

# Direct access Musculoskeletal Assessment

## First Contact Practitioner pilot

Your surgery is taking part in a pilot scheme to look at how treating muscle and joint pain in a different way may benefit patients. The aim is to provide early access to specialist assessment.

### What is it?

The scheme enables patients with muscle and joint problems to see a **First Contact Practitioner** for the assessment and management of aches and pains, without having to see your GP first. This makes it easier and quicker for you to get the care you need.

### What is a First Contact Practitioner?

A **First Contact Practitioner** is a highly experienced physiotherapist who is able to work beyond the normal role of a physiotherapist. Experience and additional skills (such as prescribing medication, joint injections and requesting investigations) enable them to manage most conditions, without needing to involve your GP.

### How do I access the service?

Contact your GP practice as normal, who will book you an appointment with a **First Contact Practitioner**, without needing to see your GP first. The service is not available for people who are under 12 or acutely unwell.

### What should I expect?

- You will be asked to describe your symptoms and how they started
- An expert assessment will confirm a diagnosis
- If needed, pain relief can be prescribed in most cases
- You will be given advice and treatment based on the best evidence for managing your problem
- Investigations (scans, xrays, blood tests) can be requested if required
- You can be referred to other services, if appropriate (such as Orthopaedics, Podiatry or Physiotherapy).