

Care navigation

criteria for booking appointments with First Contact Physiotherapists

The role of First Contact Physiotherapists (FCPs) in Primary Care is to assess patients with soft tissue, muscle and joint pain and to decide on the most appropriate management pathway. FCPs are physiotherapists with expertise in the assessment and management of Musculoskeletal (MSK) conditions. They may also be known as Advanced Practice Physiotherapists (APP) or MSK Practitioners.

If you are unsure where to direct a patient, please discuss with your FCP and they will be happy to advise you.

Inclusion Criteria

- All soft tissue injuries, sprains, strains or sports injuries
- Arthritis – any joint
- Possible problems with muscles, ligaments, tendons or bone, eg 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, eg pins and needles or numbness
- Changes to walking
- Post-orthopaedic surgery

Exclusion Criteria

- Acutely unwell
- Children under 16
- Medical management of rheumatoid conditions
- Women's health, antenatal and postnatal problems
- House-bound patients
- Medication reviews
- Neurological and respiratory conditions
- Headaches
- Acute mental health crises
- Patients who do not want to see a FCP

Decision-making guide for booking FCP appointments (for patients 16+)

