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MOBILISATION OF A NEW OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICE – LESSONS LEARNT FROM STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

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In 2022 a new musculoskeletal (MSK) physiotherapy service was launched within the Gateshead NHS Trust. To allow the service to meet the demands required a stakeholder engagement exercise was carried out. As staff are the main stakeholders in this service their views were seen as an important aspect in this process.

For a one month period a questionnaire was circulated to all staff via social media and the trusts newsletter. Questions regarding the timing, location and nature of appointments along with open questions exploring what staff required from the new service were asked. The results were collected and evaluated using descriptive statistics and through thematic analysis.

In total of 39 questionnaires were returned. 94% of staff were happy to be seen during the week with 62% of staff being happy to be seen between the hours of 9-4. 60% of respondents suggested that they would be interested in an initial telephone service whilst 54% expressed an interest in attending a back-rehabilitation group. Ease of access along with support and resources for patients with back-pain were noted as common themes, with group exercise provision and the ability to work closely with local MSK services also being highlighted.

Using the information gathered the physiotherapy service has been designed to reflect the needs of the service-users. Ease of access is ensured through self-referral and an optional telephone appointment service. A website has been designed to provide resources on back-pain as well as a back-rehabilitation group to support this client group.