own self-management is both necessary and important.



It is certainly not all up to your doctor or health care professional to manage your health condition/s. You have to play a vital part as well - it is all about teamwork.

Teamwork is essential for self management to become the winner!

Your next question may be *“Well how can I become more involved and how do I get started?”* Using different skills and tools can be helpful to get you started. It is like a motor mechanic who has many tools in his/her toolbox to repair and maintain cars. People with health condition/s also need a selection of tools to help them successfully self-manage their own health condition/s.

You may not need to use all the tools suggested in the toolkit, but like any good motor mechanic it is best to have a variety of tools at the ready to dip into when and if they are needed.

Self-managing a persistent pain condition is not as hard as you may think - so let's get started and look at the first tool in your self care toolkit.

The Self Care Toolkit

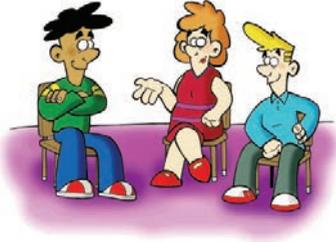
Tool 1 - Accept that you have a persistent pain condition/s . . . and then begin to move on



For many people and their families acceptance is often the most difficult thing to do. Acceptance is not about giving up but recognising that you need to take more control with regards to how you can better self-manage your health condition/s.

Acceptance is also a bit like opening a door - a door that will allow you to access more self-managing opportunities.

The key that you need to open this door is not as big as you think. All you have to do is to be willing to use it. For some individuals and their families who may struggle with this issue, help may be available from the support organisations listed at the back of this booklet.



Tool 2 - Get involved - building a support team

Being a successful self-manager means getting both help and support from others. Ask your health care professional, friends, family and work colleagues about working more together - becoming a team.

Develop a self-management plan. Find out if there are other support groups in your community you could join which could provide you with more self-help management skills. If you cannot locate one, why not start one with other like-minded people?

Tool 3 - Pacing

Pacing daily activities is one of the key tools to self managing your pain condition. You need to begin to pace your work and also other everyday activities. You may have recognised yourself in the vicious cycle. You tend to overdo things, or rest too much and become inactive and lose fitness.



Pacing in short is: taking a break before you need it throughout the day. But how can you remember to pace yourself?

Remember the old saying... "*How do you eat an elephant?*"



Answer: ***One bite at a time!*** Pacing is carrying out activities one bite at a time, and not tackling all of them at once.

For examples of pacing daily activities see page 12.



Tool 4 - Learn to prioritise and plan your days

Prioritising and planning your days is an essential tool. Make a list of things you would like to do but remember to be flexible. It is a great way to set yourself a starting point.

Examples:

- Monday a.m. - vacuum the living room and have a couple of breaks so that I pace myself
- Monday p.m. - prepare food for evening meal - sit down to do this
- Tuesday late morning - go swimming - meet friend for a coffee/tea - practice some relaxation when I get home.
- Tuesday evening - write an activity plan for the next day.

Tool 5 -Setting Goals/Action Plans



You may sometimes want to run before you can walk as that old saying goes. So to avoid this happening set yourself simple, realistic goals or action plans. Just as you need goal posts when playing football, or a finishing line when racing - you need something to aim for.

Perhaps, you could set yourself a simple, hourly, daily or weekly action plan. Always ask for help from your health care professional if you are not sure. You can also learn more about setting goals and action planning when you attend a Self-Management Programme (SMP). See Page 16 for more information about attending an SMP.

Tool 6 - Being patient with yourself

Take things steadily. It may take you a few weeks or months to see changes or improvements. When you start to feel good, you may want to catch up with activities that you may have let go of.

Don't be tempted to overdo it otherwise your chances of yet another setback could increase. A good saying is 'take things one day at a time'. And also.....ask for help and support from others!

Tool 7 - Learn relaxation skills

Relaxation skills are very important for tense muscles in the body and for unwinding the mind.

Relaxation could be:

- Reading a book
- Listening to some music
- Gardening
- Meeting friends for a coffee/tea
- Going to the cinema or a restaurant
- Meditation
- Dancing
- Walking
- Breathing techniques (your health care professional could show you how to do this).



Coping or self-managing?

Coping with a persistent health condition/s can be like playing a game of snakes and ladders - a game of luck. Being an over-achiever you can tend to do more on good days (climb the ladder) and on bad days, do less and return to bed. (This is like sliding down the snake). Self-managing is taking positive, planned action which can reduce the 'luck' element in self-management.

Tool 8 - Exercise



Many people with pain conditions fear exercise in case it causes more problems. However this is not true. Regular stretching and exercising actually decreases pain and discomfort. It prepares the body for other activities, it can strengthen weak muscles and you will also feel better for it. Remember to start slowly and build up or increase your stretching and exercising. It is not as hard as you think.

If you are in pain, remember that unfit and under used muscles feel more pain than toned ones. Talk with your physiotherapist or fitness coach about an individually tailored stretching and exercise programme that you can work on steadily and safely. This will help you build your confidence, muscle and joint strength. Remember that swimming (or just walking up and down in the pool) is also a low impact exercise and is good for you if you have joint problems. There are 15 good reasons why exercise is good for you on Page 15.

Tool 9 - Keep a diary and track your progress

Keeping a diary of your progress will help you to see how far you have come and note the successes you have achieved. This will help you to build on success. But it is also handy to note down what didn't work for you so can you learn from those experiences. We sometimes learn more from our errors and not from our successes.



Try to write down one piece of evidence each day to show yourself how you are positively self-managing your health. Doing this has been shown to increase people's confidence. We have developed a booklet titled "My Support Plan" for this purpose. Ask your health professional for a copy.

Tool 10 - Have a plan for set-backs



Is it realistic to think you will never have a setback? The simple answer is NO!

Developing a setback plan is good self-management. Ask your healthcare provider if you need help in making one. Make a note of

what triggered your set-back and what helped. This could be useful information if and when you experience another.

Tool 11 - Team Work

Team work between you and your healthcare provider is vital. Imagine your local football team playing without a team plan.

Managing your pain condition is not a *'one way street'* and it is unrealistic for your health care professional to totally solve it for you. You will have an important part to play as well.

Together both you and your health care professional can set or develop an action plan. This plan could help you both track your progress. It is easy and not as hard as you think.



Tool 12 - is keeping it up...putting into daily practice the self care tools from 1-11.

You may be asking yourself do I have to put these tools into daily practice? **What daily? What every day?** The simple answer is **Yes**. Just as the person with diabetes has to take their treatment/medication and maintain their diet daily, **your** treatment is planning/prioritising, pacing, setting weekly or long-term goals/ action plans, relaxation, exercise, generally keeping active and being in charge of your health condition/s. Keeping it up is difficult for many people but it is not as hard as you think once you have set yourself a routine. Just like brushing your teeth, self-managing your pain condition will become a habit. Get others involved and make self-management fun.

What three things have I learnt about managing my condition in the Self Care Toolkit?



1

2

3



What will I try?

.....

.....

.....

Examples of pacing your daily activities



Ironing

As an alternative to doing a large amount in all one go, do smaller amounts frequently. Instead of doing the whole washing load of ironing at once, spread it over a period of days.

e.g. have two or three piles.

- an 'urgent' pile
- a 'not so urgent' pile, and an
- 'I can do that at the end of the week' pile.

Shopping

Instead of doing one large weekly shop cut it down to a few trips to the shops per week. Divide your shopping into more bags, so that you are not lifting and carrying heavy bags. Remember to ask staff from the shop to carry and then put your shopping into the car; remembering to get someone (family or a neighbour) at home to lift and carry your shopping into the home. Or consider Internet shopping, and then you just have to pack the items away once they have been delivered to your home.

These are just a couple of examples. There may be many other every day activities that you need to think through before you tackle them.



If you stop and think about what you intend to do **BEFORE** you do it, then there is less of a chance that you will have a set back and in turn increase your condition/s.

Remember pacing is 'taking a break before you need it' and spreading out your activities.

Setback/s

It is not realistic to think that you will never have a set-back ever again. Remember if you are an over achiever; it is easy to forget to pace yourself and in turn you may experience a setback.

So the first thing not to do is panic, but many people do.

It is best to have a setback plan ready if one occurs.

Setbacks are usually caused by doing too much - overdoing it, pressure from others, or just forgetting you have a persistent health problem. Don't get annoyed with yourself, it is common to occasionally have setbacks.



Don't forget to stretch before and after most physical activities to avoid a set-back!

Prioritise your responsibilities

Pace yourself. Break up tasks into smaller portions. Rest in between. Reduce your activities until the setback settles. Be kind to yourself. Say 'NO' to any unnecessary demands put upon you until you are feeling healthier. And.....don't be too proud to ASK for help!



Take your medication as prescribed by your Doctor

Follow or ask the advice of your GP or Pharmacist about medication and when you need to take it. If you have to take regular medication think of ways to remind you to take it. Many people just simply forget. Use post it notes, use a timer or get someone to remind you.

Please remember that taking medication if you have musculoskeletal pain (back, leg, arm, neck etc) may mask the pain and encourage you to do more.

For musculoskeletal pain (back, leg, arm, neck etc.)

Apply heat and/or ice in a way that makes you most comfortable. To relieve initial pain, you could apply ice packs wrapped in towels for 5 minutes every hour for the first one or two days. Always make sure you have a cloth of some type between your skin and the ice to prevent an ice burn. It is not recommended that you lie on an ice pack. (People with rheumatic problems may prefer to use heat rather than ice). Again, if you are not sure, seek advice from your GP or health care professional.

Take it easy

Briefly cutback on normal activities, lie down for a short while and relax but not for too long. Bed rest weakens muscle strength rapidly, you lose about 1% of total muscle strength a day if you become inactive - remember keeping active and mobile can actually speed your recovery.

Try to start moving gently

Remember to pace yourself. Begin gentle stretching and movement as soon as possible to regain normal suppleness. Keeping active may seem alien to you, but in self-management terms, learning to live with a persistent health condition/s is a skill to be learned. Don't be put off - it does work!



Relaxation

Using relaxation is another good way of managing a set-back. Accept the situation that you are experiencing a set-back, and just as it has come, it will go.

15 reasons why stretching and exercising (don't forget swimming) is good for you

- Helps to improve and maintain good overall health
- Increases strong cardiovascular system – heart, lungs and blood vessels
- Increases muscle strength
- Improves flexibility
- Increases endurance and stamina
- Increases natural pain killers (called endorphins) in the bodies nervous system which help control pain
- Helps with weight control
- Helps to improve quality of sleep
- Helps balance and co-ordination
- Reduces fatigue and increases energy
- Reduces muscular tension, stress and depression
- Helps combat depression and anxiety
- Helps maintain a positive outlook
- Helps to prevent constipation
- Can be sociable



Drinking water

Water is essential for a healthy life so drinking plenty of water is important for everyone. It's even more important if you are taking part in physical exercise so make sure you keep properly hydrated before, during and after exercising.

Local Resources to help you manage your pain



In this next section are some choices to access support, advice or help in Forth Valley or Nationally.

Self Management Programmes (SMP)

Self Management Programmes are run in the community usually by voluntary organisations such as the Pain Association and Arthritis Care. They are run by people who have received training and some have additional input from healthcare professionals. Typically participants will meet once a week for six weeks to share experiences and learn about managing their condition/s, pain, problem solving, diet and exercise.

For more information on the availability of self management programmes contact CVS, Long Term Condition Alliance Scotland or www.sid.scot.nhs.uk

Self Management Skills for People with Chronic Pain



In Forth Valley [Pain Association Scotland](#) run 7 week intensive courses for people with chronic pain. These are delivered by specialists in self management with additional input from health professionals. These courses build essential skills to enable people to manage their pain and improve wellbeing. Referral is through GP, physiotherapist or other health professional.

Open door monthly groups also meet in Falkirk and Stirling. These are staff led and provide a rolling programme of self management topics throughout the year. For more information on all services offered by the Pain Association Scotland contact 0800 783 6059 or e-mail info@painassociation.com Pain Association Scotland, Suite D, Moncrieffe Business Centre, Friarton Road, Perth, PH2 8DG.

My condition, My Life (www.myconditionmylife.org) is a new national self management website which contains advice, information and support for people living with long term conditions.

Stress Control is a 6 session course delivered weekly by a range of healthcare professionals that will teach you all about stress and give you the tools to fight it. Ask your GP to refer you to a course in your area.

Making Changes and Becoming Active

So why should you be more active? By being regularly active you can feel better both physically and mentally.

Physical Activity

- Reduces the risk of developing diabetes
- Reduces the risk of developing heart disease
- Reduces the risk of developing breast, bowel and other cancers
- Helps build and maintain healthy bones, muscles and joints
- Helps reduce blood pressure
- Can improve mood
- Can reduce feelings of depression

Physical Activities Referral Schemes

If you are unsure about becoming active or exercising you can access a Physical Activities Referral Scheme. These schemes are designed to allow a variety of different medical professionals including GP's, physiotherapists, cardiac rehabilitation nurses, stroke units, mental health day units and weight management groups to refer people onto a structured physical activity programme in order to improve health.

