

Leeds Community Healthcare Trust MSK service – re-opening of access to routine referrals

We are pleased to confirm that from Monday September 14th, the Leeds MSK service will reopen to routine referrals. The service will be published on e-RS as a Referral Assessment Service (RAS), rather than a Telephone Assessment Service (TAS) There will be a separate spinal and peripheral RAS but in all other respects, the referral process remains unchanged and both services will be located in the orthopaedic menu.

The aim is that all referrals received will be triaged within 2 working days, and assessed as either urgent (in which case the patient will be offered a virtual appointment in the first instance and only be offered a face to face appointment if indicated during the virtual consultation) or routine. (Patients who require onward referral into other services such as orthopaedics will be offered appropriate choice of provider and referred as appropriate in the usual way). **It is possible however that in the initial weeks following the re-establishment of service, high levels of referrals due to the backlog in demand caused by the suspension of service will make it difficult to meet the two working day target in all cases. We would be grateful therefore if you could explain to your patients that the initial triage may be delayed, and we appreciate your patience in this matter.**

Patients assessed as routine will be likely to face lengthy waits as the service seeks to manage their backlog of patients whose treatment was paused during the pandemic, and restart clinics that meet PPE and social distancing requirements.

It is important that patients are made aware of this at the point of referral. **Patients will however be offered self-management support, and will be able to contact the service directly should they be worried or if their symptoms worsen.**

Please note, this message does not relate to podiatry, where a further update will be issued shortly.