



# Annual Report

## 2021 / 2022

Sussex MSK Partnership  

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East





# Helping patients to stay healthy

**Patients are at the heart of everything we do.** We've been listening to patients since the service began and using their feedback to shape the service and develop patient information and advice on managing conditions.

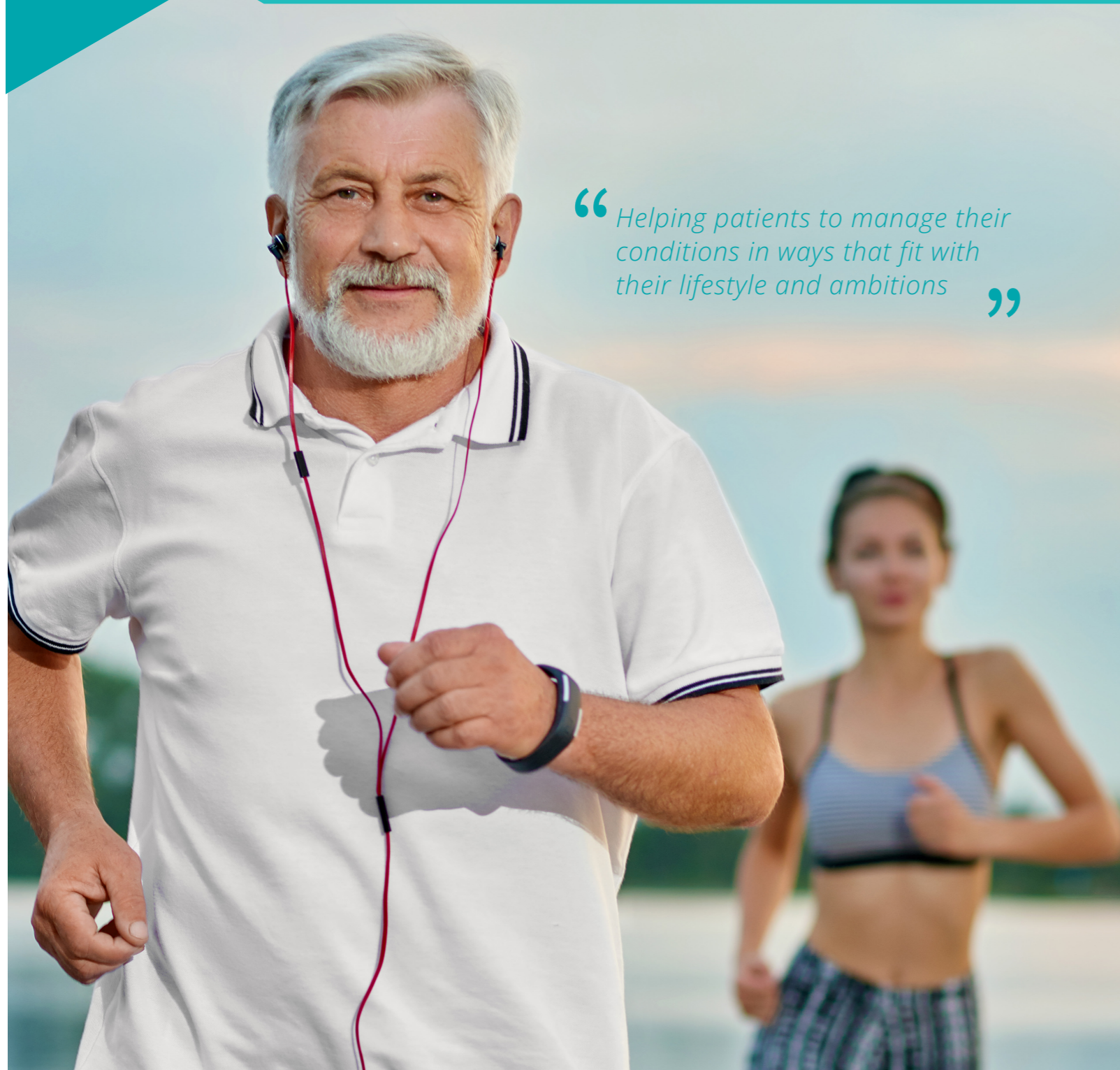
With longer waiting times, caused by the pandemic, we improved the website to provide easy to access support. Patients wanted exercises with pictures that were simple to

follow, so we worked with the pain team, to develop on-line self help resources, approved by our expert patients. This is part of a package designed to give patients better control of their conditions and the means to an active lifestyle.

