



Dr Kate Sheridan is a chartered physiotherapist specialising in pain management and an Assistant Professor at Dublin City University. With over 12 years of clinical experience in chronic pain, she has witnessed firsthand the dominance of the biomedical model in treating chronic pain contrary to the recommended biopsychosocial approach.

Dr Sheridan developed the HELP Platform, an eHealth self-management intervention, to address an under-resourced health system for people with chronic pain. Ireland currently lacks a centralised, evidence-based digital platform for people living with pain. Existing information is fragmented and difficult to navigate, leaving patients struggling to find trusted, actionable, and localised resources.

The HELP Platform addresses this gap by providing a single, accessible hub that supports individuals to understand pain, build self-management skills, and engage in evidence-informed strategies for living well with pain.

## About Health Innovation Hub Ireland

Health Innovation Hub Ireland (HIHI) was established by the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation and the Department of Health and is supported by Enterprise Ireland (EI) and the Health Service Executive (HSE) to drive collaboration between the health service and enterprise. We offer companies the opportunity for pilot and clinical evaluation studies and we provide the health service access to innovative products, services and devices that they may not otherwise be exposed to.

HIHI is built on the recognition that collaboration with enterprise can benefit patient care, patient pathways

and outcomes. We assess all concepts for healthcare innovation from those on the frontline – from clinician to porter. We encourage healthcare professionals to get in touch with HIHI if they have an idea or solution to how something in your job might work better.

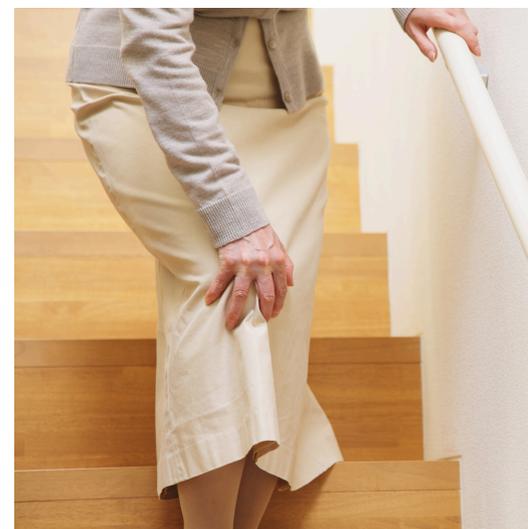


## The Healthcare Challenge

Chronic pain services in Ireland are severely under-resourced. Inadequate facilities, a lack of specialised training for healthcare professionals, and the absence of agreed care pathways are recognised barriers to effective service delivery. A national audit identified just five clinics in the Republic of Ireland that employ the recommended interdisciplinary team.

A review by the Faculty of Pain Medicine estimated an eight-year delay between symptom onset and referral to specialised pain clinics, where appropriate pain education is delivered. Consequently, many patients receive care from individual clinicians, rather than from integrated interdisciplinary teams. This fragmented system is further challenged by evidence that Irish healthcare professionals lack confidence and skills in delivering self-management support.

Early access to appropriate, multidisciplinary pain care is associated with improved quality of life and reduced healthcare costs. However, despite the recognised benefits, there remains a critical gap in accessible, non-pharmacological, self-management resources to support people living with pain in Ireland.



# The Healthcare Solution

The HELP Platform (Healing and Empowering Lives in Pain) is a co-designed, digital self-management intervention for chronic pain.

Developed collaboratively with people living with pain and multidisciplinary healthcare professionals, HELP integrates educational content, behaviour change principles, and supportive strategies that enhance autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

Grounded in Self-Determination Theory and informed by Public and Patient Involvement (PPI) at every stage, HELP directly addresses eight key determinants of self-management identified by individuals with lived experience of pain.

This dual foundation of experiential insight and theoretical rigour positions HELP as a unique, evidence-informed tool with the potential to improve self-management outcomes and inform the design of future digital pain interventions.



## HIHI Role

Health Innovation Hub Ireland (HIHI) connected this healthcare innovator with key opinion leaders and end-users. These evaluations provided vital feedback on the product need, application, and market approach, while helping build a cohort of clinical champions. HIHI added value through its structured, stage-gated framework that ensures meaningful insights and engagement with healthcare professionals.



## Outcome Report

This evaluation gathered five clinical experts working with chronic pain in Ireland. All clinicians reported there is a large clinical appetite for the HELP Platform as chronic pain management is an under-resourced area in Ireland and eHealth interventions are needed to alleviate the pressure on burnt-out and overwhelmed health services.

The HELP Platform provides benefits to both patients and clinicians. Patients require a trusted resource that provides evidence-based guidance along with updates on local services (e.g. exercise classes, community social events), while clinicians require a resource that can provide support and guidance to patients outside of direct consultations.

The HELP Platform also provides a standardised methodology which is hugely beneficial to support students and junior staff working with complex chronic pain conditions. Findings from this evaluation indicate that clinicians in Ireland who work with people living with chronic pain value the HELP Platform and perceive benefits for their service users.

## Testimonial

*“The support of the HIHI was invaluable to the development of the HELP Platform. By facilitating access to clinicians across services, they enabled meaningful review of the prototype and provided critical insights that helped shape next steps for development and implementation. This engagement significantly strengthened the relevance and real-world applicability of the project.”*

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