



Six Steps to Better Health

**supporting people with long term
health conditions and their carers**



my health



my life



my skills



looking after myself



support for me



coping with setbacks

Let's go on a journey to better health... together

A booklet for people with long term health conditions and their carers

Living with a long term health problem, or caring for someone who is can be challenging. We may need to learn new skills, rethink the way we used to do things and look again at what matters most in our lives.

It's a lot to take on. Yet with the right kinds of information and support, many people learn to manage their condition better and live a healthier life.

So where do you start? People in Kirklees who are living with long term health conditions, and those who are caring for them, have told us that one of the most important steps on the way to better health and wellbeing, is 'regaining a sense of control.'

So we've put together this booklet to help you do just that. It contains six questions to help you think about your situation, so you can start to take control of your health.

Throughout the booklet you'll find lots of information about different kinds of support in Kirklees and a number of other ideas to help you get further along your journey to better health.



Six Steps to Better Health

supporting people with long term health conditions and their carers

This booklet can help you...

- recognise what you need to change in order to take better care of yourself
- take care of your own health, with support
- deal with the day to day challenges of your condition
- make the most of life living with a long term condition
- have more useful conversations with health professionals

The questions in this booklet have been designed to help you think through what you need to maintain and improve your health.

Remember, this booklet is just for you – it's your own record of what you think is important right now.

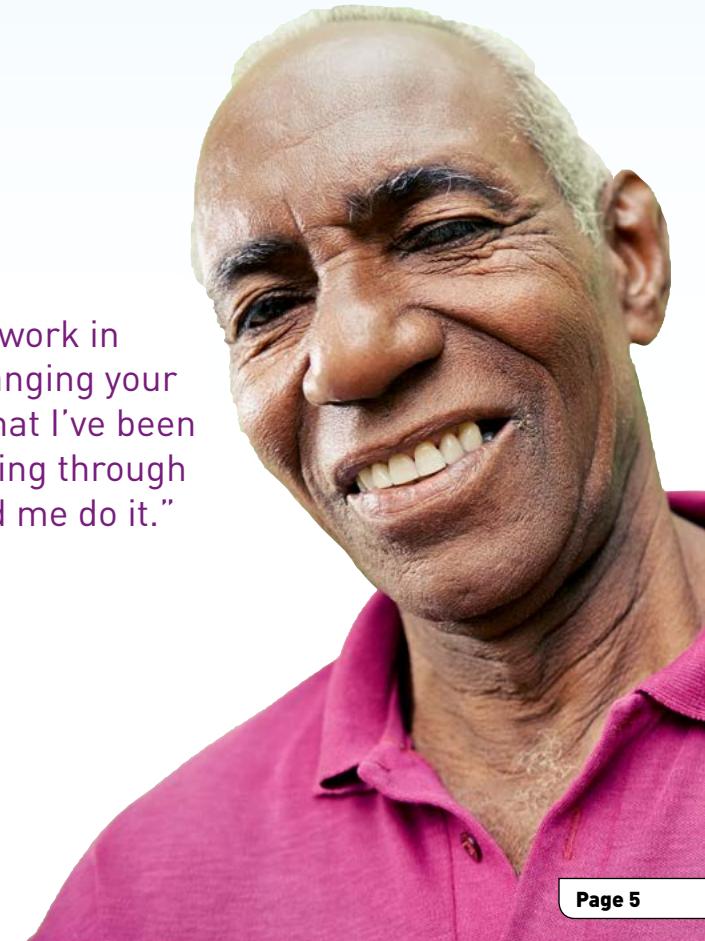
What can I do next?

We know from listening to other people with long term health problems and their carers that writing things down is a really good way of working out your priorities.

At the bottom of each page you'll find a set of 'next steps', these are ideas to help you.

Your six steps to better health start here...

“Tablets can only work in conjunction with changing your lifestyle – which is what I've been able to do. And thinking through my priorities helped me do it.”





Ask yourself what's important for your health

Here are some things other people thought of:

- finding ways to stay active
- coping with body feelings such as pain, tiredness, managing my moods
- managing my medication better
- sleeping better

"I think there's a relationship between body and mind – some issues are psychological as well as physical. I do a lot of walking and running. It makes me feel more contented, so I can cope better with physical problems."



Write the three things that are having the most impact on your health

Next steps

Step 1

Do you feel you need more help or support with your health or life issues?

Step 2

Find more information on websites such as:
www.kirklees.gov.uk/selfcare or NHS choices at: www.nhs.uk

Step 3

Explore ways to build more skills
(for details about support see page 19).

Step 4

If you have concerns speak to a health professional such as your GP, nurse or pharmacy staff as they may have some ideas too.



Ask yourself what's important for you in your life?

Here are some things other people thought of:

- eating well
- my family
- being independent
- staying active
- having fun
- socialising

Write the three things that are most important in your life right **now**

Next steps

Step 1

Think about how you can keep these things a priority in your life

Step 2

Ask yourself the following questions:

Are there things here that need to change?
If so, how would you go about dealing with these?

Step 3

If there are things you'd like to change look at the list of options available at the back of this booklet on page 19.



“Living with my condition can be hard, but concentrating on other parts of my life have helped me to feel good, recognising what these things are has really motivated me.”



Ask yourself what skills you need to keep well?

Tip: knowledge or information that helps you is also a skill.

Here are some things other people thought of:

- learning how to relax
- controlling my thoughts
- recognising changes in my moods
- communicating with my GP
- learning to ask for help
- finding and using online resources



“Realising I can improve my own health gives me confidence. You think ‘yes, I can do things to help myself – I can become more independent’. And once you learn to do those things, it does start to make a difference.”

Write down the skills you already use

List the skills you'd like to have

Next steps

Step 1

Pick the first skill from the list above that you'd like to learn.

Step 2

Websites such as www.healthtalkonline.org are a great place to hear what other people have learned.

Step 3

Contact Kirklees Health Trainers, Practice Activity and Leisure Scheme (PALS), or the Expert Patients Programme (EPP) who can help people learn new skills to support their health, see page 19.

Or you can refer yourself to the IAPT (Improving Access to Psychological Therapies) service for more in-depth training, such as their ‘Controlling Stress’ courses. For details of all these services and more, see page 21.

Step 4

When you're ready, look at the other skills you'd like to learn on your list.



Ask yourself what can you do to look after yourself?

Here are some things other people thought of:

- getting involved in activities
- connecting with others
- giving myself a treat
- learning how to relax
- eating well to stay healthy
- talking through my worries



“With the encouragement of the instructors, I do supervised exercise which has prevented the need for knee surgery – and the increased fitness has improved my general health and wellbeing.”



Ask yourself what on-going support you need?

Here are some things other people thought of:

- attending a local support group where I can speak to others experiencing similar challenges
- adapting my home to make it easier to live independently
- making some lifestyle changes through the support of a friend or health trainer

Write the three most supportive or caring resources or services you are getting support from already

Now write three other kinds of resources or support that would help
(ideas for further support are at the back of the booklet)



Next steps

There are lots of services in Kirklees where people can find support. For help understanding what kinds of support you are entitled to, contact Gateway to care (see page 20).

“I get fantastic medical help, but I only see them once a year. Nowadays, through PALS I have the support of people with similar problems – and we’re all in the same boat, so nobody needs to feel embarrassed.”