There are different schemes in operation across Forth Valley.

Falkirk - this service can be accessed through *Active Forth* by contacting the Circuit Health and Fitness Clubs on 01324 504568 where fully qualified referral consultants provide individual support and design specific programmes for people depending on their medical condition/s. The programme is carried out in one of the Circuit Health and Fitness Clubs at Grangemouth, Bo'ness or the Mariner Centre.

Clackmannanshire - this service can be accessed through *Clackmannanshire Healthier Lives Programme* which is a community based programme which offers support and advice to people in Clackmannanshire to help them make changes that can improve their health and wellbeing. For general enquiries telephone 0845 673 1774 or <http://www.clacksweb.org.uk/social/chl/> Email: info@healthierlives.org.uk

Stirling - this service can be accessed through *Active Stirling*. You can find out what we at Active Stirling can offer you - whether you're looking for class timetables, news of progress on the new sports stadium, gym membership, football development, swimming lessons, outdoor activity, or just some advice on staying fit and healthy. Telephone 0300 028 0101 or <http://www.activestirling.org.uk>

activescotland.org.uk

Looking for ways to get active, but not sure where to start? Active Scotland is here to get you going. Put your postcode or town in the search box and you'll find activities close to home, from easy to extreme.

Walking for Health

Walking is described as the perfect exercise by health professionals and has many benefits. Walking requires no special equipment or expense and is the ideal way for most people to become more active. To find a health walk group in your area, visit the Paths for All website, <http://www.pathsforall.org.uk/pfa/health-walks/find-a-health-walk.html>

Why Walk? Because:

- ☑ Its fun!
- ☑ Its free!
- ☑ Its easy!
- ☑ It makes you feel good!
- ☑ Its great for all ages and abilities!



Walking Groups

Free weekly walks led by trained volunteer walk leaders. Lasting from 10 minutes up to 1 hour, suitable for people wishing to become more active, those who want to meet new people and everyone in between.

Clackmannanshire: **Wee Country Walkers**

Tel: 07922 582772

Stirling: **Stirling Walking Network**

Tel. 0300 028 0101

Falkirk: **Step Forth**

Tel: 01324 504556 / 4568 step.forth@falkirk.gov.uk

(Also includes buggy group walks)

Walk with Braveheart: support adults with or at risk of developing coronary heart disease and diabetes. Contact Walking Development Officer: 01324 673706 Braveheart Office, Falkirk Community Hospital, Majors Loan, Falkirk, FK1 5QE.

Local Exercise

Back into Action: easy steps to begin exercising again, includes exercise options (Tai Chi, Gentle Circuits), advice, relaxation, pain management. Contact your local GP, chartered physiotherapist or health professional.

- Physical Activity Referral Consultant, The Circuit Health and Fitness Club, Grangemouth Sports Complex, Abbots Road, Grangemouth, FK3 9JD. Tel/Fax: 01324 504568.
- Bo'ness Recreation Centre, Gauze Road, Bo'ness, EH51 9QB, Tel/Fax: 01506 778510.
- Mariner Centre, Glasgow Road, Camelon, FK1 4HJ, Tel/Fax: 01324 503750.

Dunblane Centre: Exercise to Music for over 45s, offering safe graduated exercises, and Mobility Exercise for Seniors; Pilates - beginners and intermediate; Tel: 01786 824224 or visit www.dunblanecentre.co.uk

Opals: 50+ Exercise to Music Classes - run at Stirling Rugby Club, Salvation Army Hall Falkirk, Kirk Hall Callander, Village Hall Buchlvie, McIntock Hall Balfron, Baptist Church Hall Denny, and Linlithgow. Offer safe graduated exercise for the over 50s but also for any age group requiring a gentler exercise level. Class timetables and further information available on www.opals50plus.co.uk

Pilates: Contact 07933 911522.

