

A blended approach  
to **occupational  
physiotherapy:**  
A pay-per-case **CQUIN  
support service**

Improving health & wellbeing

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## INTRODUCTION

We are often asked what the key benefits are of providing Occupational Physiotherapy as a service. The answer is simple. Having happy and healthy employees increases overall productivity, reduces sickness absence and contributes directly to the bottom line.

The NHS knows this only too well and health and wellbeing is officially recognised as part of the CQUIN requirements.

As innovators, we are always looking at how we can take positive action on employee health and wellbeing. We provide industry-leading reactive care for patients with musculoskeletal problems, using our award winning blended approach to occupational physiotherapy; as well as proactive intervention to reduce the onset of musculoskeletal conditions.

## CQUIN REQUIREMENTS & WHERE WE FIT IN

“Estimates from Public Health England put the cost to the NHS of staff absence due to poor health at £2.4bn per year – around £1 in every £40 of the total budget. This figure excludes the cost of agency staff to fill in gaps often associated with staff absence. As well as the economic benefits that could be achieved, evidence from the staff survey and elsewhere shows that improving staff health and wellbeing will lead to higher staff engagement, better staff retention and better clinical outcomes for patients.

A key part of improving health and wellbeing for staff is giving them the opportunity to access both proactive and reactive services that promote education, self management and rapid access to physiotherapy where required.”

**We work with NHS trusts who are proactive in working towards creating an environment where health and wellbeing of their employees is actively promoted and encouraged.**

“Physio Med’s delivery model is specifically designed to enable NHS trusts to improve the health & wellbeing of their staff and enable them to fulfil their current CQUIN requirements.

A flexible and robust, blended approach to providing preventative health and wellbeing advice and acute treatment for staff suffering from musculoskeletal conditions.

We offer a financially sound solution, by focusing on both innovation and quality.”

**Mark Fletcher**  
Clinical Director

## WHY PROVIDE OCCUPATIONAL PHYSIOTHERAPY?

In any organisation, it is staff which are your biggest asset. It’s your staff who make the biggest difference, in order to create a real value for your patients and your Trust.

Physio Med provides occupational physiotherapy to...

- Increase employee wellbeing
- Increase employee productivity
- Reduce presenteeism
- Reduce absenteeism
- Deliver a genuine return on investment to our clients

“

**In the UK, 31 million days are lost to musculoskeletal absence each year. ”**

“

**Musculoskeletal absence costs the UK economy over £4 billion per year. ”**

“

**How many people do you employ that are turning up to work each day, but whose productivity is low due to a physical inability to work to their full potential? ”**

# HOW OUR SERVICE WORKS

Our services have been specifically developed to reduce the cost of delivery, without compromising on clinical outcomes.

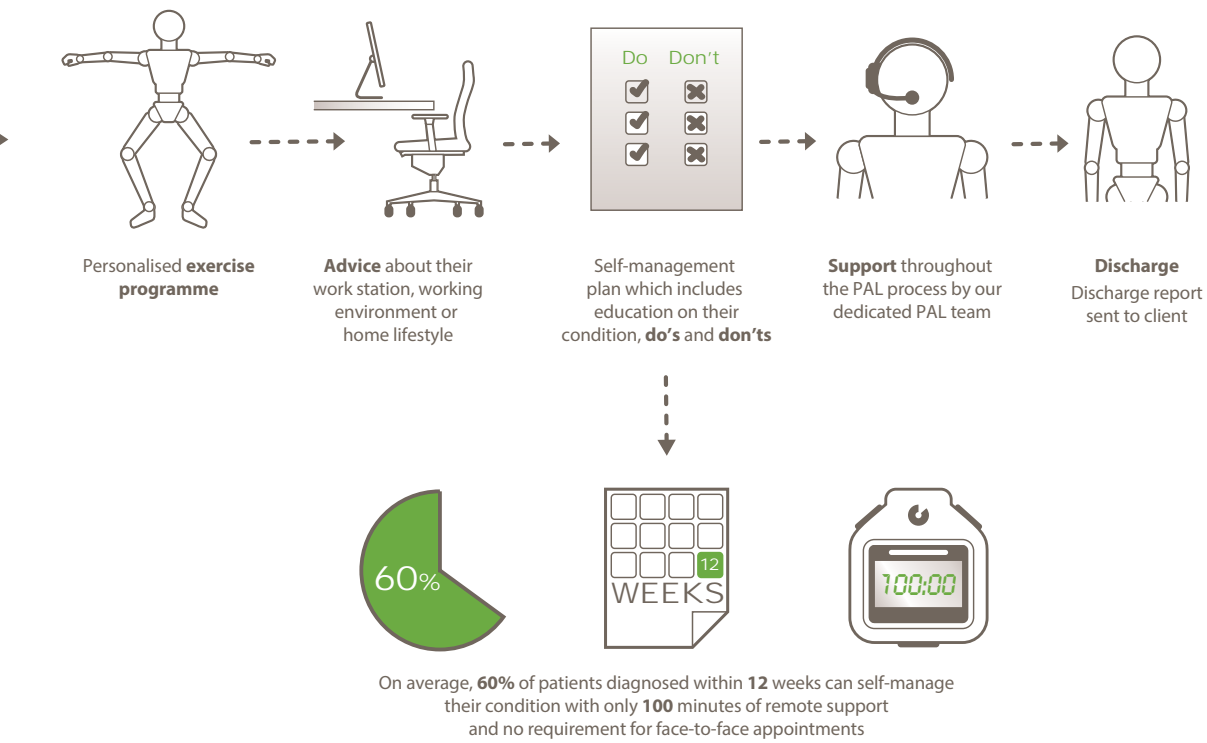
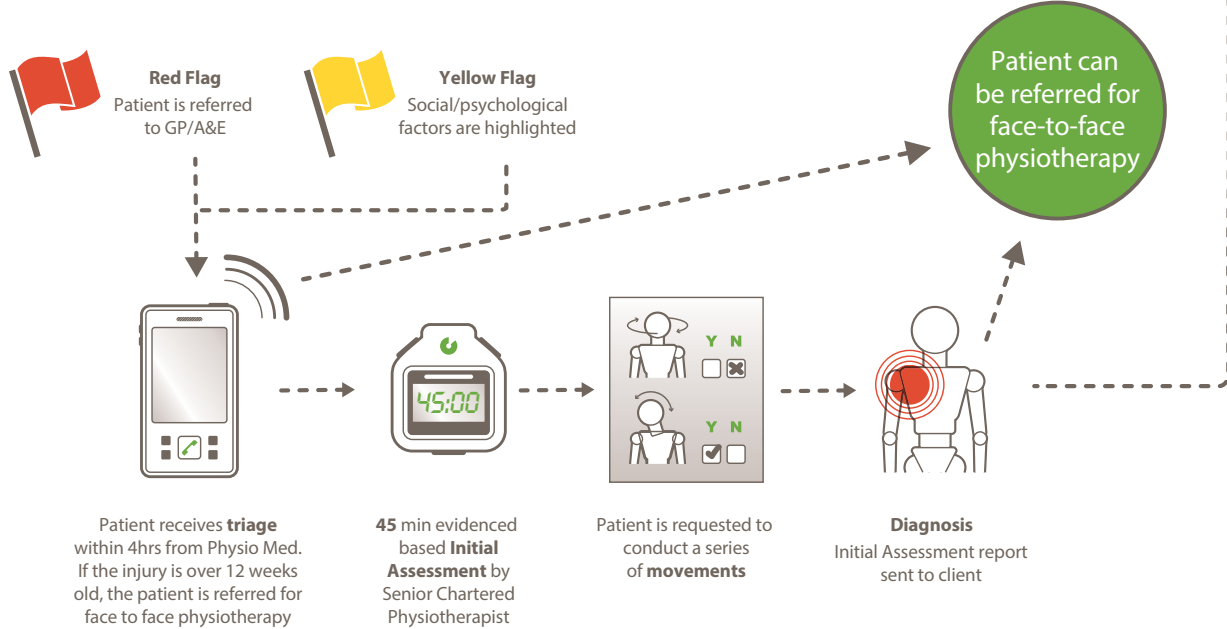
Our blended, remote and face-to-face delivery model enables us to reduce the amount of time the physio needs to spend with the patient, thus reducing the cost of delivery. Our remote service enables us to filter out and effectively manage conditions which do not require the hands of the physio by empowering patients to self manage their condition via telephone support and online exercise video... and patients who require hands-on physio are referred into the network in the traditional manner.

So let's take a look at this delivery model in more detail.