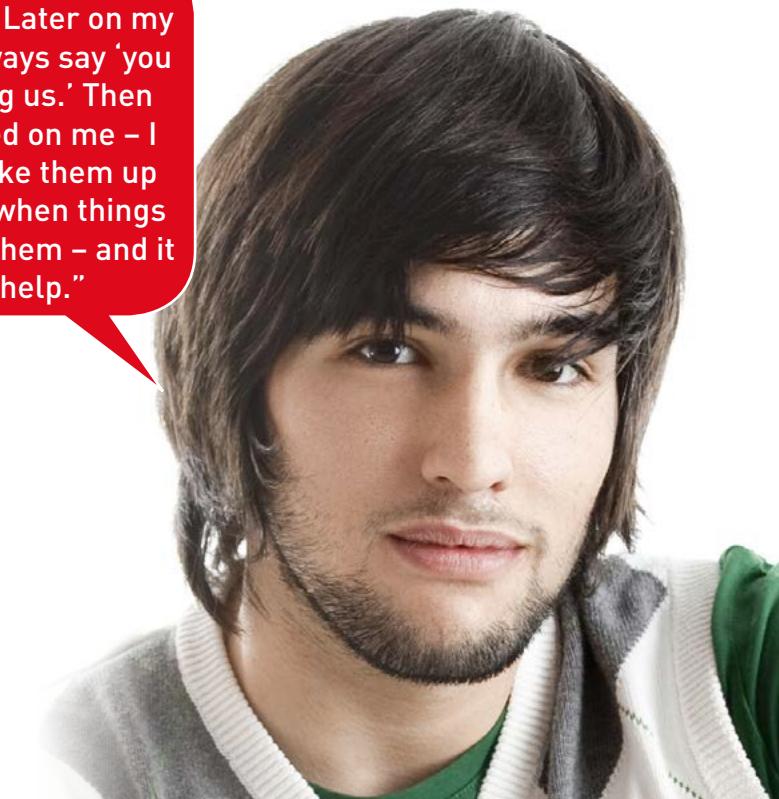
coping with setbacks

Ask yourself what you do when you can't seem to move on?

Here are some things other people feel helps them when they have a setback:

- talk to a friend
- contact a support group
- look for three positives in my life
- get help to find new ways of coping

“I used to battle through a crisis on my own. Later on my friends would always say ‘you should have rung us.’ Then one day it dawned on me – I could actually take them up on that! So now, when things are bad, I do call them – and it really does help.”



Write down three things you do that helps you deal with a setback

Now list three other things you could do that may help you deal with a setback

Next steps

Step 1

If you are struggling with setbacks, why not check out some of the useful websites at the back of this booklet. You can also watch the setback video by visiting <https://youtu.be/79thW6GM68>

Step 2

Ask yourself if Kirklees Health Trainers or Expert Patients Programme could help you? Look at how you cope now and suggest changes that may help you now and during future setbacks (see page 19 for details).

