

# UK Pain Messages 2024

There are a large number of messages used for chronic pain by a variety of organisations. The aim of UK Pain Messages is to ensure consensus and consistency over the facts and figures used when highlighting the burden of chronic pain in the UK. These messages, separately in the public domain, have been approved by the below organisations/individuals.

**1** The Global Burden of Disease Study highlighted **pain as one of the most prominent causes of disability worldwide**. Primary chronic pain is now deemed to be a specific condition in its own right



**2** Approximately **8 million adults** report **chronic pain** that is moderate to severely disabling. From the same report, it is estimated that **43%** of adults (just under 28 million people) currently live with a degree of chronic pain in the United Kingdom. Chronic pain may affect up to **30% of young adults of working age** (18-39 year olds).

**3** The prevalence in **older age** groups is even higher, with up to **62%** of those aged **75 years** and over reporting chronic pain symptoms.



**4** The prevalence of chronic pain is similar in all ethnic groups (**34%**) but is **higher** in people in the **Black ethnic group** (**44%**). Severe chronic pain is associated with **increased risk of mortality**, independent of socio-demographic factors.



**5** **Low back** and **neck pain** have consistently been the leading causes of disability internationally, with other chronic pain conditions featuring prominently in the **top 10** causes of disability.



**6** **41%** of people who attended pain clinics report that their pain has **prevented** them from working, and **13%** have had to **reduce** their working hours.



**7** Around **12.8 million (31%)** of working age people in the UK have a long-term health condition. **1 in 4** UK employees reported having a physical health condition, and **1 in 5** of those employees with physical health conditions also reported having a mental health condition. People with **one** health condition have an employment rate of **61%**, while those with **5 or more** have an employment rate of **23%**



**8** Those living in more **deprived areas** were more likely to report having **chronic pain** (**41%**) than those in the least deprived areas (**30%**)



**9** Many of the conditions exhibiting the largest growth in absolute numbers, such as **chronic pain**, tend to be managed in **primary care** settings as they currently have no known cure. Subsequently there is likely to be **significant increasing pressure** on this element of the health care system



**10** It is predicted that **chronic pain**, as the leading condition in 2019 for impact upon healthcare use and mortality, will see an incidence **growth of 32% by 2040**, driven by an ageing population that will live longer but with multiple health challenges