**Rachel Slack, Patient Experience Lead**

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“ *Helping patients to manage their conditions in ways that fit with their lifestyle and ambitions* ”

## About Us

The service was originally commissioned to reduce variation in practice because spend on secondary care in East Sussex was higher than in similar areas. Horder Healthcare, Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, Sussex Community Foundation Trust and Brighton and Hove Integrated Care Service formed a partnership and in 2014 Sussex MSK Partnership East (SMSKPE) was awarded the contract to provide integrated Musculoskeletal services to High Weald, Lewes and Havens and Eastbourne, Hailsham and Seaford CCGs. The service delivery model is based on evidence-based clinical pathways and enabling informed patient choice.

This year the team worked hard to manage waiting times, responding proactively to change in referral patterns brought about by the pandemic. Our mission is unchanged, **we put patients at the heart of everything we do** and aim to be responsive, flexible providers, and reliable and creative business partners.

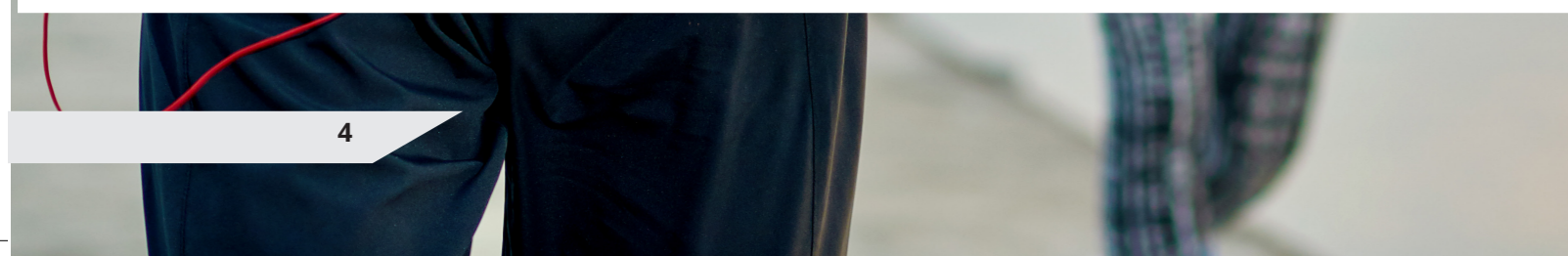
As we move forward building a new future for MSK services in Sussex we will continue to improve clinical pathways, promote codesign, tackle health inequalities and encourage innovation.

**Lorraine Reid, Managing Director**



## Mission & Vision

To enable the best healthcare and support for people with musculoskeletal conditions.



## Ruth's story

“ I had been suffering from excruciating pain across many of my joints for years and had given up on any sort of resolution. It had started affecting my personal life, relationships with friends and family were breaking down and work was suffering. I was beginning to think that it was the end of my working life and the thought of this was creating a lot of anxiety and depression.



I was referred into the MSK service for potential physio and/or investigation into my joints in 2020 but after further investigations, the conclusion was reached that there was nothing physical that could be done to resolve the problems and pain I was having. I was really disheartened until I was referred to the Pain Team. Following a thorough assessment with them in early 2021 I was referred to undertake the pain management programme. It has been the best thing that has happened to me. It was an amazing experience and has taught me so many skills that I am able to utilise daily and has enabled me to carry on working, something I genuinely thought was going to have to end and I didn't know how to cope with that.