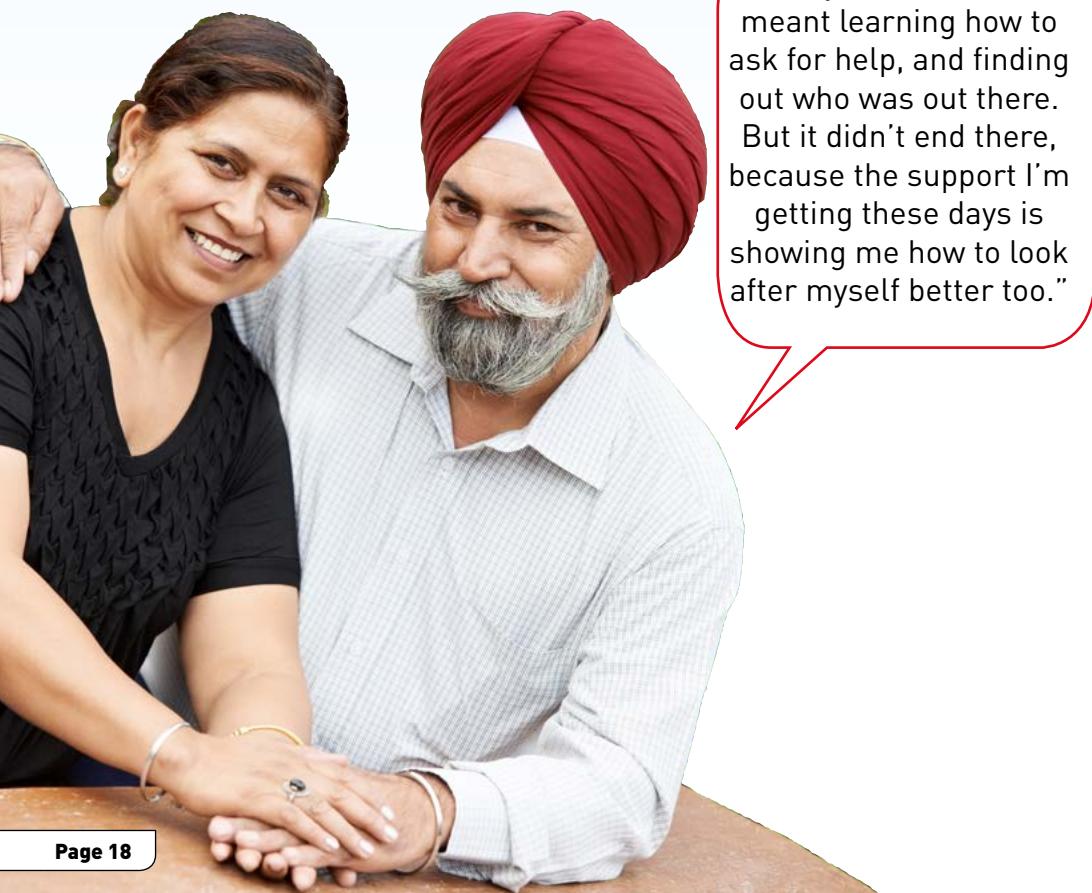
Important note: Sometimes a severe setback requires professional help. In these situations contact your health trainer, practice nurse, community matron, midwife, health visitor, physiotherapist or GP.

What to do when you've finished

Decide if any of the resources listed below could help address your priorities.

To get help thinking through what to do about your answers, you can take this booklet to Kirklees Health Trainers (see next page). They can offer encouragement and may have more ideas for helping you deal with the difficulties that are affecting you.

You can also find lots more tips and links to other local organisations that can help, at: www.kirklees.gov.uk/selfcare



"In my case, self care meant learning how to ask for help, and finding out who was out there. But it didn't end there, because the support I'm getting these days is showing me how to look after myself better too."

Local self care services

My Health Tools

My Health Tools is a free online tool for people with long term conditions who want to understand what they can do to improve their health and wellbeing. The tool tailors information to your needs, so it doesn't matter if you've just been diagnosed, or have lived with the condition for a while, there are a range of options to support you. Visit: www.myhealthtools.uk

Kirklees Health Trainers

Kirklees Health Trainers help you learn to manage your long term condition and can give you personal support to help you stay independent. They use motivational techniques and can support you to make positive lifestyle changes by:

- identifying your health needs
- recognising what triggers setbacks
- caring for yourself and achieving your goals
- making changes to your life to make you healthier and happier

For more information and advice call 01484 414 774 and ask for the Health Trainer Service. Visit: <http://bit.ly/1XKjENa>

Expert Patients Programme

The Expert Patients Programme (EPP) is for anyone in Kirklees with a long term condition who wants to develop skills to better manage and improve their health. Based on a tried and tested national programme, these locally run courses are tailored to the needs of the people who attend. To book on a course, or for more information, call 01484 221543. Visit: <http://bit.ly/24IDP1y>

PALS

PALS Practice Activity and Leisure Scheme (PALS) is a local exercise scheme that supports people who want to improve their health by becoming more active. People with health problems or persistent pain can contact their GP or another health professional to get a referral to the service. This will enable them to take part in group or individual activity. For more information call 01484 234095 or visit:

<http://bit.ly/1qbDLBw>

Other sources of help

EPP Persistent Pain Programme

Help people living with persistent pain to:

