

First Contact Physiotherapy (FCP) Services offered to patients by the White House Clinic

Chesterfield & Dronfield PCN is pleased to be able to offer a First Contact Physiotherapy (FCP) service to patients. This FCP service is provided by the White House Clinic.

White House Clinic has been a leading provider of physiotherapy services to individuals and businesses across Sheffield & Derbyshire for over 50 years. They have helped to support NHS services and worked closely with GPs throughout this time as well.

What are First Contact Physiotherapists, and what do they do?

FCP's are physiotherapists working as part of the GP practice team and they provide a physiotherapy triage or MSK screening service. The vast majority of FCP's are physiotherapists with enhanced skills.

FCP's work alongside GPs, and they can help to assess, diagnose and provide early intervention and advice for patients with Musculo-Skeletal (MSK) complaints. They are also able to refer patients onto specialist services at the earliest opportunity if this is required. FCP's therefore effectively take the load off GP's, allowing GP's more time to focus on other core areas within general practice.

FCP's always work collaboratively with their GPs to ensure an integrated service. This ensures that GPs do not lose sight of the cohort of MSK cases or deskill them in any way.

FCP service allows GP staff to see and refer directly into the physiotherapist's diary, as well as tasking and communicating with the physiotherapist directly. The FCP therefore becomes the **GPs MSK practitioner**, and GPs can develop their own 'internal' MSK pathway.

How do First Contact Physiotherapy services help Patients?

Having a First Contact Physiotherapist within GP premises means that patients with MSK pain, including conditions such as back pain and arthritis, can contact and access their local physiotherapist directly and rapidly, rather than waiting to see a GP or being referred to hospital or community physiotherapy services.

This early access to physiotherapy, alongside rapid intervention, advice and treatment (where necessary) has been proven to reduce sickness absence, accelerate recovery and improve the long-term health and well-being prospects of patients with MSK complaints (Addley et al., 2010; Boorman, 2009; NHS Employers, 2012).

How do First Contact Physiotherapy services help GPs?

First Contact Physiotherapists can help GPs to manage their workload more effectively by freeing up appointment slots. They can also reduce and lower the number of unnecessary investigations and prescriptions and reduce the number of patients being referred onward to other services.

White House Clinic's FCP services have been proven to help GP's by:

- Providing rapid access to physiotherapy assessment and intervention
- Reducing referrals to GP's themselves
- Avoiding unnecessary waiting lists
- Reducing repeated prescriptions
- Avoiding unnecessary referrals to secondary care
- Maximising the efficiency of investigations
- Managing and co-ordinating MSK healthcare in-house, with on-site MSK specialist practitioners