Physiotherapists (FCPs) in General Practice

By Ilkem Mehmet (Clinical Lead) & Rio-Jess Leslie (Deputy Clinical Lead)
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In 2019, Five-Year Framework for GP Contract Reform outlines roll out of FCPs (First Contact Practitioners/Physiotherapists) through the Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme. The Scheme will fund an estimated 20,000+ additional posts in 5 specific primary care roles by 2023/24, including FCPs at Bands 7 and 8a. From 2020, NHSE will reimburse 70% of the costs (including on-costs) for FCPs employed by Primary Care Networks.
What are FCPs in GP Settings?
First Contact Practitioner for MSK Services (NHS England & NHS I May 2019)

• FCP work is the first point of contact for patients, providing new expertise and increased capacity to general practice and providing patients with faster access to the right care

• While FCP services will take a significant proportion of the MSK workload from GPs, there is no intention to de-skill GPs

• The CSP estimates that physiotherapists working as FCPs could see up to half of all patients with MSK conditions (up to 10% of all patients currently being seen by GPs)

• The principles proposed for physiotherapists providing FCP services can be applied to other practitioners in other clinical areas who are able to demonstrate compliance with the Health Education England (HEE) and NHS England Capability Framework

• FCP services are also reported to deliver a return on investment
Why Implement it?

• The model brings physiotherapy expertise to the front end of the MSK pathway

A review of recent and ongoing FCP pilots demonstrates:
• The majority of patients present with relatively complex MSK conditions
• Improved use of diagnostic capacity with 3-5% cost reductions in plain X-rays and MRI scans Ordered by general practice
• Over 70% of patients receive specific self-management advice
• Good patient experience with 90-99% satisfaction rates in pilots
• Reduces existing GP staff workload, and increases practice capacity, but supports faster access to advice and self-care expertise for MSK triage across a streamlined MSK pathway
How should the FCP role be implemented?

• At the beginning of the MSK pathway and considered part of the GP team

• Patients should be able to self-refer

• With the support of GPs, Consultants and other community practitioners

• With the ability to refer directly for diagnostics, back to the GP, to local outpatient community physiotherapy services and to secondary care

• They need to be freely bookable and signposted by GP practice administrators

• The IT infrastructure needs to be ready
What have the pilots found?

• Headlines from the evaluation report include:
• 97% of all patients questioned would be likely or highly likely to recommend
• 21% reduction in orthopaedic referrals per day in STPs where FCP has been implemented for two or more months
• 12% fewer drug prescriptions given by FCPs compared to GPs for MSK patients
• 10% fewer blood test referrals made by FCPs compared to GPs for MSK patients
Findings from Ferryview Health Centre

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>NHSE</th>
<th>Ferryview (Last 5 months)</th>
<th>Ferryview (all time)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patients Seen</td>
<td>4,509</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>1,281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Management Advice Given</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referred to Physio</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>14%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Referred to GP</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referred for Minor Surgery</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Referred for Diagnostics</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referred to Secondary Care</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Referred to Community MSK</td>
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<td>9%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patients given a Follow Up</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calculated Self Management</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>73%</td>
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</tbody>
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Organisational challenges

• Variations in ethos

• Financial pressures

• Time constraints

• CCG expectations

• Patient expectations? Seeing a physio vs GPs?
Professional challenges of delivering clinics

- Establishing a true “First Contact” role
- Variations in patient pathways
- Non-MSK presentation
- Scope of practice: injection, investigation, analgesia / medication review
Elective Care High Impact Interventions: First Contact Practitioner for MSK Services

May 2019

NHS England and NHS Improvement
First Contact Physiotherapy posts in General Practice

A guide for implementation in England

May 2018 Version 2