- Find ways to manage symptoms and improve how they feel
- Deal with anger, fear, frustration, isolation, fatigue and depression
- Relax
- Improve breathing
- Start action planning

Call 01484 221543 or visit: www.kirklees.gov.uk/expertpatients

Gateway to care

To get help finding out whether you are eligible for support from the council, contact the Care Navigation team on 01484 414933 or visit: www.kirklees.gov.uk/carenavigation

Kirklees Citizens Advice

For free, independent, confidential advice on a wide range of issues including benefits, debt, employment, housing, relationships, immigration and much more call 0344 848 7970 or visit: www.citizensadvice.org.uk/kirkleescab

Kirklees Benefits Advice

Use the 'BetterOff Kirklees' website to show the benefits you are entitled to and help to apply for them online. BetterOff Kirklees also provides information on how to find and apply for jobs. www.betteroffkirklees.org.uk

Bibliotherapy Service

'Well into Words' groups across Kirklees meet regularly to share stories and books, and to support wellbeing. To find a group near you call 01484 226300 and ask for the Bibliotherapy service or access the following webpage: <http://bit.ly/1YlmXKK>

Fusion Housing (formally CHAS)

For independent, confidential and free advice and support on all aspects of housing in Kirklees call Huddersfield 01484 425522 or Dewsbury 01924 454770 or visit: www.fusionhousing.org.uk

Affordable Warmth

Kirklees Council together with NHS and local and national charities is working to ensure that all Kirklees residents can afford to heat their home, can have energy efficient housing, receive the financial support that they are entitled to and live in a home that supports their health and wellbeing. For more information visit:

<http://bit.ly/1Xi78pu>

IAPT

IAPT (Improving Access to Psychological Therapies) helps people over 17 to get quick and easy access to the best type of therapy for their individual needs. Once your GP refers you, the IAPT team will work with you to identify how best to deal with the problems you are facing. IAPT offer 1:1 counselling and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). You can self refer to the IAPT service to access a controlling stress course – call 01484 434625 or visit: <http://bit.ly/10nbAMt>

NHS Choices

NHS Choices is the UK's biggest health website. It provides a comprehensive health information service to help put you in control of your healthcare. The website also helps you make choices about your health from decisions about your lifestyle, such as smoking, drinking and exercise, to finding and using NHS services in England. Visit: www.nhs.uk

More things you can do

Keep this booklet and come back to it again later

Over time, as you learn to cope better with some of the issues affecting you, your priorities may change. You may find it useful to answer the six questions again, and compare both sets of answers to see how you've moved on.

Take this booklet to a health professional

If you'd like to get help thinking about what to do about your answers, you can take this booklet to your health trainer, practice nurse, community matron, midwife, health visitor, physiotherapist or GP.

They can offer encouragement and may have more ideas from working with people who have similar health problems for helping you deal with the difficulties that are affecting you.

Visit your local library

You can learn more about your condition and improve your wellbeing at your local library. They keep a wide range of resources that can help. Many are books but there are also relaxation CDs to help you relax and unwind. Your librarian will be happy to help you find what you need.

For details of your nearest library, visit:
www.kirklees.gov.uk/libraries

Keep a diary

This booklet may have encouraged you to set yourself certain goals. Keeping a diary of your progress towards them is one way of reminding yourself how you're getting on. It is beneficial to be able to look back at your goals see how successful you have been and set further goals for the future.

Visit your local pharmacy

Your local pharmacist can offer information and advice on a range of health related questions.

