

Enter & View Report

Service	Croydon University Hospital Physiotherapy department
Address	530 London Rd, Croydon, Surrey, CR7 7YE
Manager	Mathew Wyatt - Clinical and Operational Lead MSK Therapies
Date and time of visit	Tuesday 17 th November at 10:45am
Status of visit	Announced
Healthwatch Croydon Enter & View team - Authorised Representatives	Annamika Koomoshan, Anne Milstead
Lead Authorised Representative	Annamika Koomoshan
Healthwatch Croydon contact details	Healthwatch Croydon, 24 George Street, Croydon, CR0 1PB

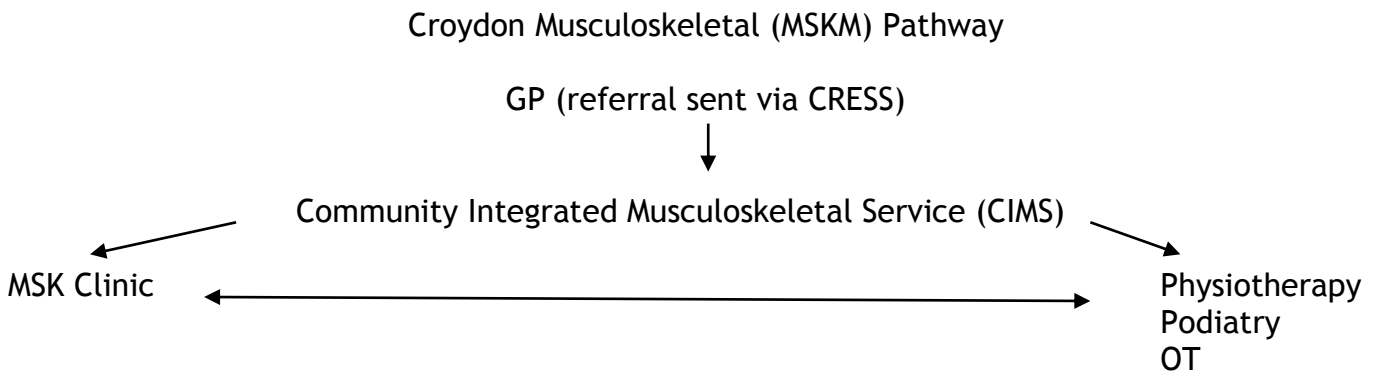
Reason: Healthwatch Croydon trends analysis report showed a high number of people have had problems with booking appointments.

Acknowledgements: Healthwatch Croydon would like to thank Mr Wyatt the Clinical and Operational Lead for the MSK Therapies for agreeing to the visit. Also, we would like to thank the Physiotherapy department staff, outpatients and carers for their cooperation during the visit.

Purpose of the visit: The Health and Social Care Act allows Healthwatch Croydon representatives to observe service delivery and to talk to service users, their families and relatives on premises such as hospitals, residential homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, optometrists and pharmacies. The visits can happen if people tell us there is a problem with a service, but equally, they can take place when services have a good reputation - so we can learn about shared examples of what we are doing well from the perspective of the people who experience the service first hand. On this occasion, 2 Authorised Representatives (including a Healthwatch staff member) carried out observations and engaged with outpatients, carers and staff. Local Healthwatch representatives carry out these visits to health and social care services to find out how they are being run and make recommendations on areas for improvement if required. Healthwatch Enter and View visits are not intended to specifically identify safeguarding issues. However, if safeguarding concerns arise during a visit they are reported in accordance with Healthwatch safeguarding policy. If at any time an Authorised Representative observes a potential safeguarding concern, they shall inform their lead and service manager. The lead Authorised Representative will then end the visit. In addition, if any member of staff wishes to raise a safeguarding issue about their employer, they will be directed to Croydon Council's Safeguarding Team.

About the service

The Physiotherapy Department is part of the Community Integrated Musculoskeletal Service (CIMS), which replaces the previous Musculoskeletal Physiotherapy, Hand Therapy, Rheumatology and MCATS services.



The areas which the Physiotherapy Department at Croydon University Hospital covers are:

- Musculoskeletal Team
- Physiotherapy - treatment or self-management
- Hand Therapy Department
- Gym - Group circuit sessions which provides 8 to 7 rehab session per week from Monday to Friday
- Back Clinic
- Shoulder
- Hydro Poll

The Paediatric Therapy Service is part of Physiotherapy but not part of the Musculoskeletal Service.

The majority of referrals are either for physiotherapy or musculoskeletal. Patients receive an appointment letter through the post.

GPs refer outpatients with back pain or knee pain. They are offered school sessions to self-manage their condition and are educated in pain management.

Outpatients are involved in planning their treatment and are offered choices from:

- School Sessions
- Self-management
- One to one support

Criteria for assessment for Musculoskeletal clinic:

- Assessment for Musculoskeletal conditions are those that have failed primary care management (including physiotherapy) or who need a specialist option and/or investigation.

Challenges:

The Authorised Representatives were informed that the department had a cancellation rate of 10% late cancellations and 10% fail to attend due to sickness, work or non-attendance. The department are considering different ways that patients could inform them if they were going to cancel to alleviate the problem. Physiotherapy receives the bulk of departmental referrals and demand has increased, whilst resources and budgets remained the same.

Referrals from GPs:

From the GP, it takes CRESS 1 week to send the referral and then up to 8 weeks for an appointment. On some occasions the referrals are delayed at the GP practice by a couple of weeks due to weekly uploading by GP practice, before it is forwarded to CRESS.

Other delays can occur when the GP practices do not complete the referral forms correctly and the department has to go back for further information. GPs refer via the e-referral system (replaced "Choose and book" system).

Observation:

Reception and waiting area: Reception staff dealt with outpatients in a polite and friendly manner. Outpatients did not wait long for their appointments.

Feedback from outpatients

Question	Response from outpatients
How satisfied were you with being referred for an appointment?	<p>"I did not have to wait long; I was referred from another hospital."</p> <p>"I waited 18 weeks for an appointment at another hospital. From being transferred to this hospital I am very satisfied with this appointment, staff are very helpful. I waited 1 month for an appointment here. I received an assessment and physio at Leander Road then referred to Croydon University Hospital."</p>
How easy was it to book an appointment?	"I received an allocated appointment letter through the post."
How helpful are staff?	"Staff are very helpful."
Are you happy with your treatment?	<p>"They know best, it's going very well. I have used the therapy pool; the therapy staff are very caring."</p> <p>"Overall my experience is very good, no medication required."</p>

The Authorised Representatives did not view any of the treatment areas as they were in-use at the time of the visit.

Feedback from staff

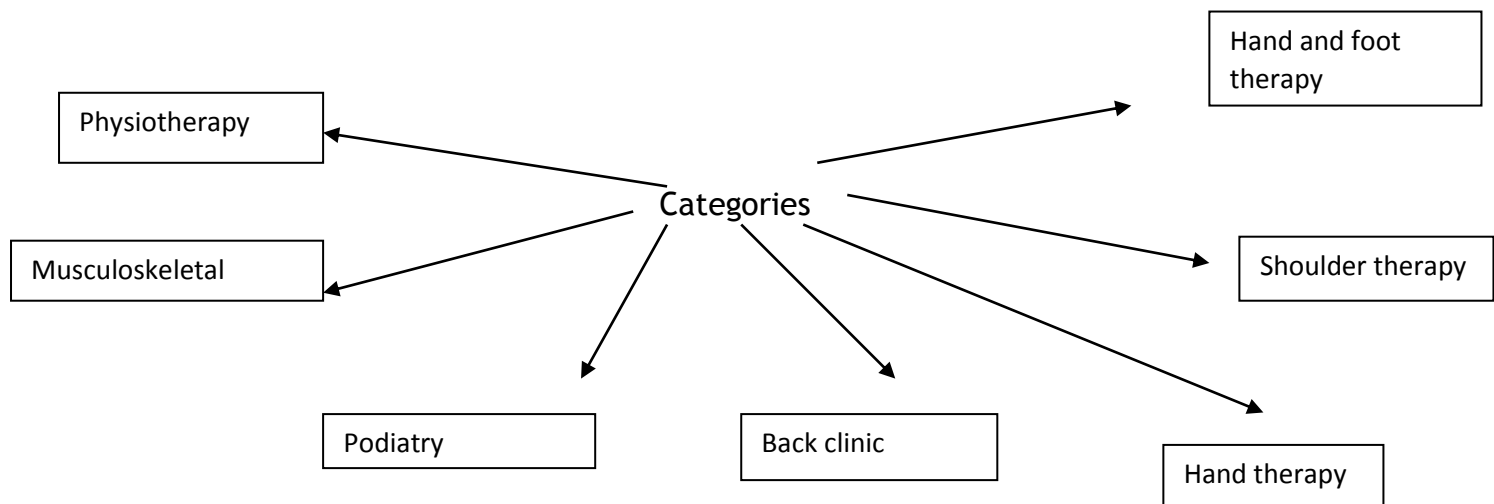
Question	Response from staff
1. How do you handle complaints?	Staff aim to deal with complaints internally. If the complaints cannot be dealt with by staff, the patient is provided with information on the PALS service.
2. What challenges have you found in outpatients appointment booking?	The challenges are that patients cannot book appointments. Previously the waiting time was 18 weeks; this has now been reduced to 6 weeks. The phone lines used to go straight through to reception which led to a delay in patients being able to book their appointments. Now the phone calls go straight through to the Admin Hub.
3. What is working well?	An existing staff member moved from another area of the service to cover the reception area.
4. Any challenges or improvements?	Staff challenges are with patients trying to book all community services. This has repercussions on the large quantity of calls received through the Admin hub which results in the phone lines being busy and outpatients complaining. The Admin Hub has one number, one phone line, 3 to 4 members of staff deal with the phone calls and manage the referrals. The phone line system does not allow call waiting or for a voice mail to be set up. Another challenge which the staff face is dealing with the slow IT system. On top of this it is a lengthy process for staff logging an outpatient referral.
5. Are staff asked for their feedback or suggestions	Staff are not asked for their input, feedback or suggestions.

