

# Musculoskeletal Transformation Programme

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## Frequently asked questions

Question	Answer
What are Musculoskeletal services?	Musculoskeletal (MSK) services treat conditions which affect bones, joints, and muscles, as well as rarer autoimmune diseases and back pain.
Why are you transforming Musculoskeletal services in Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin?	<p>There are a number of reasons why we need to provide our Musculoskeletal services differently:</p> <p><b>Our services and hard-working staff are struggling to meet the growing demand.</b> In line with the rest of the country, our services are under huge pressure due to staff shortages and record levels of demand. Dealing with the pandemic has impacted the amount of planned care the NHS has been able to provide, furthermore our local population is ageing and more people are living with long term conditions, including those affecting their bones, joints and muscles.</p> <p><b>Our services currently operate differently and aren't as joined up as they could be.</b> We have looked at patterns across a person's journey through MSK and found that some people need care and treatment from multiple services, for example orthopaedics and physiotherapy, which have different ways of referring people, recording information, and running their services.</p> <p>This has led to people's experiences being different depending on how and where they access services, with individuals and staff often feeling frustrated by the time it takes for information to be passed from one service to another, resulting in delays to care and treatment.</p> <p>Often a person is referred back to their GP to make a further referral rather than the services working together and communicating to ensure their needs are met. This is inefficient in terms of waiting time, capacity and cost for both the NHS and the individual.</p>

<p>What does this mean for patients?</p>	<p>For patients, this means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced waiting times for first appointments</li> <li>• Access to the right care first time</li> <li>• Smoother transfers between services</li> <li>• Equitable access to services across the county</li> <li>• Better support to manage their own conditions through self-care and earlier therapy support</li> <li>• Reduced need for surgery.</li> </ul>
<p>How will the referral process be different?</p>	<p>People will continue to be referred by their GP or healthcare professional but rather than being referred into one of a number of different services for assessment, they will be referred to a team of people made up of different MSK specialisms – this is known as a multi-disciplinary triage team.</p> <p>The triage team will be able to provide a wider assessment of a person’s needs, based on the information in the referral, so that the right decision about their care is made first time. They will also be able to add their information to a shared electronic patient system that all our MSK services will be able to access.</p>
<p>Why do we need one referral process and one electronic patient record system across all our MSK services?</p>	<p>Having the same referral and triage process for the whole of our county means that people will have equal access to MSK services regardless of where they live in Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin.</p> <p>One electronic patient record system for all our MSK services will mean people can be transferred smoothly between services more quickly.</p> <p>It will also mean we will have better oversight of all our MSK patients so that we can spot inequalities or issues that need looking at.</p>
<p>How will people be supported to manage their condition?</p>	<p>In future, patients will be offered earlier access to therapies and be provided with the information and support they need to manage their own conditions through self-care.</p>
<p>How have people and communities been involved?</p>	<p>To help shape the transformation of our Musculoskeletal services in Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin, we have gathered and considered people’s experiences about our current services and their views about what they will look like in the future.</p>

	<p>This included a public survey, community engagement activity, and analysing feedback received through our Patient Advice and Liaison Service.</p> <p>As the programme develops we will continue to involve people and our communities.</p>
What does this mean for staff?	<p>This is the first time staff across all organisations will work together as a system to implement a big transformation programme.</p> <p>Staff will have the opportunity to work alongside different organisations and different speciality teams to provide holistic support to MSK patients.</p>
Are the locations of our services changing?	No. There are currently no plans to change the locations of our services.
Will this new way of working mean staff will be subject to TUPE?	No. Although staff will work more closely with teams from other providers, they will continue to be hosted by their current employer (TUPE will not apply).
Will staff have to work differently to the way they do now?	<p>Yes. Staff will have the opportunity to work more closely with other teams to provide more holistic care for our patients.</p> <p>We will also be introducing some new ways of working, such as the electronic patient record system which will enable all MSK staff to have a full picture of a person's care and support.</p>
What support is available to staff?	<p>Working in these new ways will require training and support.</p> <p>Support is being provided by the system People Team but staff should speak to their line manager if they have any concerns or questions.</p> <p>Training on the new electronic patient record system will be made available to staff before implementation.</p> <p>All our staff will have access to a virtual MSK multi-disciplinary team to provide advice and mentoring so that they can support people living with MSK conditions with the most appropriate care and information.</p> <p>We are also setting up a workforce sharing agreement so that we have a workforce that can work flexibly to meet the needs of the new service model and our population.</p>
Does this mean you will need less staff to run the services?	No. We will need to recruit additional staff to deliver this new way of working.

When will all the changes take place?	This is a five year programme which will be rolled out in three phases, starting with the referral, triage and therapies services. Phase 1 will be launched later this year.
Why has it taken so long?	<p>The last couple of years have presented different challenges - including Covid, workforce pressures, and increasing demand - which have all impacted on the progress of the MSK programme.</p> <p>However, staff involved in the programme have continued to work incredibly hard to design the model and scope the workforce and systems needed during this time.</p>