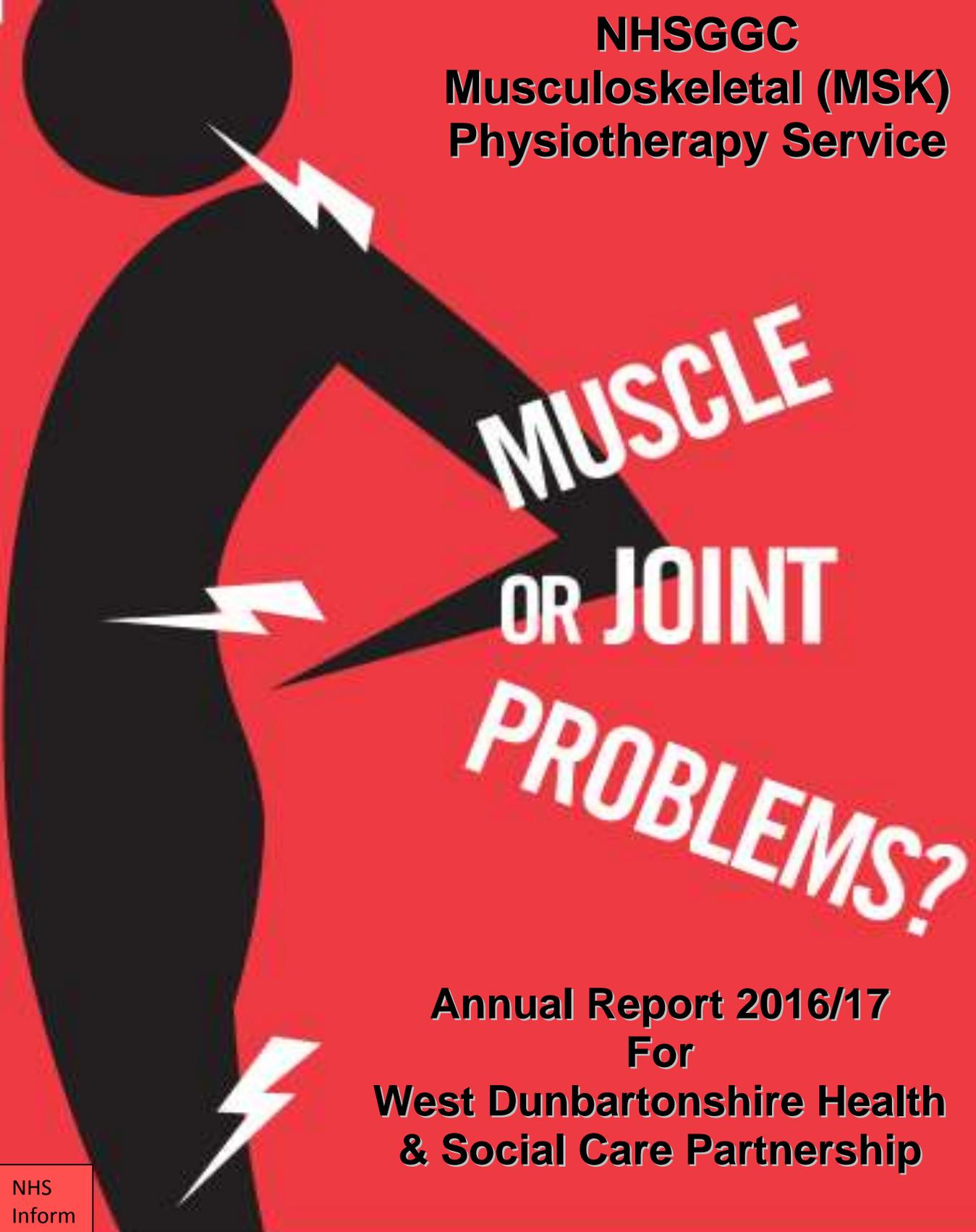


**NHSGGC  
Musculoskeletal (MSK)  
Physiotherapy Service**



**MUSCLE  
OR JOINT  
PROBLEMS?**

**Annual Report 2016/17  
For  
West Dunbartonshire Health  
& Social Care Partnership**

## Foreword

Musculoskeletal (MSK) disorders are the leading cause of time off work for sickness worldwide. It is estimated that 20-30% of a GPs caseload are patients with musculoskeletal conditions and this rises to 50% in the over 75 population. MSK Physiotherapists draw upon a wide range of therapies tailored to suit the needs of each patient. Physiotherapists also have a vital role in preventing ill health, maintaining mobility and encouraging older patients to remain active, thus contributing to falls prevention.