I have been enabled again and feel like I was offered a second chance at life. ”

*“I was very impressed with the excellent service. Everything was carried out smoothly, efficiently and speedily. I could not have asked for more. Well done to the team and all involved. Thank you. In my opinion nothing more could have been done to make my experience any better - it was first-class in every respect”*

## A Message From Our Chair

Much has also been achieved with consolidating partnership arrangements within the local areas. This year saw the mutual exit of partners from the collective arrangements between Central and East Partnerships. Throughout this year, SMSKPE continued to maintain a robust, stable and highly effective partnership between Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (SPFT) and Horder MSK Limited. This is known as the joint venture. SPFT signalled early its intention to exit the joint venture, the legacy of this partnership will be felt for the remainder of the contract and we are grateful for the Trust's stewardship and the opportunity to pave the way in linking physical and mental well-being in the delivery of MSK services.

We are delighted to report that from April 2022 onwards, East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust has joined Horder MSK Limited in a new partnership to oversee the MSK Partnership East contract and services. This will bring new opportunities to patients and services.

The board would like to thank all of those involved in the successful delivery of MSK services in what has been another challenging year.

**Annie Ralph, Independent Chair**



## Experience counts

Patient reported experience measures (PREMs) are used to assess the quality of their healthcare.

**99%**  
Of patients report the Patient Care Advisor team provide a courteous and helpful service.

**96%**  
Of patients feel involved with decisions about their care.

**95%**  
Of patient responses rated the service as good or very good.

**95%**  
Of patients are satisfied with time, date and location of their appointment.

# Clinical Referral And Assessment Service



*“ I was treated with friendliness and respect at all times. It was all made clear to me and I could not fault anything, everyone was very helpful throughout ”*



Every day the team answers 125 telephone calls, responds to 200 emails and books 100 appointments.

The Clinical Referral and Assessment Service, better known as the CRAS team, is the heart of the MSK service.

The team aims to ensure that our patients get the right care, in the right place, at the right time and have a great experience during their time in the service. They are dedicated to making every patient contact count and supporting the patient throughout their MSK journey from referral to discharge. They join up patient care with other services, empower patients to access the right care pathway for their needs and keep them well informed. The team also ensures that MSK clinics are run efficiently and effectively to maximise utilisation and minimise DNA rates.



This year, as referrals returned to pre-pandemic levels and the pressure on waiting times increased, the CRAS team went the extra mile to keep the things on track and ensure our patients get the treatment and care they need.

**Alister Meades, Head of Service**

## Jan's story

*“ I was a full-time carer for my husband up until he passed away. When I injured my shoulder moving him, I didn't get any treatment as I thought waiting lists would be too long and I wasn't keen on leaving my home. In fact, it was nine months after he died before I felt able to get myself sorted out. My GP referred me for physiotherapy, the MSK service contacted me and asked if I had a preference about where I was treated because waiting times varied. I have my own transport, so I said I didn't mind at all.*

I was sent an appointment in Wadhurst and got my treatment from a lovely physiotherapist there. Within a few weeks my shoulder had improved considerably. Feeling physically better helped me so much to get over my loss. I would recommend seeking treatment sooner, rather than leaving things the way I did. I tell my friends to ask about waiting times, if they are happy to travel a bit further to get their appointment.

# Service Timeline

Service goes live.  
 Single point of access.  
 New care pathways.  
 Physiotherapy redesigned.  
 Patient forums introduced.

Multi-provider Quality Meetings commence.  
 CEC protocols introduced.

Independent review demonstrates sustainable progress.  
 2 year extension awarded.  
 First Contact Practitioners begin working in primary care.

Sussex wide MSK redesign begins.  
 SMSKPE contract extended by 1 year.  
 SPFT exit the Joint Venture Agreement held with Horder MSK Ltd.  
 ESHT enter a partnership alongside Horder MSK Ltd.

2016/2017

2018/2019

2020/2021

2015/2016

2017/2018

2019/2020

2021/2022

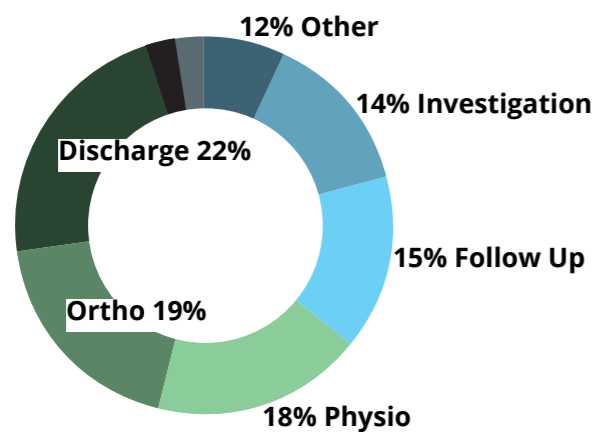
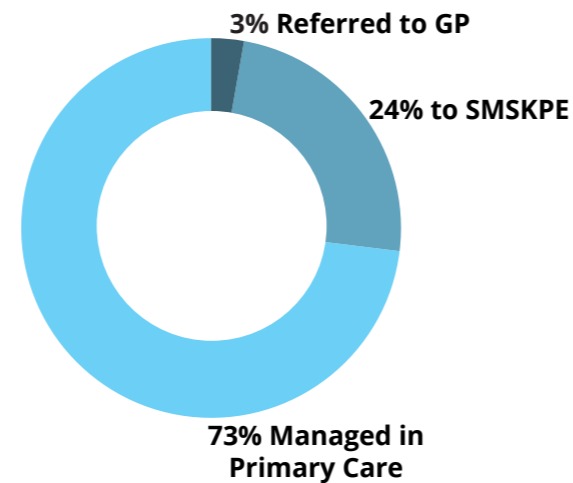
Self management programme.  
 Shared decision making.  
 Rheumatology pathway.

Community services expanded.  
 'I want my hips and knees to hurt less' booklet introduced.  
 'Living Well with Less Pain' patient educational events.

SMSKPE supports NHS response in pandemic.  
 Physiotherapy self-referral introduced.

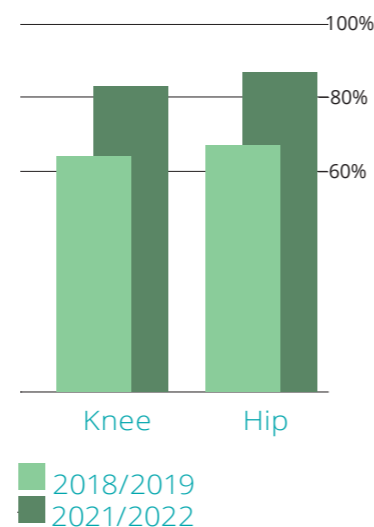
### First Contact Practitioner (FCP) clinical efficiencies

Local FCP services have continued to grow and are delivering specialist MSK care to patients from their first appointment. By capturing and analysing data, through our regional FCP clinical forums, we have been able to reduce variation in patient care. This chart shows that very few patients treated by an FCP need to be referred on.



### Advanced Practitioner (AP) clinical efficiencies

AP pathway leads monitor variation in individual clinician practice by looking at the use of imaging, investigations and follow up appointment rates. Targeted training has helped ensure a high standard of skill and a consistent approach to patient care. This is key to ensuring effective treatment and good patient experience.



### Knee and Hip conversions to surgery

Knee and hip teams are passionate about continuously improving the care offered to patients prior to referring for surgery. Enabling access to specific exercises; advice on pain management; diet; weight; smoking cessation helps improve pain and function despite arthritis still being present in the joints. Some patients still require surgery, however our data over time demonstrates that the patients referred on are those for whom surgery is the most suitable option.

# Quality

This year services felt the impact of Covid-19. Not only were waiting times longer, social isolation took its toll on our patients' wellbeing, with many seeking help much later into the course of their condition. Our providers went the extra mile, working extremely hard to meet patient need in a timely and clinically appropriate manner.



### Community pain services

Patient care needs are now coordinated by our community teams. Injections are being given in a community setting, complemented by pain education programmes, one-to-one therapy and psychology sessions along with medicines management services. This has improved theatre capacity and is helping to reduce waiting lists.

### Physiotherapy

SMSKPE uses a number of different providers to ensure that physio is geographically accessible and waiting times are good. Representatives from each of the six providers come together on a regular basis to review clinical outcomes to ensure excellent practice and consistently positive patient experience.

