



2<sup>nd</sup> February 2015

**IMPORTANT: Amendments to some  
current West Essex MSK Pathways**

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Dear Colleague,

We are writing to inform you of some changes and additions to pathways for patients with back and/or knee pain and/or requiring physiotherapy. Please note that the following changes will be made with immediate effect.

**Direct Access Spine and Knee MRI to PAH**

Following a clinical evidence review, West Essex CCG has agreed to restrict Spine and Knee Direct Access MRI referrals into PAH from immediate effect. Please see Appendix 1 for updated MRI Referral Guidance. As stated in Appendix 1, PAH will continue to accept Red Flag request if clearly detailed in referral correspondence.

Spinal and Knee MRI's should only be requested as a pre-cursor to surgery. If you think a patient requires an MRI as there may be a need for surgery, please refer the patient in the first instance to the West Essex Orthopaedic CRS for triaging. Patients will then be triaged by an Extended Scope Practitioner (ESP's) who will be able to request an MRI if required.

This decision has been taken following a number of local audits carried out by both local GP's and ESP's which recorded the outcomes and effectiveness of direct access Spine and Knee MRI's over a set period of time. We have also discussed this option with a number of West Essex GP's, ESP's and radiologists, and the decision to restrict Back and Knee MRI's is a reflection of pathways in place in other local CCG's. Potential risks have been addressed and it has been agreed that this process will closely monitored and reviewed until April 2015 to identify any negative impacts, with the option of reversing this decision.

**Physiotherapy Service**

To support the current MSK pathways and ensure patients are able to access the correct physiotherapy services at the right time, we have included the updated SEPT MSK Physiotherapy referral Pro-Forma for the MSK Physiotherapy Service - please see Appendix 2. All referrals into the SEPT MSK Physiotherapy Service will now need to be completed using this Pro-forma and sent through the usual methods.

Please note that referral into the West Essex CRS for any Orthopaedic referral is unchanged.

**STarTBack Tool**

As you will note, the MSK Physiotherapy Pro-Forma requests a score from the Keele STarT Back Tool which we are launching across West Essex. This tool has been developed and rolled out by Keele University and is now being used as core practice by a number of clinicians across the country.

Dr Rob Gerlis – Chair  
Clare Morris – Chief Officer



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STarTBack is an example of a stratified care approach. It matches patients to treatments based on prognosis or risk of poor clinical outcome. The STarT Back approach uses a simple tool to match patients to treatment packages appropriate for them. This has been shown to:

- Significantly decrease disability from back pain
- Reduce time off work
- Save money by making better use of health resources

Taking the concept further it has been shown in the impact study that this approach can be successfully embedded into normal primary care. The STarT Back approach continues to be adopted across the UK and Internationally. The following link shares the knowledge, resources and experiences of the STarT Back approach for use by clinicians, providers, researchers and patients: <http://www.keele.ac.uk/sbst/>

Please see Appendix 3 for a hard copy of the tool, which can also be downloaded from the Keele website <http://www.keele.ac.uk/sbst/> .

Guidance for action following completion of the STarTBack tool can be found in Appendix 4. Please could you read carefully through this and contact us if there are any questions.

### **IAPT Services for Pain Management**

As you will see from the STarTBack Tool Management Options, there is an option to refer patients to the IAPT Service for specific pain management.

The MIND Life Management Skills team currently works with people who access the service and for whom chronic pain management is identified as an issue.

The IAPT service works with individuals to identify how the problem affects people's lives as often people struggle to accept any changes, try to do too much and then suffer the consequences, usually leading to worse pain, more lethargy, being less active, changes in mood-anger at the situation- and depression.

IAPT therapists will then work with the patient to look at either spreading out the activities they can do to avoid the peaks and troughs or 'wipe the slate clean' about their activities and look to see what they are able to do and make plans to reassess their lives.

The service uses Behavioral Activation, Acceptance Therapy (to work towards acceptance of change) Mindfulness and Sleep Management and also look at what thoughts people are having about their situation and support them to develop more balanced thoughts.

The Service is seeing an increasing number of people with fibromyalgia and these interventions can be helpful.

Referrals into this service can be made through the existing MIND referral routes.

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We appreciate that there are a number of changes and updates produced in this correspondence. If you have any queries or concerns, please contact Chloe Atkinson, Senior Transformation Manager at West Essex CCG at [chloe.atkinson@nhs.net](mailto:chloe.atkinson@nhs.net) , Dr Christine Moss at [christinemoss@nhs.net](mailto:christinemoss@nhs.net) or Dr Sanjeev Rana at [sanjeevrana@nhs.net](mailto:sanjeevrana@nhs.net)

Kind Regards

*Christine Moss.*

**Dr Christine Moss**

West Essex CCG Clinical Director

**Dr Sanjeev Rana**

West Essex GP and West Essex CCG Integrated Adult Pathway Clinical Lead

Enclosed:

**Appendix 1** – Direct Access MRI Referral Guidance (Feb 2015)

**Appendix 2** – SEPT MSK Physiotherapy Referral Pro-Forma

**Appendix 3** – Keele STarT Back Tool (hard copy)

**Appendix 4** – STarT Back Tool Management Guidance

**Appendix 5** – Written Information Self-Management Advice – Acute Back Pain / Exercises in water for low back pain

Dr Rob Gerlis – Chair

Clare Morris – Chief Officer