

What is a First contact Physiotherapist?

The service provides direct access to a specialist first contact physiotherapist for initial assessment for musculoskeletal conditions. It is designed to be a face to face triage service rather than a traditional treatment service. The First contact physiotherapist role is similar to the highly successful introduction of nurse practitioner role in primary care.

The first contact physiotherapist will only see musculoskeletal conditions such as back pain, neck pain, tennis elbow and sports injuries to name a few examples.

This is not a physiotherapy treatment service, if a patient requires ongoing treatment they should and will still be referred onto the standard physiotherapy team. The introduction of FCP's allows for an accurate assessment and diagnosis to be made early, screening for non MSK conditions and red flags, and the patient given the most effective and clinically appropriate treatment.

FCP's are experienced clinicians and are fully autonomous practitioners. Some of them are able to inject and prescribe. They also have expert knowledge of where to refer patients to be seen by the most appropriate clinician at the most appropriate time.

Some guidance on patients who are appropriate for FCP:

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All soft tissue injuries, sprains, strains or sports injuries (that do not require A & E or minor injuries) • Shoulder, elbow, hand, hip, knee, ankle pain • Arthritis – any joint • Possible problems with muscles, ligaments, tendons or bone, e.g 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 e.g pins and needles or numbness • Post-orthopaedic surgery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patients who are already seeing /have seen the GP/PA/ANP for this problem • Patients who do not have joint, muscle or bone pain • Acutely unwell e.g fever, sweats, temperature • Open wounds, facial/head injuries • Children under 16 • Abdominal pain • Chest pain • Medical management of rheumatoid conditions • Women's health, antenatal and postnatal problems • House-bound patients • Medication reviews • Neurological and respiratory conditions • Headaches, migraine & dizziness • Acute mental health crises