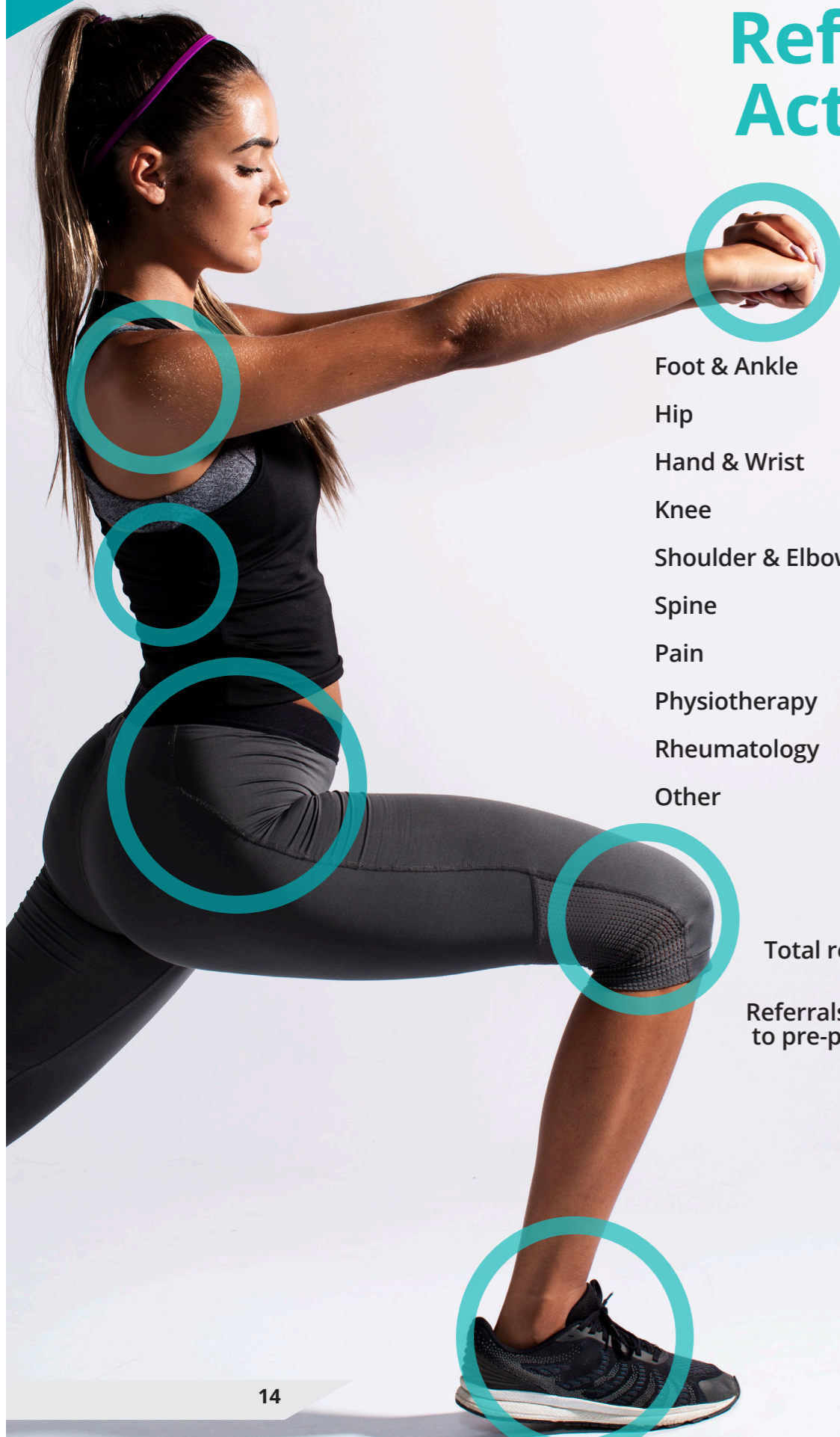
### Looking forward

This year we have been involved in developing a Sussex-wide MSK service model. The team at SMSKPE supported this programme by co-chairing workshops and participating in the various workstreams involved in designing the way MSK care will be delivered in the future.

