

**South West Essex  
Musculoskeletal  
Service**

**A guide for patients**

**Are you suffering  
from muscular or joint  
pains?**

**Our service brings together specialist musculoskeletal (MSK) clinicians to assess, diagnose and manage your condition at health centres, GP surgeries and gyms in your local community. We treat MSK conditions involving bones, soft tissues, muscles, joints and ligaments.**

### **Our services:**

South West Essex Musculoskeletal (MSK) Service is for people with musculoskeletal conditions. Our team includes specialist clinicians covering all musculoskeletal specialist areas, who can provide a comprehensive assessment and a range of treatments and management plans in a community setting.

### **How do I make an appointment?**

- Make an appointment to see your GP and your GP will refer you into the new service
- Once the referral is complete, you will be contacted by our Referral Management Centre, to arrange your first appointment.

### **What should I expect?**

Your first appointment will most likely involve a telephone assessment by a physiotherapist. These calls usually last about 20 minutes and will be from a withheld number.

They will ask questions about your condition and general health in-order to make a provisional diagnosis, provide instant advice and plan your care accordingly.



**Self-management**

**Other Services**

## What should I expect?

You may then be referred to see a physiotherapist, a specialist rheumatologist, or a specialist orthopaedic or pain management clinician who will further assess you and will refer you for further investigations as appropriate.

Clinical Specialists

Group Exercise

Physiotherapy

Your treatment plan may include a variety of specialist treatments which will be discussed with you and delivered in a clinic or group setting to help you to return to your usual activities. Your treatment plan will also include advice and specific exercises to help you self-manage your condition.

## What to wear:

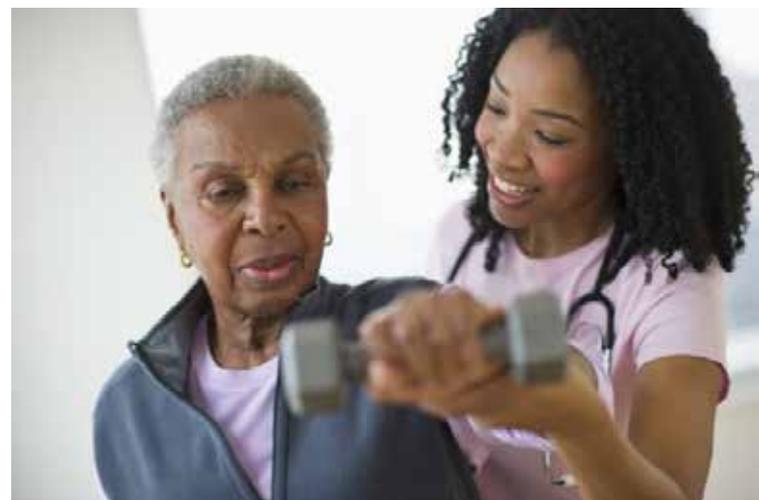
During your assessment you might be required to carry out a number of movements to determine the cause of your pain. Therefore we recommend you wear suitable loose fitting clothing, such as t-shirt, shorts, jogging bottoms and underwear that you are comfortable being assessed in.

## Where will I be seen?

The clinics are located in local health centres and some GP practices within the community. You will be offered the earliest appointment available but you will also be given a choice of venues so you can choose a location which is best for you.

## What if I need to go to hospital?

If it is necessary for you to have an operation or see a consultant at a hospital, this will be discussed with you. You will then be able to choose which hospital you wish to be treated in and a referral will be arranged through our support team.



## Important information:

- **Patients under 14 years-old:**  
This service is only available to patients aged 14 years or older.
- **Patients with additional needs:**  
If the Patient is vulnerable, or has a disability, or mobility problems, then please advise us when you book their appointment.
- **Transport:**  
If you require hospital transport, please advise us when you book your appointment.
- **Translation Support:**  
If you require a translator, please advise us which language when you book your appointment.
- **Keep us informed:**  
If you need to change or cancel your appointment, please call the service **at least 48 hours prior to your appointment**, so it can be offered to someone else. This keeps patient waiting times low and helps to reduce NHS costs.
- **Don't be a DNA:**  
If you **Do Not Attend (DNA)** or you are late to your appointment without notifying us, you may be discharged from this service.
- **Diagnostic Tests:**  
Your clinician may require you to have diagnostic tests (e.g. blood-samples, X-Rays, MRI Scans). You may be required to attend a walk-in clinic, or we may request the test for you.  
**Diagnostic tests may take up to 8 weeks** and we monitor your progress throughout the diagnostic process, so there is no need to call us earlier than this.

## Patient and GP support

Our support team is here to help you, if you have any queries or questions regarding your care, then please call **01268 904 102**

Lines are open Monday to Friday between 8.30am and 5.00pm.

## Data protection and patient confidentiality

Patients and Clinicians can be assured that the protection of privacy and confidentiality are given the highest priority, with all personal information being collected, held and used in strict compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018.

## Comments, complaints and suggestions

Service encourages feedback from its patients on their experiences with the services they have received. If you wish to make a suggestion, compliment or a complaint about any part of the service, then please call the Referral Management Centre on **01268 904 102** and they will direct your call, or access further information on how to do so via our website:

[www.connecthealth.co.uk/contact](http://www.connecthealth.co.uk/contact)

The South West Essex Musculoskeletal Service is delivered by Connect on behalf of the NHS and in cooperation with Basildon and Thurrock University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust