

FIRST CONTACT PRACTITIONER (FCP)

We are delighted to announce that we have employed the services of a first contact practitioner to provide much-needed additional services within the practice, that is, assessment of musculoskeletal injuries such as soft tissue injuries, sprains, strains, sports injuries, back pain, neck pain and spinal related pain in arms or legs.

Inclusion Criteria

- All soft tissue injuries, sprains, strains or sports injuries
- Arthritis - any joint
- Possible problems with muscles, ligaments, tendons or bone, eg tennis elbow, carpal tunnel syndrome, ankle sprains
- Spinal pain including lower back pain, mid-back pain and neck pain
- Spinal-related pain in arms or legs, including nerve symptoms, eg pins and needles or numbness
- Changes to walking
- Post-orthopaedic surgery

Exclusion Criteria

- Acutely unwell
- Children under 16
- Medical management of rheumatoid conditions
- Women's health, antenatal and postnatal problems
- House-bound patients
- Medication reviews
- Neurological and respiratory conditions
- Headaches
- Acute mental health crises
- Patients who do not want to see a FCP

This means it will no longer be necessary to book an appointment to see a GP for these issues.

At the moment, appointments are made to see the GP who then refers on to the musculoskeletal assessment service, which may take some weeks before an appointment is available.

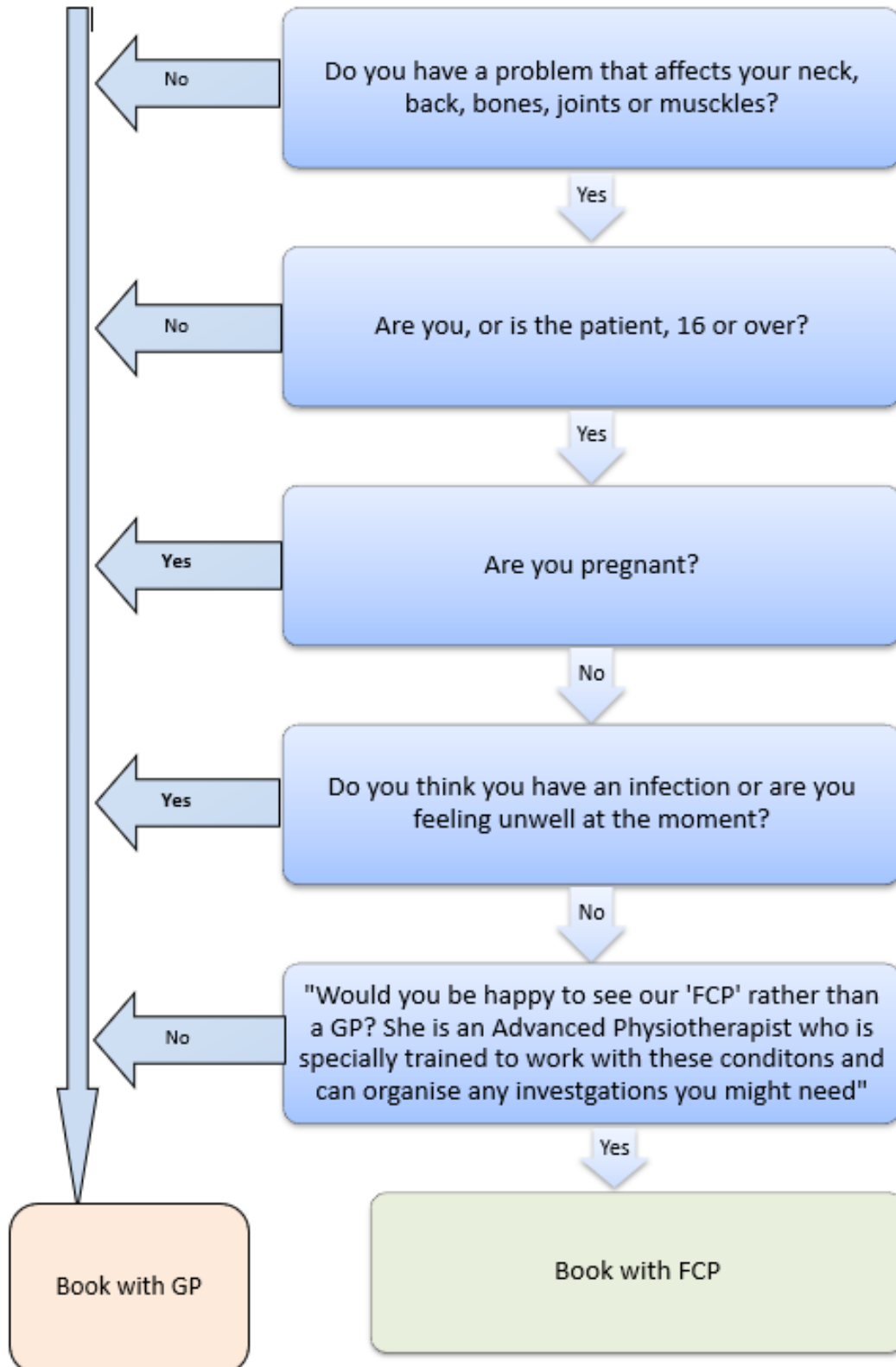
Now it will be possible to see the musculoskeletal specialist without the need to see a GP saving much time for you as a patient and for the GP

From next week. If you have any of the issues below our receptionist will offer you an appointment with our musculoskeletal specialist, who be working on Thursdays and Fridays.