The Musculoskeletal clinical assessment provides a triage service staffed by Physiotherapy Consultants but this is not explained to patients at point of referral.

Interface services for GPs

1st triage - come from CRESS (electronically)

2nd filter - 1st line of triage (100 referrals received per day)



Musculoskeletal filters through to secondary care such as:

- Injection therapy
- Orthotics
- Surgery is a possible consideration

Other comments

The Authorised Representatives were informed that there is more demand for Physio; they have the same resources and no additional income therefore putting added pressure on the department.

Conclusion

Positives

- Patients fed back that they received a good service and were pleased with the treatment received
- With support from clinicians, patients are consulted about their treatment in the hospital
- Experienced clinicians
- The team meet with consultants regularly to discuss outpatients' care

Recommendations

- Problems with outpatients getting through to the Admin Hub.

Recommendation: To look for ways to reduce the number of outpatients complaining about trying to contact the Admin Hub regarding their appointments. The Admin Hub to have more staff and more phone lines to manage the demand for the service.

Response from Physiotherapy: The current phone and IT system slows down the Admin Team in dealing with referrals and phone calls from patients.

- Outpatients complaining about booking appointments.

Recommendation: To have a call waiting, voice mail system for outpatients to contact the Admin Hub, ideally to have more staff managing the phone lines.

Response from Physiotherapy: The department have an email and web contact form. Firstly the phone line system is old and it does not have the capacity to install a call waiting or a voice mail system and is having repercussions on the department. There is one phone line that works on a 'call hunting' system which diverts calls to six phone lines and is open from Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm. A minimum of three members of staff are required to cover the phone line.

Due to the limited resources of the department, the manager is having to decide on whether to recruit a clinician or recruit part time staff to cover the demand of the Admin hub. The department is reviewing options of combining two area to utilise resource and budgets.

The Admin Hub have an email address and web contact form for outpatients; outpatients to receive a response within 72 hrs.

- The feedback from staff were that the clinical letter is a generic letter which does not explain what type of specialism the outpatient is being referred to. Staff receive regular complaints from outpatients.

Recommendation: To tailor the letter for the appropriate departments.

Response from Physiotherapy: The IT system which seems to be a centralised service of the NHS does not allow staff to alter the generic letters.

Disclaimer

This report is a representative sample of the views of the outpatients, carers and staff that Healthwatch Croydon spoke to within this timeframe and does not represent the views of all the outpatients, carers and staff at Croydon University Hospital Physiotherapy department. The observations made in this report only relate to the visit carried out at Physiotherapy department at Croydon University Hospital on Tuesday 17th November at 10:45am.