This report details the activities of the Musculoskeletal Physiotherapy Service with respect to residents of West Dunbartonshire and across the NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde (NHSGGC) area as a whole.

2016/17 has been a challenging year in terms of financial pressures and ongoing demand but staff continue to offer patients a full assessment, diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation and self management support tailored to their individual needs and influencing their healthcare journey. Considerable work has gone into redesigning our service, introducing TrakCare and our referral management centre; and standardising clinical practice to be as efficient as possible whilst maintaining an acceptable quality of evidence based care.

We continue to seek opportunities to improve efficiency whilst maintaining a safe and effective, quality service.



A handwritten signature in grey ink that reads "Janice Miller".

**Janice Miller**  
**MSK Physiotherapy Service Manager & Professional Lead (Partnerships)**

## **Background**

Musculoskeletal (MSK) conditions account for the largest cause of disability in the UK. These conditions affect bones, joints, muscles and tendons and interfere with people's ability to carry out their normal activities. MSK Physiotherapists are highly skilled in assessing and treating people with physical problems caused by accidents, ageing, disease or disability. They aim to restore function, activity, independence and prevent illness or injury by working with patients to achieve mutually agreed goals. Physiotherapists are trained to spot serious pathology and act upon these findings. If necessary, they can refer to Orthopaedics or advise GPs if a referral for other investigations is required. Self management is encouraged through advice, education and exercise to prevent recurrence of acute conditions and for the ongoing management of long term conditions.

The NHSGGC MSK Physiotherapy Service is hosted by West Dunbartonshire Health & Social Care Partnership (HSCP) on behalf of all Partnerships and the Acute Service Division of NHSGGC. The MSK Physiotherapy Service Manager reports to the Chief Officer of West Dunbartonshire HSCP; and the Service is included within their development plans and governance structures.

**Our Vision: To offer expert diagnosis and intervention to maximise the potential of people with musculoskeletal (MSK) conditions, the most common cause of disability and work related absence in the UK.**

Our key objectives are to:

- Provide an efficient, timely and equitable MSK service.
- Provide an effective MSK service.
- Provide a person centred MSK service.
- Ensure staff wellbeing within the MSK service.
- Provide a safe MSK service.
- Provide a creative and innovative service that will be responsive to current and future challenges.

The Service treats adults over the age of 14 and across NHSGGC received approximately 77,000 referrals in 2016/17 with over 162,000 return appointments.

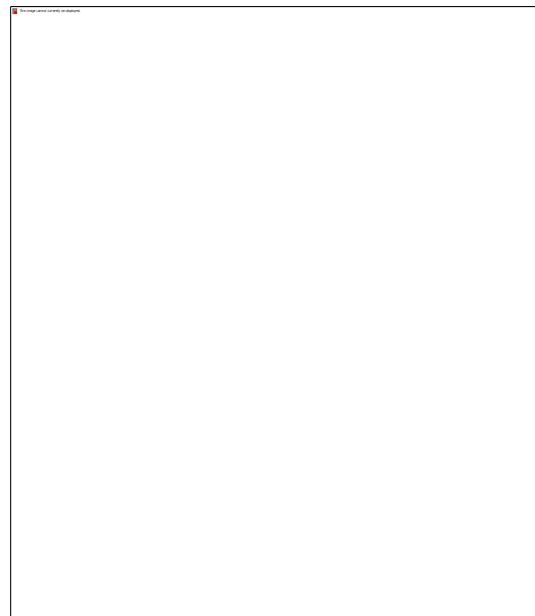
The delivery of the service is divided into four geographical quadrants: South, East, West & Clyde. There are 37 sites across Glasgow & Clyde providing MSK Physiotherapy with three sites within the West Dunbartonshire HSCP area – Vale of Leven Hospital, Dumbarton Health Centre and Clydebank Health Centre.

## **Patient Care**

In line with Scotland's new Health and Social Care Standards, the MSK Physiotherapy Service is focused on improving people's experience of care.

We strive to ensure patients:

- Experience high quality care and support.
- Are fully involved in all decisions about their care and support.
- Have confidence in the people who support and care for them.
- Have confidence in the organisation providing their care and support.
- Experience a high quality environment.



Regular audits including our record cards and a yearly Consultation and Relational Empathy (CARE) Measure ensure quality of care. This validated patient reported experience measure seeks feedback from our patients on their experience of the therapeutic interaction.

Our average CARE score for 2016 is 48.4 out of 50 demonstrating the empathy and interpersonal effectiveness of our excellent clinicians. Some feedback from patients on the questionnaire include:

*“ I found my physiotherapist to be very understanding and very open to try different treatment options”*

*“X’s physiotherapy exercises have been really good for me both physically and mentally. I went from a depressed physically unable person to someone who knows he can overcome the pain and injury. I now also exercise more as I am now in the right frame of mind to do so. Thanks, X, you’ve been great!”*

The MSK Physiotherapy Service has established evidence based clinical pathways for over 90% of the conditions seen in MSK Physiotherapy, including exit routes and onward escalation guidance. We have introduced a risk stratification tool for all back pain patients to ensure they receive appropriate evidence based care that is safe and effective.

All treatment is based on current research, evidence and appropriate guidelines when available. We will routinely discuss a patient’s general health and wellbeing, offering signposting to various health promotion resources including weight management, physical activity, smoking, mental health services, alcohol and employability services.

Validated Patient Reported Outcome Measures (PROMs) are used to measure the impact of physiotherapy interventions. We record pain, function, work status, age, body part, number of treatments, health improvement activity and discharge outcome and are working to embed this in our IT system.

Our Support Workers have been trained to gym instructor level to lead gym sessions with patients and free up qualified staff to see patients with more complex conditions. They are also involved in group sessions and classes and have received training to issue appropriate appliances e.g. walking sticks.

In 2016/17 the MSK Physiotherapy Service received 12 complaints, of which seven were partially upheld; and five not upheld. The largest cause of complaints is regarding waiting times (six complaints) with other complaints against staff, their attitudes and treatment offered which were not upheld. One complaint was regarding access to the service which was partially upheld and learning from this has resulted in changes to our service. All complaints are scrutinised through the West Dunbartonshire HSCP Clinical & Care Governance Group.

Staff and management receive many thank you cards and letters from patients expressing their appreciation for the care and treatment they have received. Letters this year included the following comments:



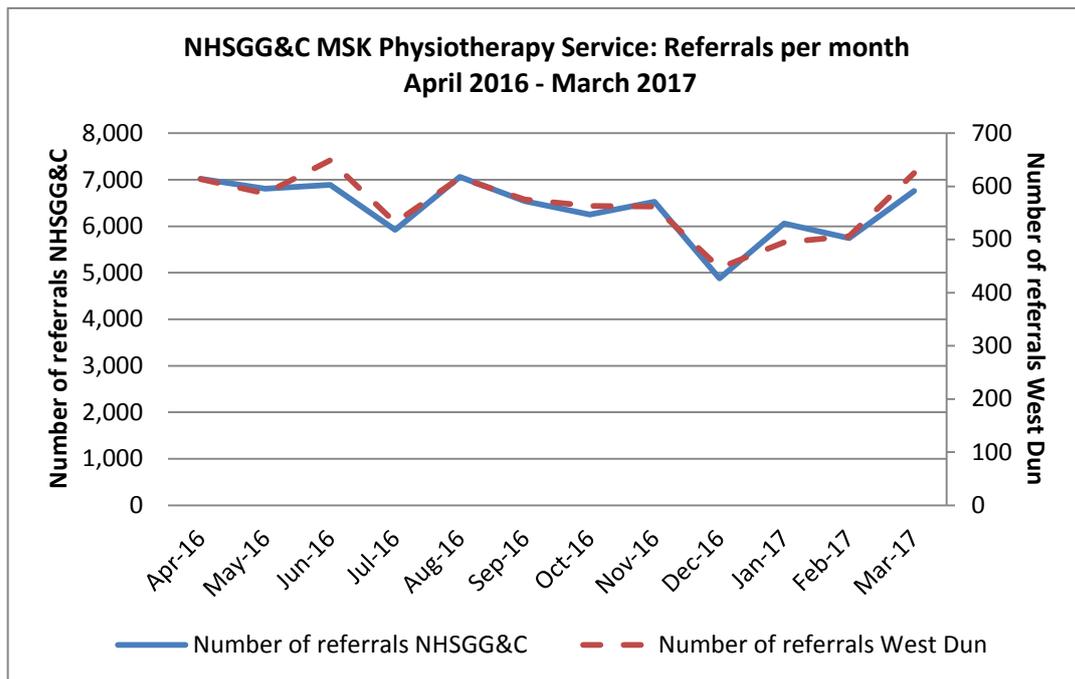
*“Thank you for all the care and support I received from X. I am grateful for all she did for me. She was a gift from God and I was so fortunate to be under her care”*

*“I would like to commend X on her work that she carried out. Due to various injuries I have seen a few of the physiotherapists in the department over the years and would like to thank you all. You all do a great job and probably don’t get thanked enough for your efforts so I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all”*

## Referrals to the Service

Patients can access MSK Physiotherapy via GP referral, self referral or referral by another Health Care Professional. All referrals are logged onto our electronic system and vetted by a clinical member of staff to identify any clinical priorities. A small proportion of patients are phoned directly as they require an immediate appointment whilst the majority are sent a letter inviting them to call and book an appointment at a time and place suitable to the patient. They are usually offered the first available appointment within their local quadrant but many patients choose to wait for an appointment closest to home or work. Figure 1 below shows the number of referrals into the MSK Physiotherapy Service from across the NHSGGC area and from West Dunbartonshire.

Figure 1

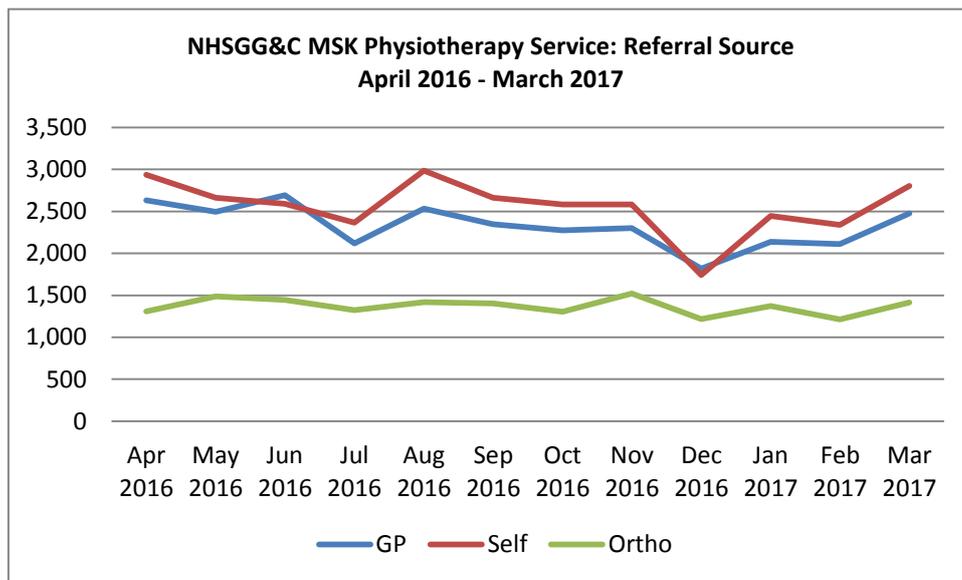


Across NHSGGC the number of referrals received from GPs and via self referral has dropped slightly during 2016/17 whilst referrals from Orthopaedics has risen slightly. Feedback from GPs at Locality meetings indicate that in some cases they are not referring because of the high waiting times - but considerable work has gone into supporting patients to manage their own

conditions so this may well also be reflected in the reduced number of referrals received. The vast majority of Orthopaedic patients are post surgery (at least 70%). These individuals tend to need longer courses of treatment and rehabilitation to get back to full function post surgery (previous audit showed average of seven treatments compared to three treatments from other referral sources). In 2012/13 15,494 referrals were received from Orthopaedics rising to 16,526 referrals in 2016/17.

Figure 2 below shows the main referral sources into the MSK Physiotherapy Service. As mentioned above, referrals are mainly from GPs or patients referring themselves (usually on the back of a GP suggesting they refer if not resolving). The other main source of referrals is from Orthopaedics.

Figure 2



To continue to be effective we are reviewing our core business and referral guidance for GPs and patients. Using available evidence, we have recently identified a list of conditions that are likely to benefit from physiotherapy treatment and have also identified conditions that are not seen as a primary referral for MSK Physiotherapy. Once fully developed this referral guidance will be shared with GPs, patients and staff to support improved management of MSK conditions across NHSGGC.

## Service Activity

In 2016/17 there were 58,147 new patient appointments available across the MSK Physiotherapy Service with respect to the NHSGGC area as a whole. Within the West Dunbartonshire HSCP area, 4,591 appointments (8%) were available and patients from the area have accessed the service outwith the HSCP area. Figures 3 and 4 below show the new and return appointments available each month across the whole service, the variation is mainly due to periods of annual leave and public holidays.

