

PRESS RELEASE

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Approved by: Karen Kyle, System Programme Director - Bay Health
and Care Partners
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PHYSIOTHERAPIST TRIAL IN GP SURGERIES ALREADY PROVING A SUCCESS

The introduction of 'first contact' physiotherapists at GP practices in the Bay area have enabled over 200 patients to be seen since November 2018. The new clinics are being trialled at Bay Medical Group in Morecambe, Ashtrees Health Centre in Carnforth and Ulverston and Dalton practices.

Charity Bamforth, a First Contact Physiotherapist in Ulverston, sees up to 14 patients a day offering 40 minute sessions. She has seen more than 100 patients since November 2018 and only six of these patients have been referred on to the Integrated Musculoskeletal Service (iMSK) service and Outpatient physiotherapy.

Patients suffering from musculoskeletal problems such as back and knee pain and sprained ankles can refer themselves to First Contact Physiotherapists when they make an appointment at their GP surgery. The physiotherapists can offer patients advice, exercises and information on managing their condition long-term – this frees up GPs' time to lead, manage and spend on other patients.

First Contact Physiotherapists can refer patients on to community physiotherapy or the advanced physiotherapy service (iMSK) if further courses of treatment are needed.

There are plans to extend the service to other local practices including in Millom, Askam, Sedburgh and Kirkby Lonsdale.

Charity said: “The service really is about improving patient care and experience and we have had some great feedback so far from those who have used the service – not only does it give them faster access but we have more time to spend with an individual. It is also empowering patients, giving them the right advice to manage conditions themselves and getting them faster access to this advice.

“We’re experts in musculoskeletal issues so it is a great opportunity to share knowledge, grow skills and provide expert training to GPs on MSK issues, as well as strengthening links with the physiotherapy service and primary care.”

Dr Alison Johnston, from Dr Johnston and Partners in Ulverston, said: “It is fantastic having Charity working with us. We are already seeing a difference in our referral rates and patients are better able to manage their own conditions. They now can see a physiotherapist directly without having to see their GP first.”

Musculoskeletal conditions affect the joints, bones and muscles, and also include rarer autoimmune diseases and back pain. They affect 1 in 4 of the adult population (many being young and of working age) which is around 9.6 million adults and 12,000 children in the UK and account for 30% of GP consultations, in England.

Patient feedback has included:

“This is great, this is exactly what I need.”

“Now I know what to do to help myself.”

“I was surprised I could see someone so quickly and your examination has been so thorough.”

“I feel much more confident in how to manage this now.”

Bay Health and Care Partners continue to introduce and support new models of care across Morecambe Bay to improve the way people receive health and care services within south Cumbria and North Lancashire. These new models of care developed over the last four years are integral in the delivery and implementation of the Better Care Together Strategy.

Ends

Notes to editors:

1. For further information, please contact the communications team on 01539716675 or by email as indicated above.
2. Bay Health and Care Partners is made up of the following organisations: University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust, Morecambe Bay Clinical Commissioning Group, GP Providers Alliance, Lancashire County Council, Cumbria County Council, Lancashire Care Foundation Trust, NWAS and Cumbria Partnership NHS Foundation Trust.
3. You can find out more about First Contact Physiotherapists at <https://www.csp.org.uk/publications/guide-implementing-physiotherapy-services-general-practice>
4. You can find out more about musculoskeletal conditions at <https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/clinical-policy/ltc/our-work-on-long-term-conditions/musculoskeletal/>