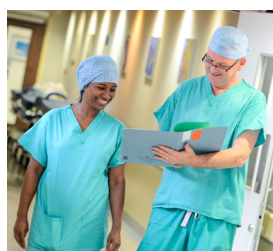




Welcome to Sussex MSK Partnership East's November Newsletter

In this edition we update you on the roll out of services, including new community consultant-led clinics in Eastbourne; an explanation of e-triage and the role of the ESP; a plea for feedback and a first hand account of a patient's experience of the service.

Between April and October this year, Sussex MSK Partnership East Clinical Referral and Assessment Service has received and processed 21,965 referrals. During the same period our Extended Scope Practitioners have seen 3,382 patients.

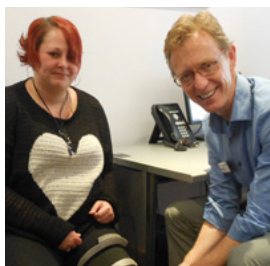


Update on MSK, Rheumatology and Pain Management Services

September saw the launch of consultant-led clinics at our Eastbourne hub for hip and knee patients. This integration of community and secondary care means patients can be seen locally and avoid a trip to hospital outpatients. It is also helping to improve waiting times for patients to see an appropriate consultant. The following local consultants are now holding regular clinics: Andrew Armitage (knee), Simon Hoskinson (hip and knee) and Andrew Skyrme (hip and knee). Spine specialist Satish Ganesan also started clinics on 5th November 2015.

The clinics offer full options for diagnostics and patients can be approved for surgery. The patient journey is managed by Sussex MSK Partnership East who arrange appointments and keep both the GP and patient fully updated.

Extended Scope Practitioners are running hip, knee, spine, shoulder and elbow, and hand and wrist clinics at our hubs in Crowborough, Eastbourne and Seaford, with foot and ankle, pain management and rheumatology services scheduled for launch by the end of the year. Patients with these conditions should still be referred to Sussex MSK Partnership East and we will triage and refer them to an appropriate local service or consultant.



E-triage and the role of the ESP

By Matt Daly, Extended Scope Practitioner

The aim of the partnership is to get patients on the right course of treatment as soon as possible, be it through self-help measures, physiotherapy, medication or surgery. All referrals to Sussex MSK Partnership East are clinically triaged by Extended Scope Practitioners (ESP) so that the referral is directed to the most appropriate care pathway for their needs.

To give a bit of context, ESPs are a relatively new breed of physiotherapists who have chosen to specialise in a specific area of healthcare, most commonly in musculoskeletal/orthopaedics. We commit to additional training that allows us to work in 'extended' roles to carry out investigations and deliver treatments that have traditionally fallen to the medical profession. We often focus on one body region and work closely with orthopaedic surgeons to understand their management approaches and thresholds for surgery. This gives us specialist knowledge and skills to work alongside patients in a shared decision making process to help manage their care.

When a GP referral is received by Sussex MSK, it will be forwarded that day to the ESP team. We look at the information on the form and decide the best course for the patient. Very often the next step will be an appointment with an ESP who specialises in the relevant region of the body. These clinics are held in community settings so your patient will be seen closer to their home and avoid a trip to outpatient hospital clinics. We will spend from 30 to 45 minutes with a patient and can arrange for any diagnostic tests to be carried out locally, if available. If it is clear that surgery is needed then we will send the patient directly to an orthopaedic consultant. In that situation the patient will be contacted by a Patient Care Advisor and offered a choice of where they would like to go.

If we have a query about a particular case we discuss it with our colleagues, a consultant or we may come back to you for further details. What really helps us is the quality of the information provided on the referral form – this is gold dust to us! We'll need to know:

- History of patient
- Present condition, including length of time of symptoms
- Findings from your physical examinations
- Your suspicions/opinion
- Details of any treatment that has been tried, including self-management
- Details of any tests that have been organised

If you have any queries about the referral process, including what information to include on the form, please get in touch! I know that there's probably very little time in your day to make a phone call, but a quick five minute chat with one of us could save you far more time in the long run. We are always available and are really happy to hear from you. Please call on 0300 300 0003 or email mskp.east@nhs.net.

Matt Daly is a Lead Extended Scope Practitioner with Sussex MSK Partnership East and East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust. He has been working as an ESP and Physiotherapy Clinical Lead for many years. He has an MSc in Musculoskeletal Physiotherapy and is a member of the Musculoskeletal Association of Chartered Physiotherapists (MACP); PG Diploma in Orthopaedic Medicine and Injection Therapy; PG Dip in Sport and Exercise Injury Management and is currently completing an MSc in MSK Diagnostic Ultrasound. He has a specific interest in Spinal and Shoulder conditions.



A Patient's Experience

Peter Smith is a fit and healthy 68-year-old living in Eastbourne. A day of gardening which involved a lot of heavy lifting in early summer caused some discomfort in his back, but he carried on with most daily activities. A few days later his back went into spasms and a grinding pain in his hip and leg developed.

Mr Smith said: "The pain was such that I had to spend several nights propped up in a chair downstairs, so my GP came to see me at home. He prescribed painkillers and told me to come and see him if the pain was no better in a couple of weeks.

"During that time, the back pain improved but the pain in my leg got worse and when I walked more than a hundred yards, I got a stabbing pain down my thigh. I went back to see my GP who examined me and talked about my previous medical history. We had a discussion about next steps and we decided that I would be referred to Sussex MSK Partnership East for further investigations.

"I was contacted by a Patient Care Advisor who offered me an appointment at the Spine Clinic. I was delighted that it was just around the corner from my home. My appointment was with an Extended Scope Practitioner called Matt Daly. He examined me and spent a lot of time talking about my symptoms, both past and present.

"My biggest concern was that I wouldn't be fit enough to go on the long awaited cruise that my wife and I were really looking forward to. But Matt was very reassuring and said he thought that the pain in my leg was likely to be referred pain from my back and explained that most back pain resolves itself within six weeks. However, as I had had an old injury in my thigh, he wanted to rule out any deep muscular tears and arranged for me to have an ultrasound.

"Fortunately this turned out not to be the case and just as Matt said, my pain started to get better and I found I could walk further and further each day. By the time our cruise came round in September, I was feeling much better and was able to walk, swim and play table tennis – not something I thought I would be able to do only a few weeks before!

"I found the MSK service extremely good. The appointment system seemed faultless and I was kept informed along the way. I was sent confirmation of appointments and copies of letters that were sent to my GP. When I had questions it was easy to call the patient care advice number and speak to someone. There was always somebody who knew what was going on and if they didn't know the answer, they would find out and ring me straight back. It seemed very straightforward and everyone I spoke to was so friendly."



Calling all GPs: Don't suffer in silence – talk to us!

Sussex MSK Partnership East is pioneering a new way of delivering MSK services in Eastbourne, Seaford, Hailsham and High Weald, Lewes and Havens CCG areas. Our aim is to make a more efficient, straightforward patient journey, reduce the number of hospital referrals and provide high quality MSK care in the community, close to patients' homes.

We're making good progress, but as with most big changes, there are inevitably some teething problems.

We want to hear from you about how the new service is affecting you, your colleagues and your patients. If you have experienced problems with our systems or frustrations with the referral process, then please don't suffer in silence – tell us so that we can find ways of improving things. Equally, if you've found that our service has made life a bit easier for you, your colleagues or patients, then please tell us so that we can give you more of the same.

We realise that there is very little spare time in your day so we have put together a short questionnaire which you can complete via <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SMSKPEGP1>

There are just five questions which should only take a few minutes to complete, so please do try to find the time to take part. The more responses we get, the better we will understand what we need to do to deliver an outstanding service for you and your patients and any information we do receive will be fed back to you. Your opinion and feedback is invaluable and will help shape the way MSK services continue to develop in this area, so thank you in advance for taking part.

This survey closes on 30th November, but please still get in touch after this date if you would like to voice your opinion. You can do this by emailing smskp.east@nhs.net.

Sussex MSK Partnership is formed of the following organisations