The Sussex Integrated Care System has been successful in securing NHS funding to use a digital programme which will enable remote digital collection of patient outcomes and experience and give a better understanding of the value of local MSK services. Our clinical teams are involved in testing and evaluating this new approach.

In addition, we regularly contribute to regional 'MSK Community of Practice' workshops, learning from and influencing treatment and care nationally.

**Matthew Carr, Clinical Director**



## Referral Activity

Foot & Ankle	- 1815
Hip	- 2032
Hand & Wrist	- 2605
Knee	- 3453
Shoulder & Elbow	- 1859
Spine	- 3734
Pain	- 2407
Physiotherapy	- 13972
Rheumatology	- 2836
Other	- 345

Total referrals 35058

Referrals have returned to pre-pandemic levels

## Outcomes



Internal Referral	1%
Discharged	1.5%
Podiatry/Orthotics	1.5%
Pain Services	4%
Returned To Referrer	8%
Treatment Complete	17.5%
Secondary Care	20%
Physiotherapy	46.5%

**583**

Plaudits received

*"It is the best clinical service I have ever experienced. All staff are fantastic, friendly and welcoming."*

**45**

Formal complaints received

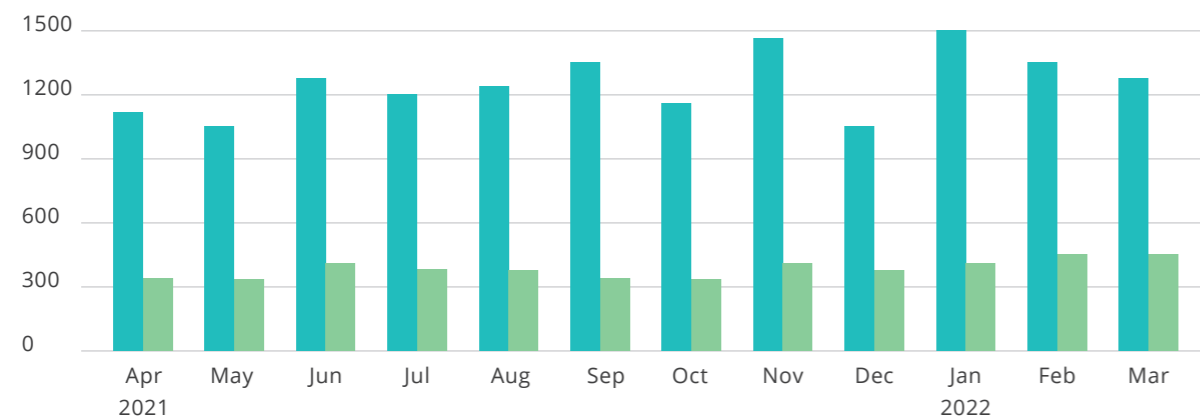
**100%** acknowledged within 3 working days

**98%** responded to within 25 working days



# Performance

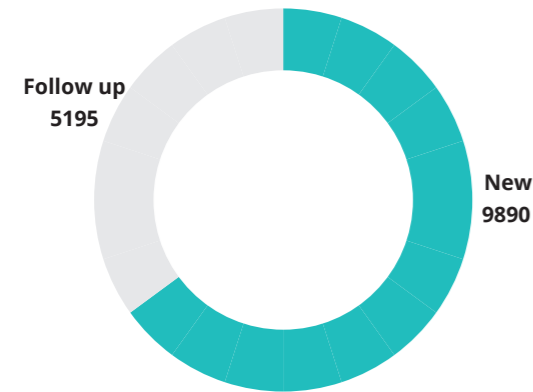
**Advanced Practitioner (AP) / Consultant - community clinic attendance over time**



**New / Follow up AP community appointments attended**

Workforce challenges have affected waiting times, however, there are several clinician-led waiting list initiatives including the Advanced Osteoarthritis pathway and a direct listing pilot, helping squeeze some additional capacity.