Yoga: www.yogascotland.org.uk



Airthrey: Personal exercise programme design and gym induction, for those registered at Airthrey Medical Centre. Contact Airthrey Medical Centre, Tel: 01786 463831 for information email: info@apmc.co.uk

Health Pass: free swimming pool entrance for 6-12 months for Falkirk residents on recommendation of your GP. Contact Falkirk Council at contact.centre@falkirk.gov.uk or Tel: 01324 506070
Customer First, Corporate & Neighbourhood Services, Falkirk Council, Suite 3.2, The Forum, Callendar Business Park, Falkirk, FK1 1XR

For physical health assessment and opportunity to take part in graded physical activity and weight management for people with **mental health problems**. Stirling, Clackmannan and Falkirk Contact 01259 290156 for more details.

Utilising Community Resources

Your local Library is a good starting point as they hold useful information (access to the internet, books, DVD's, CD's and cassettes) about other local health and community initiatives.

Library Services

Falkirk and Stirling library services have these resources on managing chronic pain and relaxation techniques.

Falkirk Library Services, Contact 01324 503 605
hello@falkirkcommunitytrust.org

Stirling Library Services, Contact 01786 432 107
centrallibrary@stirling.gov.uk

Books / CD's / Audio Books / Leaflets

- *Managing Chronic Pain in 10 Easy Steps, The Pain Association Scotland*
- *Manage Pain Before it Manages You* by Margaret Caudill
- *Coping Successfully with Pain* by Neville Shone (who has chronic pain)
- *Overcoming Chronic Pain: A Self-Help Guide to Using Cognitive Behavioural Techniques* by Frances Cole, Hazel Howden Leach, Helen Macdonald and Catherine Carus
- *Explain Pain* by David Butler and G.Lorimer (science of pain for lay people)

Voluntary Work

Build your confidence, get out the house, meet others, use your skills, and help others first steps in returning to work?

Councils for the Voluntary Sector (CVS)

Within Forth Valley area, there are three CVS's locating in Falkirk, Alloa and Stirling. CVS works closely with NHS Forth Valley and local voluntary and community groups to promote health and wellbeing through its community care and development work.

CVS in your area can assist you to locate help available from local voluntary organisations and community groups. Directory can also be found at their websites.

CVS Contact Details

CVS Falkirk	www.cvsfalkirk.org.uk	01324 692000
Stirlingshire Voluntary Enterprise (previously CVS Stirling)	www.cvs-stirling.org.uk	01786 469916
CVS Clackmannanshire	www.cvsclacks.org.uk	01259 217852

Return to Work / Staying at Work

Help in improving health and supporting individuals to remain in work or return to work for those who work for a small to medium company with less than 250 employees.

www.healthyworkinglives.com / Tel: 0800 019 2211

“**Employability Service**” provides support for people living in the Stirling area with health conditions, learning disabilities and other health related disabilities, to overcome barriers to gain and sustain employment. We give advice, guidance and organise assessments, training, work experience and employment opportunities. For a referral to the service or further information contact 01786 432057.

For advice about local help, support, training and financial incentives to return to work, contact your local Job Centre and Disability Employment advisors.

Making Good Use of the Internet

There is a lot of good information available through websites but be aware that not all sites can be trusted. As a general rule sites that end org.uk, nhs.uk, gov.uk or ac.uk may be more trustworthy.

NHS Inform The national health information service for Scotland contains a wide range of health information and advice, including information on long term conditions www.nhsinform.co.uk

Service Information Directory (SID) is a website that provides accurate and up to date information about healthcare services in Forth Valley. SID also provides access to information and resources that help people and their carers to self manage their condition/s. This includes local authority and voluntary services www.sid.scot.nhs.uk



Self Help Online Resource Sites (includes relaxation skills):

Moodjuice www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk/ is a site designed to offer information and advice to those experiencing troublesome thoughts, feelings and actions. Good section on dealing with chronic pain plus lots of local information.

www.glasgowsteps.com This site will tell you all about common stress problems and give you some ideas on how best to tackle them.

The Living Life to the Full www.livinglifetothefull.com course is an online life skills course that aims to provide access to high quality, practical and user-friendly training in practical approaches you can use in your own life. Not specifically for chronic pain but useful for dealing with some of the consequences of having chronic pain. Free, anonymous, NHS sponsored, evidence based.

Other website links for information and support

<i>Name of website</i>	<i>Web address (URL)</i>	<i>Telephone No.</i>
Action for M.E. leading UK charity for people with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (M.E.) and their carers.	www.actionforme.org.uk	0845 1232380
Action for Pain providing support and advice for people with chronic pain.	www.action-on-pain.co.uk	0845 603 1593
Arthritis Care works on behalf of over 700,000 people in Scotland who are affected by arthritis.	www.arthritiscare.org.uk	0808 800 4050
Arthritis Research UK is the charity leading the fight against arthritis.	www.arthritisresearchuk.org	0300 7900400

BackCare the charity for healthier backs.

www.backcare.org.uk

Helpline:
0845 1302704

Scottish Backs online resource for people with low back pain.