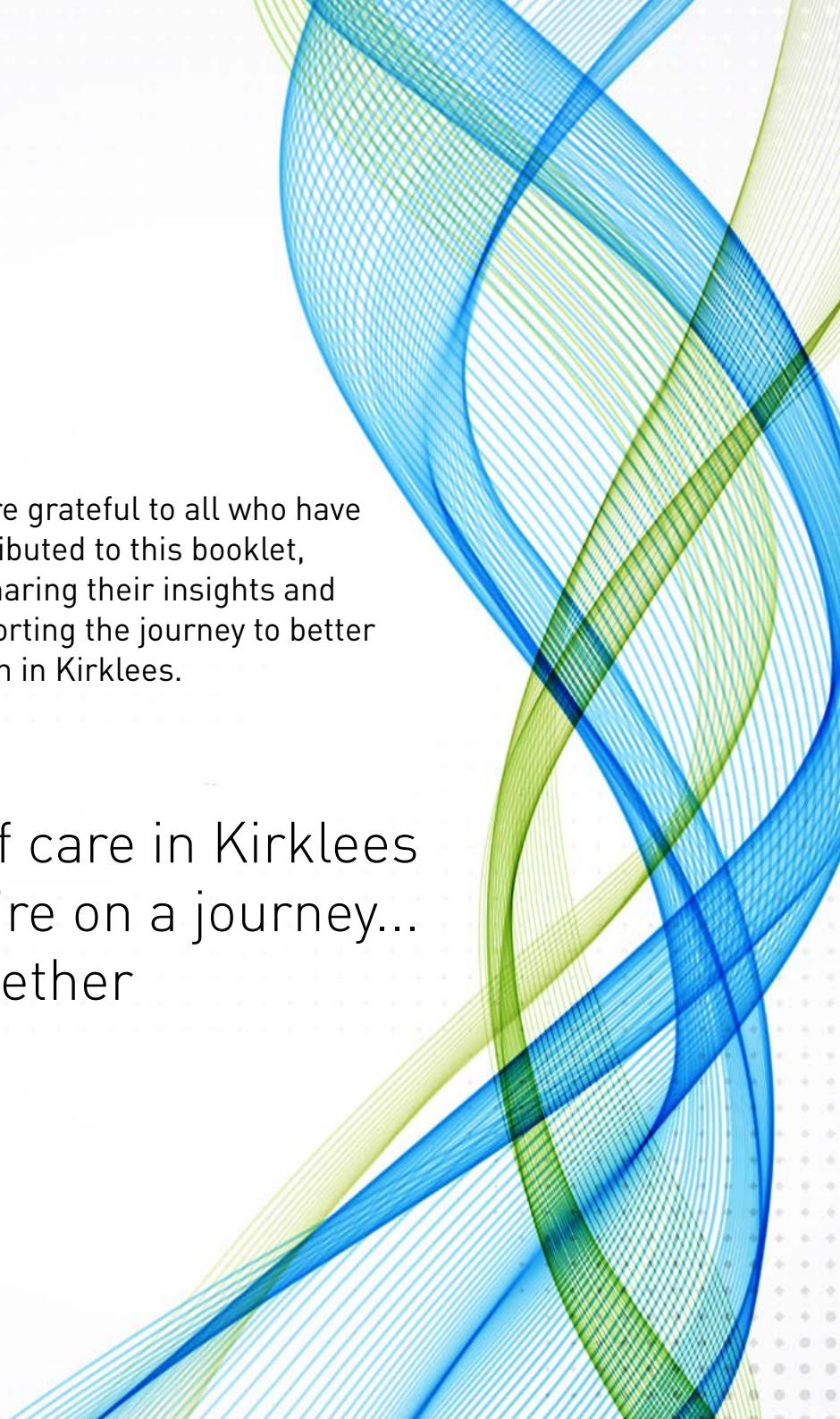
Five Ways to Wellbeing

Another useful tool for self care is the 'Five Ways to Wellbeing'. Find out more at www.kirklees.gov.uk/fiveways

Was this booklet useful?

Did you find this booklet useful? How could we improve it to help other people with long term health conditions?

Please email your feedback to self.care@kirklees.gov.uk



We are grateful to all who have contributed to this booklet, for sharing their insights and supporting the journey to better health in Kirklees.

self care in Kirklees
we're on a journey...
together