Approximately 20% of all appointments are outwith the HSCP area. These are predominantly within the West Glasgow area, although West Dunbartonshire residents are accessing the service across the whole of NHSGGC (possibly due to work or family commitments). Less than 1% of West Dunbartonshire appointments are used by residents from outwith West Dunbartonshire. Each month in the West Dunbartonshire HSCP area there are between 300 and 500 new appointments, the variation due to the number of days in the month and staff on duty at any one time.

Figure 3

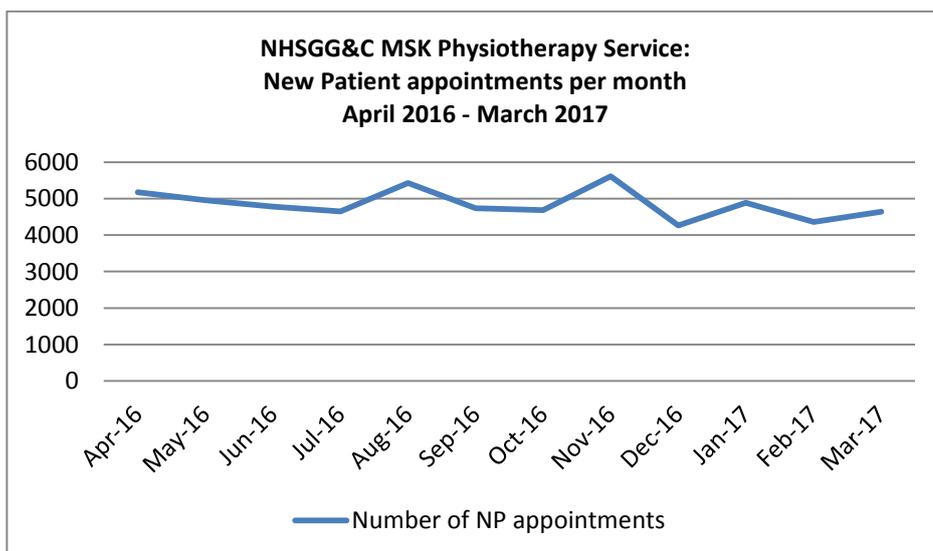
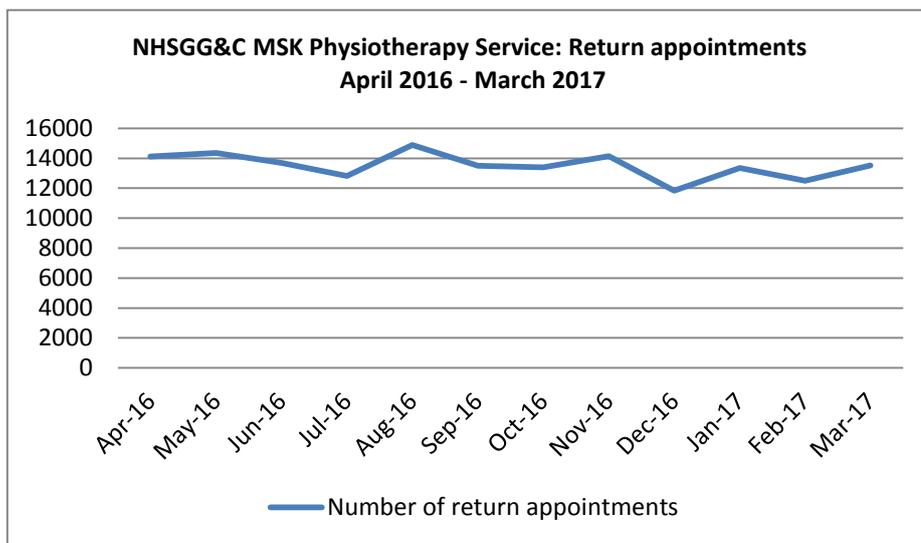


Figure 4



### Did Not Attend (DNA) Rates

From April 2016 to September 2016 the DNA rate for new patients for the whole service was averaging 8.4% per month. Text reminders were introduced in October 2016 resulting in a reduction to 7.1%.

