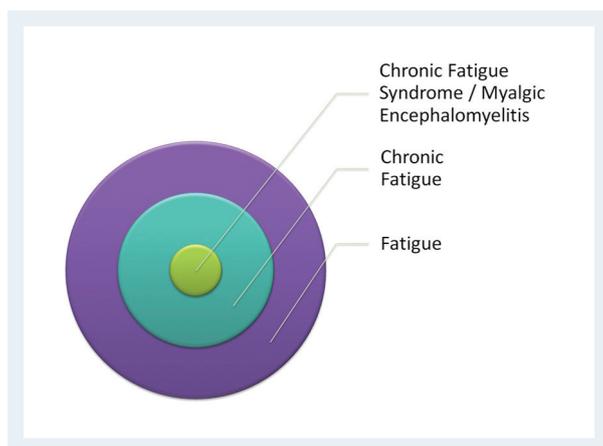


What is fatigue?

Fatigue is a common problem. Around 10-25% of people, who go to see their General Practitioner, are suffering from fatigue. It can have a major impact on people's lives and for some people it can significantly reduce their ability to do everyday activities.

Fatigue is different to tiredness. We can all experience tiredness. This happens when we exceed our available energy. This may be because we have been doing more than usual or because our energy levels are lower than normal, for example during an illness or when our sleep is disturbed. General tiredness will normally be improved by rest or by changing the demands on our energy. Fatigue is a state of complete exhaustion that is normally persistent and does not improve with rest. There is a spectrum of severity ranging from mild to very severe.

Why do we get fatigue?



Fatigue is known to be a debilitating symptom of many types of illnesses, for example in conditions such as Multiple Sclerosis, Crohn's disease or depression. This may be because of how a particular health problem affects structures in the body that support energy, such as the nervous system, digestion, or hormones. But it can also be a side effect of the treatments given for many health conditions, such as painkillers or chemotherapy. However, sometimes fatigue can be severe even when there is no obvious reason for this or when problems that have been found, such as hypothyroidism or infection, have been treated.

A large number of people in the population will experience prolonged and disabling **fatigue** lasting at least one month. Of these, some people will have **chronic fatigue** where it lasts for over six months.

Within the group of people who experience chronic fatigue, some people will have a specific condition, called **Chronic Fatigue Syndrome or Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (CFS/ME)**.

What should I do if I am experiencing fatigue?

Often problems with fatigue will resolve over time. However, if symptoms are continuing then it is important to have appropriate assessment and treatment. Your General Practitioner can perform routine investigations that should show some of the easily identifiable causes for fatigue, such as anaemia, diabetes, infection, liver and thyroid problems.

However, for many people these tests will come back within normal ranges and your doctor may discuss with you whether you meet criteria for CFS/ME and whether specialist assessment and intervention is appropriate. Not everyone who experiences chronic fatigue will have the syndrome, but you can still get help through the rehabilitation strategies the Yorkshire Fatigue Clinic can offer you.

You might find the following resources useful: NHS Choices and NICE Guidelines for CFS/ME

What is the Yorkshire Fatigue Clinic?

The Yorkshire Fatigue Clinic is an assessment and treatment service for people with chronic fatigue, and a specialist service for those with CFS/ME. The clinic was established after over 20 years' experience of working in CFS/ME within the NHS. The founders were involved in setting up the Leeds & West Yorkshire CFS/ME Service which was assessed as having some of the best clinical outcomes in the country and highly rated by patients. The Yorkshire Fatigue Clinic aims to make these specialist skills more available to people with a broader range of fatigue problems and provide a high quality of individualised care. We work with a range of people from those who are rarely able to venture out of the house to those who are managing to work.

What can the Yorkshire Fatigue Clinic offer me?

The Yorkshire Fatigue Clinic offers:

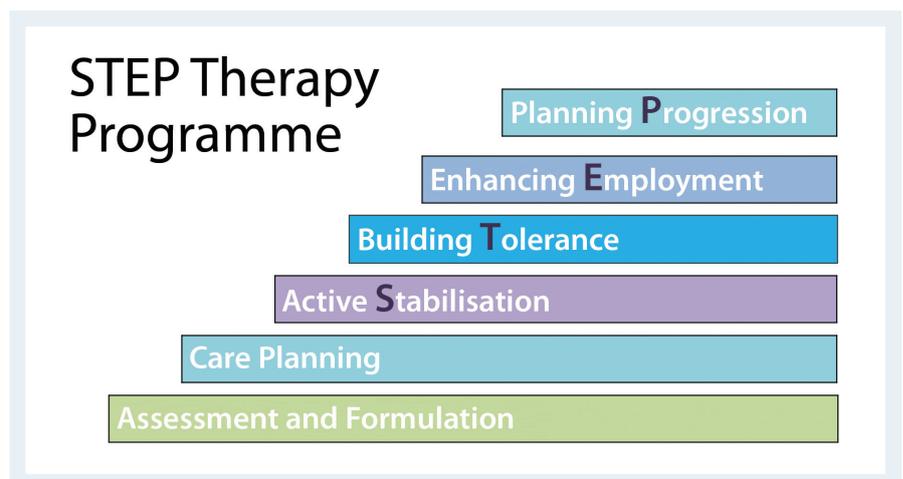
- **Specialist assessment with either a consultant physician or specialist clinician**

Fatigue is usually a systemic problem. This means it affects the functioning of many parts of our body. In addition, CFS/ME is a syndrome, so it causes disruption across a broad range of biological systems, not just physical strength. This can include experiencing pain in muscles and joints, headaches, problems with cognitive processes, such as memory and concentration, sleep, temperature deregulation and many, many more. Therefore, an assessment for fatigue will look at the specific symptoms you are experiencing, as well as all the aspects that can have a significant impact upon the way your body produces and uses energy. This can include a wide range of things such as sleep, diet, activity patterns, your emotional wellbeing, and your lifestyle.

- **Specialist Rehabilitation**

There is currently no medication available that eradicates fatigue. The Yorkshire Fatigue Clinic uses treatment approaches that focus on building your energy resources gradually and addressing factors that can impair physiological processes that support energy, such as sleep patterns, diet and poor quality rest.

The clinic uses the STEP Programme to enable you to actively stabilise your energy supply and then build up your tolerance to activity. This may also identify underlying drivers to your energy usage. There is also specific advice available for people still struggling to maintain employment or hoping to return to work.



How can I find out more about the Yorkshire Fatigue Clinic?

If you would like to know more about the programmes provided at the Yorkshire Fatigue Clinic then look at our website www.yorkshirefatigueclinic.co.uk or call us on 01904 557148 so we can discuss how we can help you. If you want to come along and meet us to find out more you can attend an Introductory Workshop, details are available on our website.