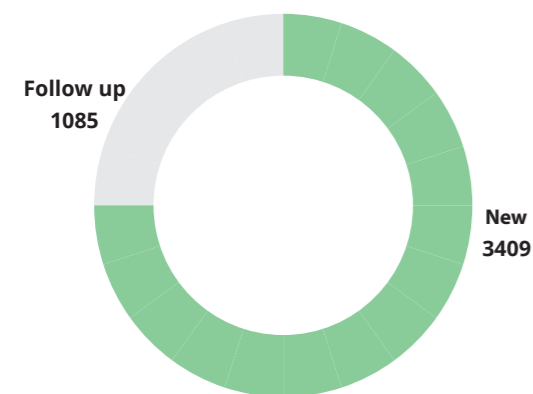
**On average, patients were seen within nine weeks for a first appointment (8 weeks 5 days).**



**New / Follow up Consultant community appointments attended**

Patients waiting for community consultant appointments have been well managed throughout the year.

**New appointments were offered, on average, within four weeks (3 weeks, 5 days).**



# Finance

In 21/22 activity recovered to above pre-pandemic levels. This represented a 48% increase in the number of referrals. Secondary Care Contract (surgical spend) increased by 84% and funding to providers was in line with nationally agreed contracts and inflators.

Integrated Care Contract spend rose as a higher volume of patients required diagnostic imaging and physiotherapy. Overhead spend fell following the mid-year cessation of an IT management fee contract.

The CCG agreed to underwrite all expenditure and a £60k surplus.



**Neil Waller, Finance Manager and Deputy Managing Director**

**Summary profit and loss**

	18/19 £'000	19/20 £'000	20/21 £'000	21/22 £'000
<b>Income</b>	35,630	35,816	24,961	38,375
<b>Expenditure</b>				
Block Physio Contracts	2,555	2,540	2,480	2,507
Secondary Care Contracts	25,807	26,414	15,683	28,871
Integrated Care Contracts	3,470	3,479	3,619	3,904
Overheads	3,368	3,365	3,132	3,033
	35,200	35,798	24,914	38,315
<b>Surplus</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>60</b>

## One Team

2021 brought everyone back to the office. The team reviewed and recommitted to its vision and defined and refreshed the standards expected of everyone.

### > 94% Staff retention

Excellent uptake of internal opportunities and all vacancies were filled promptly.

### What is it like working at SMSKPE ?

**"I have a clear understanding of what my role and responsibilities are and work to manage these on a daily basis."**

"I am well supported by my line manager and enjoy working at SMSKPE. The team (SLT and CRAS) is strong and supportive"

**"Great environment, innovative organisation, strong values and beliefs"**

"Always changing, always looking to improve. Challenging and a sense of achievement most days."

### Our results

**> 99% Clinic utilisation  
< 5% DNA rates**

The result of having a single point of access team who put **'the patient at the heart of everything we do'**. Maximising all available resources.



### They said, we did

The annual staff survey continued to evidence a strong commitment to patients with 90% agreeing their role makes a difference, and that patients are involved in decisions about their care.

**However the team wanted to be involved in decision-making and contribute to improvements.**

We all worked together to design a plan that enables: greater specialisation of role, targeted personal development, open dialogue and involvement.

## Staying Well

The last two years influenced the way we all live and work, there has been an increased appetite for flexible working. A desire for more physical and mental wellbeing resources was identified. This inspired the addition of a wellbeing room and two colleagues trained as Mental Health First Aiders.

**" The old training room has been completely transformed into a calming, reflective space. We encourage everyone to use it, particularly when things are a bit hectic. "**



**It occurred to me, while attending a course about the welfare of our patients, we could also apply the learning to our staff. Their welfare is really important to consider as we are always busy which can be stressful.**






We are lucky in that we have a few breakout rooms and so one of these was converted into our 'Wellbeing Room'. This offers a variety of different relaxing activities that can help to alleviate stress. People can use it just to re-centre and relax, listen to soothing music or read.

**Claire Kulsdom, Patient Care Advisor, Mental Health First Aider**

Sussex MSK Partnership  
East



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