Within West Dunbartonshire the DNA rate was 8.8% reducing to 8.3% with the introduction of text reminders, unfortunately this is still higher than the service average. In total, 393 new appointments were not utilised in West Dunbartonshire during 2016/17 and could have been offered to patients on the waiting list if we had been informed that they were no longer required or patients cancelled with enough notice to refill the appointment. Rates of DNA for follow up appointments are always slightly higher but again have decreased with the introduction of text reminders. As a service across NHSGGC the return DNA rate was 11.9% reducing to an average of 10.5% when text reminders were introduced. West Dunbartonshire patients have a slightly better return DNA rate at 11.2% reducing to 9% but this has still resulted in 1249 appointments not attended.

Work is ongoing to remind patients to cancel appointments as soon as possible so they can be used by other patients.

## Waiting List

In 2016 the Scottish Government introduced a target that 90% of patients referred with a musculoskeletal problem would be seen within 4 weeks.

Currently no MSK Physiotherapy Service in Scotland is meeting this challenging target. Analysis of the national report from March 2017 shows services are ranging from 34.4% seen within 4 weeks to one Board at 82.4%. The average for Scotland was 53.6%, with NHSGGC at 52.1% seen within 4 weeks.

Patients are offered the first available appointment within their quadrant (and outwith their quadrant if requested). The longest wait is recorded on a monthly basis



across the whole service as the waiting times are monitored to ensure equity across the service. In 2016/17 the longest a patient waited for an appointment was 28 weeks in March 2017.

In April 2016 the Service had 12,263 patients waiting more than 4 weeks on the waiting list, of whom 1,225 resided in West Dunbartonshire. By March 2017 this had reduced to 11,575 patients waiting, of which 780 were from West Dunbartonshire.

## Budget

The MSK Physiotherapy Service received a budget allocation for 2016/17 of £6.026m which reflected approved savings of £0.220m. The actual expenditure for 2016/17 was £6.018m.

The value of the MSK Physiotherapy Service to the population of West Dunbartonshire for 2016/17 equates to £0.531m.

## Staffing

In April 2016 the Service had 180.24 whole time equivalent (wte) posts, with 243 staff in post. This includes non qualified support staff, administrative staff, and also 18 Extended Scope Practitioners (ESPs) and 22 rotational staff who are employed by the Acute Division but provide sessions within MSK Physiotherapy. Qualified clinical staff totalled 138.32wte. Following consolidation of posts and delivery of savings for 2017/18, current staffing sits at 170.66wte, with 224 staff and 130.42wte qualified clinical staff.

	Total wte	No. of staff	Qualified clinical wte
April 2016	180.24wte	243	138.22wte
June 2017	170.66wte	224	130.42wte

All qualified staff are registered with the Health & Care Professions Council (HCPC) with registration checked on a monthly basis. Staff attend in-service training and courses whilst regular case reviews ensure all patients receive safe and effective treatment, regardless of where they receive their treatment across the NHSGGC area.

The average sickness absence during 2016/17 was 3.1%. This rate is below the 4% set by NHSGGC with all absences closely monitored and managed within the NHSGGC sickness absence policy. We will continue to support the staff governance commitments and promote the health and wellbeing of our staff and patients.

## Looking Forward

Waiting times continue to be a major challenge for the MSK Physiotherapy Service and will remain a focus for the senior management team. Priorities will centre around patient care and ensuring we deliver a safe, effective service.

MSK Physiotherapists have a vital role in meeting the current challenges within Primary Care. We have been involved in testing “New Ways of Working in Primary Care” by having an Advanced Practice Physiotherapist (APP) as an alternative first point of contact within 3 GP practices in Inverclyde HSCP. This unique role puts the physiotherapist’s expertise at the start of the patient’s journey when they first seek help. Early results show that 94% of patients were seen once within the practice and referrals for imaging, orthopaedics and prescriptions were low. There has been excellent feedback from patients and GPs on the benefits of having an MSK specialist working within the practice. This model has been readily acceptable to patients who placed considerable value on seeing a specialist in their MSK condition.

To ensure patients are seen at the right time by the right person we are working with our colleagues in secondary care through the Trauma & Orthopaedics ACCESS programme (Addressing Core Capacity Everywhere in Scotland Sustainably). This national programme is addressing variation in clinical practice, productivity and ensuring best practice.

Improving access and information available to patients remains a priority for the service. We are currently involved in discussions around piloting a new national web based access tool. This tool would allow patients to enter their symptoms online and following specific questions, gain access to relevant exercises, advice and support to self manage their problem or provide an onward referral to physiotherapy if appropriate. This work also links with other national MSK work to review patient information available to ensure patients are better informed about their problem and what they can do to help themselves.