

## The Community Rheumatology Service

Your GP or health professional has requested a further opinion about your Rheumatology condition. Your referral has been reviewed by a specialist and you are to be seen in the Community Rheumatology Service. This leaflet provides you with information about how your care will be managed within the service.

### What is the Rheumatology Service?

The Rheumatology Service forms part of a range of services provided through the Sussex MSK Partnership. It is a service provided by clinicians with specialist knowledge and skills in caring for patients with Rheumatology conditions, such as a Consultant Rheumatology Nurse and a Consultant Rheumatologist.

### How does the Rheumatology Service benefit patients?

We aim to offer you an appointment within four weeks following the referral from your GP or health professional. You will be seen by an experienced, specialist clinician and will have an appointment giving you time to discuss your condition and treatment with your clinician.

### Where are Rheumatology Service clinics located?

Clinics are based at the following locations:

**Brighton and Hove:** Hove Polyclinic and the County Oak Medical Centre

### Contacting your MSK Team

#### Brighton and Hove

Tel: 0300 303 8063

Fax: 01273 560 293

Email: [brighton.mskpartnership@nhs.net](mailto:brighton.mskpartnership@nhs.net)

#### Crawley

Tel: 01293 600 300 (ext. 4131)

Fax: 01293 600 323

Email: [crawley.mskpartnership@nhs.net](mailto:crawley.mskpartnership@nhs.net)

#### Horsham and Mid-Sussex

Tel: 01273 265 990

Fax: 01403 227 008

Email: [midsussex.mskpartnership@nhs.net](mailto:midsussex.mskpartnership@nhs.net)

### How can the MSK team help?

You can contact your MSK Team for assistance with your referral, including:

- Queries regarding your referral or appointment. Please contact the MSK Team on and not the GP surgery where your appointment is held.
- Information about clinic access, including details on transport links and parking arrangements and to request a map. All clinics sites used by the Rheumatology Service have disability access.
- Questions about the information contained within this leaflet or about the service; or for advice about your care or treatment after your appointment, including test results.

Information about changing your appointment is detailed on your appointment letter. Please note that we aim to offer choice for all clinic appointments; however there are some conditions which can only be seen at certain clinics.

If you require urgent medical advice, please contact your own GP directly.

### What should I bring with me to my appointment?

Please bring information of any medications that you are currently taking to your appointment. This information will assist the clinician in their assessment and treatment of your condition. If you have had investigations in the past, such as MRI scans or x-rays, at private or non-NHS organisations, please bring the report and scans with you to your appointment. If you have had a scan taken from an NHS hospital outside of Brighton & Sussex University Hospitals or Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust, please contact your MSK Team in order for us to request the documents before your appointment

## What can I expect to happen in my appointment?

Your appointment will last for up to 30 minutes. Your clinician will discuss your history and symptoms with you, review your condition and will explain any treatment options including the risks and benefits of treatment. The clinician may use some equipment to assess your condition; this is not invasive and your clinician will describe this to you in your appointment. You can bring someone with you to your appointment, or a chaperone can be provided on request. Please inform your clinician, at any stage during your examination, if you would like a chaperone to be present. You can also let us know by contacting the Rheumatology Service team before your appointment. Our service provides valuable teaching opportunities and works closely with the Brighton & Sussex Medical School; this means that in some clinics medical students may be present. Your clinician will discuss this with you in your appointment. If you do not wish medical students to be present in your consultation please let the clinician know in your appointment.

## What will happen after my appointment?

After your appointment you may be:

- Asked to return to the Community Rheumatology Service clinic for a follow up appointment, or be booked in for a telephone follow up consultation.
- Offered the opportunity to take part in self-management programmes for your condition if appropriate
- Sent for a diagnostic test. If you are, the clinician will provide you with an information leaflet on this in clinic.
- Discharged back to your GP who will receive advice on how to manage your condition.
- Referred on to a hospital of your choice or another health care provider if further advice or treatment is required.

## What you can expect from our service?

Whenever you have contact with the Sussex MSK Partnership, you will be treated fairly, regardless of race, sexuality, disability, age, gender or religion. We will work with you and involve you in decisions about your care. We take the safety of all patients using our services seriously and are committed to ensuring that all patients feel safe.

## Give us feedback

We aim to provide a high quality service and we would value your feedback. To send us a compliment, complaint, concern or suggestion please contact:

Sussex MSK Partnership  
4th Floor, 177 Preston Road,  
Brighton, BN1 6AG

Tel: 0300 303 8063

[sussex.mskpartnership@nhs.net](mailto:sussex.mskpartnership@nhs.net)

We are keen to work with our patients on an ongoing basis to help us improve our services.

We would appreciate it if you could complete a short survey about your experience within our service, at:

[www.research.net/s/BICS-MSK](http://www.research.net/s/BICS-MSK)

You can also take part by joining our Patient Group. There are plenty of ways to participate in this and involvement doesn't require a big commitment on your part. If you would like to get involved or to find out more, please call Gary O'Connell on 0300 303 8063 and ask to speak to or email

[sussex.mskpartnership@nhs.net](mailto:sussex.mskpartnership@nhs.net)

You can also contact Healthwatch, who can advise you about the NHS complaints process and where to get specialist advice of independent advocacy.

**Brighton**

Tel: 01273 234040

[help@healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk](mailto:help@healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk)

**Crawley & Horsham and Mid-Sussex**

Tel: 0300 012 0122

[helpdesk@healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk](mailto:helpdesk@healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk)