

Spine Service

East Sussex MSK Community Partnership (ESMSK) is a local NHS referral management service for patients with musculoskeletal (MSK) conditions. Commonly, this refers to problems with bones, joints and muscles.

You have been referred to our Spine Service so that our specialist clinicians can investigate and provide a care plan for your condition.

You have been booked into one of our community Spine clinics. Rather than attending an outpatient clinic in a hospital setting, our clinics are held in the community or within GP practices, which usually means that you can be seen by a specialist closer to your home.

What should I bring with me to my appointment?

Please bring information of any medication that you are currently taking to aid in your assessment.

The clinician may request a physical examination. With your consent, you may be asked to remove some items of clothing to help with this. Therefore, you may wish to wear loose fitted clothing which can be easily lifted or removed.

If you require a chaperone or translator, please contact our Patient Care Advisor team to let us know as soon as possible. See '**Getting in touch**' on your appointment letter.

What can I expect to happen in my appointment?

Your first appointment could last for up to 45 minutes. You will be seen by one of our specialist Spine Advanced Practitioners (APs). APs are musculoskeletal experts who have specialist, in-depth training in orthopaedic conditions. They will ask you about your symptoms and your medical history. They will fully examine you, diagnose your condition and discuss with you the best treatment options with the aim of helping you understand your condition.

What will happen after my appointment?

During your appointment you will agree the next steps with your clinician, this is called **shared decision making**. By the end of an appointment, you should have an understanding of what is happening next, for example:

- You may agree some actions, e.g. exercises, and need a follow up face to face or by telephone appointment within an agreed period.
- You may need diagnostics to be arranged such as bloods, x-rays, ultrasounds or MRI scans. *If you do require one of these, your clinician will provide you with further information about the procedure and what to expect.*
- You may be referred to another specialty or clinician within our service.
- An onward referral may be requested to another service if further treatment outside of our service is required.
- You may be discharged back to your own care, or the care of your GP.

Both you and your GP will receive a written summary following appointments within ESMSK.

What should I expect from your service?

The patient is at the heart of everything we do. You can expect to be treated fairly and in a safe environment, regardless of race, sexuality, disability, age, gender or religion, etc. You can expect to be involved in any decisions made about your care.

How can I help improve your service?

You may receive questionnaires via letter, email or text, asking you about how your MSK problem is affecting you and some other questions about your experience of the service. After you have been discharged, or after a course of treatment, we may send you another set of questions.

We would really appreciate it if you can complete these surveys. We value your honest feedback and use this to judge how we are doing. All feedback is reviewed and helps inform future changes to the service.

You are welcome to provide additional feedback or comment on your experience in our service, at any time, by emailing esht.esmskcontact@nhs.net

Do you want to know more?

Our website is filled with resources, links and materials designed to help you towards better health, with information which could help you to understand and manage your problem. Visit eastsussexmsk.nhs.uk/appointment-guide