

MSK NEWS for GP PRACTICES

MSK, RHEUMATOLOGY AND PAIN MANAGEMENT PROVISION IN HIGH WEALD, LEWES, HAVENS AND EASTBOURNE, HAILSHAM AND SEAFORD



Welcome to September's newsletter

In this edition we update you on the roll out of services, an education session on lower back pain, and details of our new headquarters. Our case study is of a patient who has been coping with chronic back pain for 30 years and is now managing without drugs.

Update on MSK, Rheumatology and Pain Management Services



Sussex MSK Partnership East now provides a full service from referral to discharge for patients with hip, spine, knee, shoulder and elbow conditions. This means that patients will usually be referred to an Extended Scope Practitioner (ESP) specialising in their particular condition who will determine the most appropriate care pathway, which may include self-management, physiotherapy, surgery or a combination.

The multi-disciplinary approach means that patients are assured of getting the most appropriate treatment in a timely manner. Our aim is to make your patient's care as straightforward as possible, by providing one point of contact and

endeavouring to treat them closer to their homes.

ESP and community clinics for foot, ankle, hand, wrist, pain management and rheumatology services will be launched by the end of the year but 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.

Since the launch of the service, Sussex MSK Partnership East Extended Scope Practitioners have seen 1,696 patients between April and July.

The Sussex MSK Partnership East Clinical Referral and Assessment Service has received and processed 11,908 referrals in the same period.

Education session on referring patients with lower back pain

Extended Scope Practitioner (ESP) Matthew Carr, pictured, who specialises in spinal conditions, was invited by the Meridian Surgery in Peacehaven to give an education session on lower back pain to the GPs and practice nurses. His talk covered the taking of a subjective history, exploration of serious pathologies and making accurate and concise objective assessments. He also touched on psychosocial factors and how behavioural patterns associated with pain can be assessed and managed.

Matthew commented: "Some 30% of GP appointments are for MSK-related conditions and of those, around 40%-50% are for back pain. That's a significant proportion of a GP's workload, so most doctors and practice nurses have a lot of experience in this area. However, having just 10 minutes to assess a patient can be a challenge – this includes taking a subjective history as well as carrying out an objective assessment – so my aim was to provide some tips and tools for assessing a patient in a short time frame and determining the next steps for making an appropriate referral."

The group discussed serious pathologies, including referral of suspected Cauda Equina and how to rate the level of concerns of different red flags, which ones – or combinations – need more urgent action.

Matthew also demonstrated a number of physical tests that can be used to quickly

assess a patient's mobility, motor and neurological functions. He said: "These are a more succinct version of some of the assessments that we use in our clinics. However, ESPs have the benefit of 45 minute patient consultations compared with a mere 10 minutes for GPs, so we would carry out a much more involved examination."

Dr Andy Starling, senior partner at the Meridian Surgery, said: "Matthew led an interactive MSK session on back pain assessment. As MSK lead in our practice I used to feel that I could triage my own referrals and didn't need this extra level of skill in the pathway. However, it is clear that ESPs, like Matthew, have highly developed diagnostic abilities."

If you would like an ESP to come and talk to your practice, please contact us on [0300 300 0003](tel:0300 300 0003) or email smskp.east@nhs.net



"Some 30% of GP appointments are for MSK-related conditions and of those, around 40%-50% are for back pain. That's a significant proportion of a GP's workload."

"This, coupled with their physiotherapy treatment skills, makes the ESPs a valuable addition to the team and I would have every confidence in referring through them in the future."

New Eastbourne headquarters for Sussex MSK Partnership East

Sussex MSK Partnership East is now based in the centre of Eastbourne on the first floor of Ivy House in Ivy Terrace, near the library and the station.

There are 27 of us working here, including the Clinical Referral Assessment Service (CRAS) and the administration and management team headed up by Managing Director, Stephen Cass and Karen Planterose, Chief Operating Officer.

The CRAS team is made up of highly trained Patient Care Advisors who assess each referral and recommend the appropriate next step. Team members also take calls and emails from patients and GPs and are available from 8am to 7pm, Monday to Friday. The contact details are as follows:

Telephone: [0300 300 0003](tel:0300 300 0003) Email: smskp.east@nhs.net

Fax: [01323 731738](tel:01323 731738) www.sussexmskpartnershipeast.co.uk

Patients will continue to be seen at the service's local clinics in Eastbourne, Seaford and Crowborough.



Case Study:

Chronic Back Pain Sufferer Finds Significant Benefits from Pain Management Programme

Scott Hunt, 48, pictured, from Hellingly has suffered with chronic back pain for all his adult life. Treatment over the years has included everything from surgery to physiotherapy. Recently he was referred by Sussex MSK Partnership East to a Pain Management Programme, which has significantly helped him to take control of his pain.

Scott is a former senior NHS manager and mental health nurse, a job that eventually became incompatible with his back condition. As the pain deteriorated, his medication increased and he was finally forced to take ill health retirement.

Diagnosed with degenerative disc disease in the lumbar region, Scott worked on keeping mobile and maintaining his core strength in the hope of avoiding surgery, but he eventually underwent a Dynesis procedure to stabilise his spine. This was later removed after two of the screws broke and again the pain increased.

In 2014, Scott's GP referred him via Sussex MSK Partnership East to Dr Janet McGowen, a Pain Management Consultant. After assessing his back pain and ensuring all other possible medical avenues had been explored, Dr McGowen referred him to the Pain Management Programme.

The Pain Management Programme takes place over six weeks with two sessions per week to help patients with long-term chronic pain to improve their quality of life. It is run by a multi-disciplinary team of health professionals who work closely with patients to educate, guide and support decision making related to pain management. Carers and relatives are also offered support. The treatments included learning about alternative lifestyle choices, relaxation techniques, safe exercising, challenging negative cognitive thinking, building confidence, medication management and most of all, regaining control of decision making.

"I feel so blessed to have been supported by the programme which has really helped me both physically and mentally."



"We were all treated with the same respect, care, compassion, and honesty."

Since the course Scott is now managing his chronic back pain without medication and is incredibly grateful to the team. He said: "I feel so blessed to have been supported by the programme which has really helped me both physically and mentally through some tough times especially as the back problems had been terribly difficult to deal with and I was struggling to manage in a career I enjoyed greatly.

"We were all treated with the same respect, care, compassion, and honesty and given high level expertise as each other and I now feel more equipped and

supported than at any other time with my pain management. I am so grateful to have a service like this so close to home."

Angela Busuttill, Consultant Clinical Psychologist and Clinical Lead for Sussex MSK Partnership East's Pain Management Service, commented: "For many people, pain management approaches help to improve quality of life significantly even when pain cannot be cured.

"We have listened to patients and their families. They have told us that earlier access to these approaches is important so we are improving the range of services we offer including an online programme for those who cannot attend weekly due to family and work commitments."

Shoulder and Elbow Clinics Launched in Crowborough, Eastbourne and Seaford Hubs

The shoulder and elbow service is the latest speciality to be launched by Sussex MSK Partnership East, the local NHS organisation responsible for treating patients with bone, joint and muscular problems, including rheumatism, arthritis and chronic pain. Clinics for hip, knee and spine conditions were launched earlier this year in Eastbourne, Seaford and Crowborough, so that patients can access specialist treatment closer to their homes.

Steve Daly, Extended Scope Practitioner with the Sussex MSK Partnership East, runs the shoulder and elbow clinic in Seaford. He explained how the service is transforming healthcare for his patients: "It's all about delivering high quality health services where people need them most – that is, close to where they live. The more we can treat people in their community the better, both for patients and the health economy.

"Musculoskeletal problems are very common and can be caused by an injury or by 'wear and tear'. Treatments can vary from physiotherapy and medication to surgery or a combination of all three. We work in teams comprising practitioners with different specialisms to make sure our patients receive the best treatment for their condition and lifestyle."

Patients are initially referred to Sussex MSK Partnership East by their GP. Once referred, the partnership looks after them throughout their treatment and organises all their follow-up appointments.

One of the first patients to be seen at the shoulder clinic in Seaford was Steve Burrett from Peacehaven who works as a stage technician at Glyndebourne. He injured his shoulder while lifting a heavy piece of set and was referred by his GP to the MSK service.

He said: "It was great to be able to come to the shoulder clinic in Seaford. I expected to have to go to the hospital in Brighton or Eastbourne. It's all been very straightforward so far."

For further information please visit www.sussexmskpartnershiveast.co.uk

"It's all about delivering high quality health services where people need them most."



Steve Daly, Extended Scope Practitioner with Steve Burrett

If you have any comments or questions, please get in touch. We value your comments and your feedback will help improve our service.

Telephone: **0300 300 0003** Email: **smskp.east@nhs.net**

Write: **Sussex MSK Partnership East, PO Box 3196, Eastbourne, BN21 9QH**

You can find out more about us on **www.sussexmskpartnershiveast.co.uk**