

Direct Access Physiotherapy

To provide an *alternative to GP appointments* for patients experiencing *MSK problems* within the *Blaenau Gwent NCN areas*

Background

- MSK conditions make **up to 30%** of a GP's caseload.
- **50%** of a GP's caseload is for MSK patients over 75 years old
- **85%** of those do not need to see a GP and can be appropriately managed by physiotherapists
- Direct access allows people to **access physiotherapy directly** without the need to see a GP first
- **Recommended by NICE** for England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Project aims

- Provide **alternative assessment/ triage service** for adult patients with new or ongoing musculoskeletal injury
- **Faster access for assessment** of an injury by a musculoskeletal specialist clinicians
- **Promote** self-management and health-focused behaviour
- **Free up** GP appointments and reduce administrative costs
- To ensure **appropriate referrals** into Secondary Care.

What we did...

- **Service advertised** using posters, patient information leaflets and GP advice leaflets. GP surgeries provided with a power point presentation to display via their IT/ television screens, which played over the IT system in YAB
- Direct access **assessment and triage service** for musculoskeletal (MSK) conditions
- Accepted referrals for **adults with new or existing musculoskeletal conditions** in Blaenau Gwent NCN areas.
- **Clinics** provided from Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan
- Delivered by 2 Band 6 Physiotherapists, **Monday to Friday**, 09:00-11:30, with 15 slots available each day
- Blaenau Gwent NCNs **funded** 0.8WTE Band 6 Physiotherapist, an experienced clinician with the ability to independently diagnose and treat a range of MSK conditions (increased to 1WTE from December 2015 – March 2016 due to slippage)
- Work within the **rotational musculoskeletal speciality** as a member of the physiotherapy team.
- **Letter** written to patient's GP explaining that they have attended the service and the planned next steps



Project outcomes

- **282** patients assessed in the first 3 months, a potential 'saving' of £9,306 when compared to traditional referral via GP
- **Highest demand** are in the early part of the week (Monday and Tuesday)
 - **6%** of patients assessed returned to their GP, equivalent to **265 GP appointment slots saved** (approx. 2.5 GP working weeks)
 - **10.2%** of patients were discharged from all services to self manage their condition with advice/ information and/ or basic exercises
 - **46.1%** of patients were placed on the mainstream physiotherapy service routine outpatient waiting list
- **37.7%** of patients were identified as requiring urgent physiotherapy and were provided with an appointment in the mainstream physiotherapy service
- **4.6%** of patients were asked to return to their GPs' with a covering letter from the physiotherapist advising that further investigation of the patient's condition is required
- **1.4%** of patients were asked to return to their GPs' for onward referral to another secondary care service

Evaluation

The project has demonstrated that

- The service has **embedded very well** and is already making an impact
- The mainstream Physiotherapy Service can act as **an efficient alternative** assessment and signposting service for patients with MSK conditions
- **84%** of patients rated the service delivered as excellent and the rest as good.
- The service has the **potential to release savings** across the Health Board for the management of MSK conditions



Dr Heather Griffiths & Dr David Minton
*East & West Blaenau Gwent
NCN Clinical Leads*