If you choose to have an appointment with your GP instead you should be aware that this will probably result in the GP referring you to the FCP thereby delaying your treatment

Our receptionist will follow this protocol when they ask you the reason for your appointment

Is the First Contact Practitioner (FCP) appropriate?



The role of the First Contact Practitioner

Please note that the FCP will be assessing not providing hands on treatment

A first contact practitioner (FCP) is an experienced physiotherapist who has the advanced skills necessary to assess, diagnose and recommend appropriate treatment or referral for musculoskeletal (MSK) problems on your first contact with the surgery.

This means that a patient presenting to a GP practice with an MSK condition can see a FCP at their first appointment, accelerating their MSK assessment, treatment plan and (if appropriate) investigations and referral, along with saving time.

If appropriate, an FCP may prescribe a programme of exercises, refer for blood tests or diagnostics e.g., X-ray, administer steroid injections, refer a patient to primary care physiotherapy, or an appropriate secondary health service e.g., rheumatology or orthopaedics.

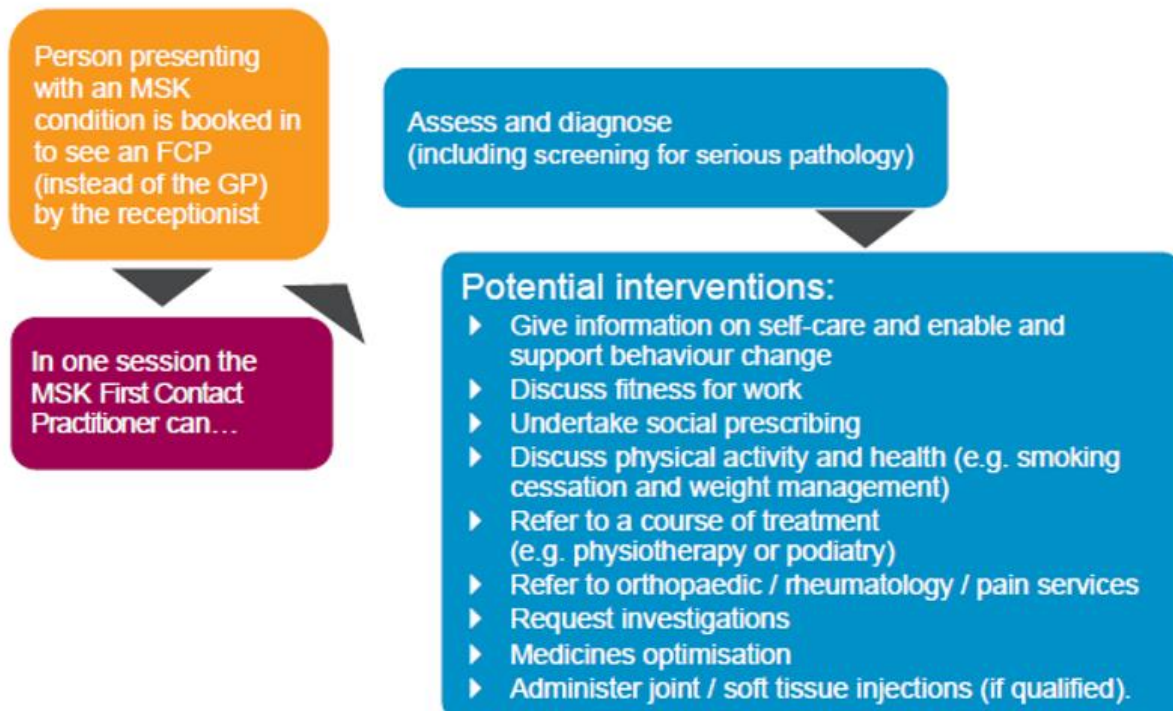


The physio will:

- **Assess you** and diagnose what's happening
- **Give expert advice** on how best to manage your condition
- **Refer you on** to specialist services if necessary.

What MSK FCP delivers

The FCP consultation will typically follow this path:



As regulated MSK practitioners, FCPs work at an Advanced Clinical Practice (ACP) level. This *“is a level of practice characterised by a high degree of autonomy and complex decision making... It includes the analysis and synthesis of complex problems across a range of settings, enabling innovative solutions to enhance people’s experience and improve outcomes”*. The skills and knowledge required for this role are attained through postgraduate-level MSK learning, which may include independent prescribing skills, injection therapy skills and imaging expertise.

The core principle of an MSK FCP service is that the patient sees the most appropriately skilled healthcare professional, in a primary care setting, as their first point of contact. The FCP approach is most efficient when multi-disciplinary primary care teams work together to share knowledge and, expertise, and pool resources. This helps to build strong working relationships, develop more effective services, and avoid duplication and inappropriate referrals and interventions.

The Right person:

- FCPs are regulated, advanced and autonomous health professionals trained to provide expert MSK assessment, diagnosis and first-line treatment, self-care advice and if required, appropriate onward referral.
- Health Education England (HEE) and NHS England (NHSE) agree that FCP roles require advanced level skills to manage individuals with undifferentiated diagnoses at the start of the pathway recognising the uncertainty and potential complexity of patients.
- FCPs working at this level have the confidence and expertise to assess, diagnose and provide first-line treatments within the appointment time without increasing referrals into secondary care or back to the GP.