

MSK Transformation Programme

– an update for primary care

We have started work to transform our musculoskeletal (MSK) services in Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin (STW) to improve the service for our patients and staff. Our ambition is to strengthen our community provision over the next five years to improve the care that people receive.

The first phase of the programme is due to go live in February. This update lets you know what is happening, and why.

The case for change

Our community MSK services in Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin include a range of specialisms and departments which are delivered by a number of different providers with different referral pathways and operational practices.

This has led to patients and clinicians often feeling frustrated by the time it takes for patient information to be passed from one service to another, resulting in delays to care and treatment.

By enabling our highly skilled teams across these services to work more closely and share patient information easily through a more streamlined MSK model, we can ensure people can access and move through and between our MSK services more smoothly.

What is happening

We are working as a system to integrate all the different community MSK services in order to have a single, streamlined service with clear accountability to improve patient experience, outcomes and service quality.

This will mean one MSK model across Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin, including therapies, rheumatology, pain services and involving closer working with our mental health teams. This service will be called Musculoskeletal Services Shropshire Telford and Wrekin (MSST).



We will put in place a Referral Centre which will be the point of access for all referrals and general enquiries across the county, providing people with a choice of different ways to get in touch, including phone and email.

People will then be triaged by a team of specialists, meaning they will be assessed, diagnosed and signposted to the most appropriate treatment, within a set time.

What are the benefits

Having one single point of referral will enable us to log and have oversight of all referrals in one place to ensure that everyone has equal access to the same high level of clinical care and treatment they need wherever they live in the county.

The care that people will receive will be organised through shared decision making and patient choice as well as tailored support to manage their own conditions through self-care, by providing the right advice and therapies.

Patients will be better supported to manage their own conditions through access to advice and therapies and we will reduce or prevent people's need for surgery with earlier therapy intervention.

All our staff will have access to a virtual MSK multi-disciplinary team to provide advice and mentoring so that they can support patients living with MSK conditions with the most appropriate care and information.

As part of this work, we will strengthen our rheumatology service. We are building on the best practice across our service and identifying areas of inequality to improve the way the service runs and making improvements to our Rheumatology helpline.

We are not proposing to reduce services nor limit the treatment options that are provided.

Working as a system

Integrated care will be delivered by highly skilled teams working together and supported by the MSK Transformation Programme.

This model will ensure consistency across providers removing organisational barriers that impact on care given to patients.

We will sustain transformational change and service improvements that have been demonstrated in the NHS response to the COVID-19 pandemic such as remote working and telephone and video-consultations to avoid the need for travel. Face to face consultations will still be available for those that need one.

These changes will ensure that we make the best use of resources.

What is next

This is just the start. In years two and three of the programme, we will put plans in place to:

- enhance our orthopaedics services
- deliver an outpatients improvement project
- strengthen the support available for Primary Care
- consider potential work focussing on falls, fractures and osteoporosis