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PRESS RELEASE

Patients urged to contact physiotherapy service through local GP Practices to tackle aches and pains

People suffering from musculoskeletal (MSK) conditions, such as back and neck pain, are being encouraged to contact their GP practice for direct access to a physiotherapist for expert advice.

A partnership of NHS organisations and the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy are working together to deliver the 'First Contact Physiotherapy' (FCP) service. This enables patients to see a physio without having to see their GP first. First Contact Physiotherapists are experts in bone, joint and muscle problems and the service is available without a referral to anyone registered with a GP practice in North West Surrey.

The service has continued to operate in the local area throughout the pandemic using virtual consultations on a computer or smart device. Virtual consultations have been well-received by patients, particularly those who would otherwise struggle to get to a face-to-face appointment. Physiotherapists from Ashford and St Peter's Hospitals have delivered more than 4500 virtual consultations since the lockdown began and are appealing for more patients to contact them if they are in pain or need help with their MSK conditions.

Commenting on the service, Leon Palmer-Wilson, Acting Clinical Lead for MSK Physiotherapy at Ashford and St Peter's Hospitals, says: "We are concerned that patients are suffering in silence during the pandemic when they could be getting help from this service. Our team can assess patient problems over the phone or via video and give exercises and advice to address their needs. We urge people to contact their local GP practice and ask for an appointment with their physiotherapist if they are at all concerned about any aches and pains. We are here to help."

Dr Caroline Baker, GP at Southview Surgery in Woking and Chief Executive of North West Surrey Integrated Care Services, said: "Providing this service through GP practices gives patients the convenience they want and means they see the right professional first time, without unnecessary GP appointments. It's just one example of how local practices are working together to offer specialist advice and treatment close to home, reducing the need for trips to hospital."

Ryan Mackie, Clinical Lead for iMSK Physiotherapy at the Trust, says: "We have also been providing virtual bespoke exercise classes for patients to help manage their conditions, such as the Back to Fitness and Keep Moving classes to help prevent any deterioration in the condition of patients during lockdown. We have been delighted to continue to offer these classes and our services throughout the pandemic to ensure that patients don't miss out on treatment. It's crucial that people remain active even while it's difficult to get out and about, in order to avoid aches and pains developing and to support mental health."

Feedback from patients has been really positive, with one saying: "I would highly recommend the virtual service, it's a game changer. As long as older patients, like myself, have help to get set up you'll be fine. Once you've done it once you get the idea."

Local GPs are equally positive. Dr Vishal Patel from Wey Family Practice in West Byfleet said: "Our patients have found the service convenient due to its location within the Health Centre. Feedback has been very positive about the level of care in addressing their musculoskeletal problems with a short wait time to be seen." Whilst Dr Linsey Leach from The Grove Medical Centre in Egham added: "FCP is a really great service for our patients at The Grove. Easy to book, no long waiting lists and fantastic advice given for patients to move forwards in their MSK management."

Patients interested in the service should contact their surgery reception and ask to see the NHS FCP Physiotherapist.

-Ends-

Ashford and St Peter's Hospital - Information for Editors

Leon Palmer-Wilson and Ryan Mackie are available for interviews including radio interviews to give advice to listeners on keeping active and what to do if they have aches and pains.

Please contact the communications team with any queries – asp-tr.comms.mailbox@nhs.net

North West Surrey Integrated Care Services (NICS) is a GP Federation that brings together 38 GP practices in North West Surrey. It provides the First Contact Physio Service in collaboration with Ashford and St Peter's Hospital and the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy.

The FCP Service is available at the following GP surgeries:

Ashley Medical Practice
Chertsey Health Centre
Chobham & West End Medical Practice
Church Street Practice
College Road Surgery
Crouch Oak Practice
Fordbridge Medical Centre
Goldsworth Medical Practice (York House)
Greenfield Surgery (Dr R J Pool)
Grove Medical Centre
Heathcot Medical Practice (York House)
Hillview Medical Practice
Hythe Medical Centre
Knowle Green Medical
Madeira Medical
Maybury Surgery
New Ottershaw Surgery
Orchard Surgery
Packers
Parishes Bridges Medical Practice
Pirbright Surgery



NICS GP Federation
Ashford and St Peter's Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Red Practice Dr J Sillick & Partners
Rowan Tree Practice
Sheerwater Health Centre
Shepperton Medical Practice
Southview Surgery
St David's Health Centre
St John's Health Centre The Family Practice
Staines Health Group
Stanwell Road Surgery
Studholme Medical Centre
Sunbury Health Centre Group Practice
Sunny Mead Surgery
The Fort House Surgery
The Hershams Surgery
Upper Halliford Medical Centre
Wey Family Practice
White Practice Dr Samy Morcos
Yellow Practice Dr Dzung M Nguyen (Wynne)

Chartered Institute of Physiotherapy – Information for Editors:

For more information please contact Mindy Dalloway, Campaigns and Regional Engagement Officer,
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The CSP is the professional, educational and trade union body for the UK's 59,000 chartered physiotherapists, physiotherapy students and assistants: www.csp.org.uk.