<http://www.nhsinform.co.uk> 0800 224488

Breathworks offers a variety of mindfulness-based courses in the UK and beyond for people living with pain, illness and stress.

www.breathworks-mindfulness.co.uk

0161 8341110

British Pain Society an alliance of professionals advancing the management and understanding of pain for the benefit of patients.

www.britishpainsociety.org

0207 269 7840

Depression Alliance we work to relieve and to prevent this treatable condition by providing information and support services.

www.depressionalliance.org

0845 1232320

Healthtalkonline share in more than 2,000 people's experiences of over 60 health-related conditions and illnesses.

www.healthtalkonline.org

Youthhealthtalk website about young people's real life experiences of health and lifestyle.

www.youthhealthtalk.org

Fibromyalgia Association UK raising awareness of fibromyalgia

www.fibromyalgia-associationuk.org

Helpline:
0844 8872444

ME Association provide information, support and practical advice for people who are affected by ME/CFS/PVFS their families and carers.

www.meassociation.org.uk

Helpline:
0844 5765326

Migraine Trust health and medical research charity for migraine in the United Kingdom.	www.migrainetrust.org	0207 631 6970
MIND helps people take control of their mental health.	www.mind.org.uk	Infoline: 0300 1233393
Multiple Sclerosis Society Scotland is Scotland's largest charity for people affected by multiple sclerosis.	www.mssociety.org.uk	0131 335 4050
National Fibromyalgia Association	www.fmaware.org	
Overcoming Mental Health Problems - one step at a time	www.overcoming.co.uk	
Pain Association of Scotland self management training for people with chronic pain.	www.painassociation.com	0800 7836059
Pain Concern provides information and support for people living with pain and those who care for them and about them.	www.painconcern.org.uk	Helpline: 0300 1230789
Pain Support website is packed with pain relief techniques for those with chronic pain.	www.painsupport.co.uk	
Pain Relief Foundation UK charity which funds research into the causes and treatment of human chronic pain.	www.painrelieffoundation.org.uk	0151 529 5820
Pelvic Pain Support Network a patient led organisation with a board of trustees who are all patients or carers.	www.pelvicpain.org.uk	

Rheumatoid Arthritis Society provides support and information for people with Rheumatoid Arthritis and Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis, their families, friends and carers, and health professionals with an interest in Rheumatoid Arthritis

www.nras.org.uk

Helpline:
0800 2987650

Samaritans confidential emotional support service for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those which may lead to suicide.

www.samaritans.org.uk

0845 7909090

Stroke Association UK wide charity solely concerned with combating stroke in people of all ages.

www.stroke.org.uk

0303 303 3100

Trigeminal Neuralgia Association UK provide information and offer support to members, and to raise awareness of trigeminal neuralgia (TN) amongst medical professionals as well as the general public.

www.tna.org.uk

01883 370214

A message from Dr Leslie Cruickshank

Helping patients and families manage chronic conditions is an essential aspect of the care they receive. We know that many people living with their condition have difficulty understanding what their doctor or health professional has discussed with them and do not participate in decisions about their care.

Others may not be aware that taking an active interest in managing their condition can have a big impact on how they feel or what they are able to do. The Pain edition of the 'Self Care Toolkit' and the accompanying 'My Support Plan' provides everyday tools and guidance to empower people to work with others to take responsibility to better manage their condition on a day to day basis.

The provision of this information is a key building block to inspiring people to be better informed about their condition and to take an active role in how it is managed.

Dr Leslie Cruickshank
GP and Clinical Lead - NHS Forth Valley

The booklet is a partnership initiative between Health, the Voluntary Sector, Local Authorities and the Scottish Health Council.

We are happy to consider requests for this publication in other languages or formats such as large print.

**Please call [01324 590886](tel:01324590886) (24hrs), fax [01324 590867](tel:01324590867)
or email disability.department@nhs.net**

SMOKING IS NOT PERMITTED ON NHS FORTH VALLEY PREMISES

This includes corridors, doorways, car parks and any of our grounds. If you do smoke on NHS premises you may be liable to prosecution and a fine.



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