## Our patient journey

### A blended approach to physiotherapy

This incorporates our remote Physiotherapy Advice Line (PAL) and face-to-face service



With a network of 780 physiotherapy practices, those who require face-to-face treatment can access it within a maximum of 30 minutes of travel time. Discharge report is sent to client once face-to-face physiotherapy is complete

Organisation wide saving with blended physiotherapy treatment

Up to 30%\* against a full face-to-face model

\*with no change in clinical outcome





**WITH OUR BLENDED  
APPROACH TO  
PHYSIOTHERAPY  
PATIENTS GET  
QUICK ACCESS TO  
TREATMENT THAT IS  
INDIVIDUALLY RIGHT  
FOR THEM.**



- Patients triaged within 4 working hours of receipt of referral
- Following triage patients are either routed for face-to-face (F2F) treatment or receive a telephone initial assessment (IA) with a Senior Physiotherapist within 3 working days
- The remote IA is identical to that which is carried out in practice, consisting of questions, answers and movements to facilitate diagnosis
- Following the diagnosis, patient is either routed directly for F2F treatment or receives a bespoke video exercise program and rebooked for a review call in 10 working days
- Following the review call patients are either discharged from the service or routed for F2F treatment, if additional intervention is required
- Current stats show that 59% of patients referred via our Physiotherapy Advice Line (PAL) service can be discharged from the service following 100 mins of remote intervention, which provides our clients with an average saving of 30% against a traditional full face-to-face delivery model

Physio Med is committed to adding value to the NHS, which includes a range of proactive material.



Exercise Infographics



Exercise Videos



Lifestyle Advice



Managing Conditions Guides

“  
WITH MANY  
ORGANISATIONS  
EMPLOYING AN  
AGEING WORKFORCE,  
PROACTIVE  
INTERVENTION  
IS ESSENTIAL TO  
HELP MAINTAIN A  
FIT AND HEALTHY  
WORKFORCE.”





## BUSINESS CASE: IN-HOUSE VS OUTSOURCED

There is no disputing that providing access to occupational physiotherapy is the right thing to do in-terms of the business case for the care and improved quality of life of employees and for the overall function of the NHS.

The question does remain... is this a service best provided in-house or are there real benefits to outsource supply to health professionals such as Physio Med?

For our clients; the flexibility of service, pay-per-case approach along with progress reports and management information, makes us the perfect occupational physiotherapy partner.

Our average contract spend is the equivalent of a 0.75 FTE Band 7 NHS Physio, which provides our clients with a fully integrated, proactive and reactive occupational physiotherapy service.



"I would be happy to recommend "Physio Med" to other NHS Trusts, who are looking to review their occupational physiotherapy service. Physio Med provides CNWL with an extremely efficient, high quality service, where we are only charged for the treatment our staff receive, when we need it.

"Their pay-per-case approach makes it more cost effective than employing a physio internally and, being networked, addresses the geographical challenges of us being a multi-site employer. Physio Med's network system offers flexibility for staff who may relocate on a temporary basis following illness/injury.

"Reports, management information and proactive educational material are all well produced, assisting our Trust in delivering a proactive (as well as reactive) health & wellbeing strategy aimed at reducing the onset of MSK conditions across our workforce."



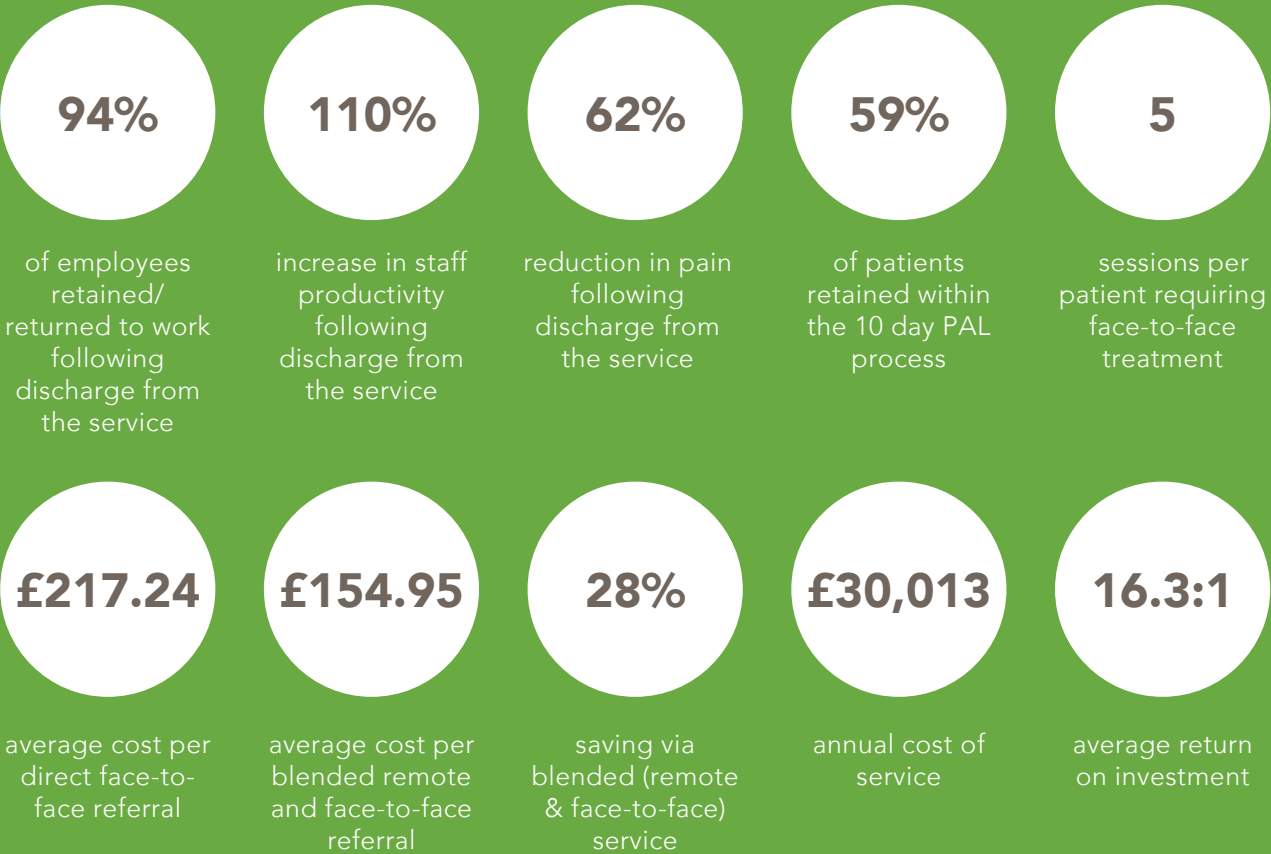
Pamela Duke – Head of Occupational Health  
Central and Northwest London Foundation  
NHS Trust (CNWL)



# PROVEN DATA & ROI: OUR SUCCESS RATES

Working with a number of NHS Trusts, Physio Med is a recognised and trusted supplier, providing the management team with evidence based data so they have the information required to report on and to manage budgets and service level requirements.

Below is the average benchmark data from 9 NHS Trusts who currently use our blended delivery model.



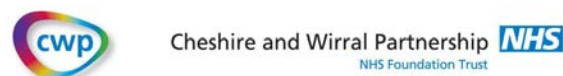
# TESTIMONIALS



We have been working in partnership with Physio Med since June 2014. The service has greatly benefitted our Trust as it gives us greater access across our Trust footprint. It provides a fast and effective service for the staff within our Trust by utilising a hybrid of its Physiotherapy Advice Line (PAL) service and face-to-face sessions which has benefitted us in terms of financial impact and of improved productivity.

The blended model has enabled an approximate 22% cost saving as opposed to just utilising a face-to-face service.

**Lorraine Cooper – Workforce & Wellbeing Business Manager**  
Cheshire & Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust



We engaged Physio Med to deliver a fast track physio service for our staff as part of our staff wellbeing programme. The model works well for us financially in that we only pay for what we use and have no overheads. We chose a blended model: initial triage followed by telephone advice and exercise plan or direct to hands on treatment. Knowing that our staff can get advice over the phone within hours helps to tackle problems at an early stage. Staff can access treatment centres close to home or work which is a great benefit. Physio Med was helpful from the outset in helping us control our costs, suggesting we use management referral in the first instance and limiting the number of treatment sessions per employee.

We implemented the system in February 2017 and have had 28 referrals to the service since then. Implementation was bespoke to our divisional set up and reporting requirements. The electronic referral system helps us keep track of our statistics and the support we have from Physio Med has been excellent. We are currently surveying staff who have used the service to identify the benefits to them, i.e. faster resolution of pain or mobility problem, and also whether it has prevented sickness absence or helped them to return to work earlier. We will use this information as part of our return on investment reporting.

**Jane Clawson - Deputy Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development**  
Sheffield Children's NHS Foundation Trust



Wellbeing partners have been using the services of Physio Med for our clients for over three years. Physio Med's customer service is very responsive with fast, timely communication with the employee to arrange assessments and treatment. Feedback from service users has been positive.

The management information provided by the Physio Med liaison team has been useful in providing detailed information to our clients on effectiveness of the service and highlighting specific areas for further review and intervention. The proactive online material is a helpful tool in reducing risks of muscular skeletal problems and self-help techniques for individuals experiencing symptoms.

Overall it has been a positive experience and a valuable add-on.

**Angela Brookes - Occupational Health Nurse Manager**  
Well Being Partners  
Occupational Health Function of Wroughtington, Wigan and Leigh NHS Trust.



Following a review of sickness absence at Sheffield Health & Social Care NHS Foundation Trust, we decided to introduce a scheme to further support staff by way of a physiotherapy service. Musculoskeletal problems are one of the major reasons for absence within the organisation, as well as being a problem for staff who remain at work. We were therefore looking for a programme to offer advice and support for staff, whether they were already off work, or remained at work.

Physio Med already provided a similar service to some other organisations, and the anecdotal feedback was positive, so we met with Jake Fletcher, their Sales Director, to discuss the possibility and logistics of providing a service to our own staff.

The decision to link-up with Physio Med following that initial meeting could not have been easier. The background to the organisation and their services illustrated the professionalism we were soon to receive.

After helping us confirm the process, we launched the service, which included offering the service initially to staff who were absent for a MSK reason, and shortly afterwards the scheme was opened to all staff. The feedback from everyone who has used the service has been universally positive in every aspect. The referral process is straightforward, the initial assessment is provided very quickly, with the subsequent advice / treatment delivered in a managed and thorough way.

Staff are able to access the service via HR, and it is proving a valuable tool in both assisting staff return to work, and also in preventing them from needing time off work.

**Dean Wilson - HR Director**  
Sheffield Health & Social Care NHS Foundation Trust





# CASE STUDY 1

## Brief

The Trust employs circa. **4,500 staff** based at two sites, providing acute in-patient, out-patient, day case and emergency services to the local communities.

Many of the roles within an NHS Trust, and specifically in hospitals, can be physically demanding, with nursing and healthcare workers particularly prone to suffering from musculoskeletal disorders (MSD) as a result of, or exacerbated by, moving and handling tasks.

The Trust employed a part-time in-house physiotherapist who was available for staff referrals. But, following the Trust's achievement of Safe Effective Quality Occupational Health Services (SEQOHS), the profile of the Health Work and Well-Being Service was enhanced and that resulted in more people using staff support services and therefore waiting up to **four weeks** for an initial appointment with the physiotherapist.

This resulted in many staff being absent from work for extended periods or being offered reasonable adjustments or light duties, causing a negative impact on the Trust's levels of absence and productivity. This in turn led to **increased expenditure** on temporary staffing to ensure continued provision of high standards of patient care.

The Trust therefore needed to find a way to support its employees in accessing quality physiotherapy treatment much more quickly in order to:

- Reduce employee discomfort and pain levels, due to MSD
- Minimise associated absence and facilitate an early return to work
- Improve productivity
- Reduce the risk of further absence due to recurrence of MSD

## Solution

The Trust began working with Physio Med, via the HR department and its on-site physiotherapy service, to implement a **robust occupational health physiotherapy service** to employees. Intervention was provided via a blended approach of fast track telephone triage, remote multimedia self-management and on-site face-to-face treatment.

Trust employees accessed the service by referral from the HR department. They were then contacted within **four hours** by Physio Med's award winning Physiotherapy Advice Line (PAL) service, which involves telephone triage to ensure they were clinically appropriate for treatment through PAL.

All appropriate referrals received an **initial assessment** call from a Senior Chartered Physiotherapist within a maximum of three days, which incorporated a series of evidence-based clinical questions and a series of movements to facilitate diagnosis. The employee was then advised on the best way to self-manage the condition, thereby assisting the physical healing process. This included:

- Appropriate advice regarding their work station, lifestyle, medication, posture and methods of symptomatic relief
- Realistic advice on modifying the working day to accommodate the injury
- An individually tailored progressive exercise programme created by the physiotherapist to speed up healing, communicated via comprehensive video exercise files, and accessed via a computer, smartphone or tablet. Any employees whose condition required face-to-face treatment were referred to the in-house physiotherapy service following either the initial assessment or the ten day review call.

## Outcome

In order for staff to be able to look after their patients and carry out their duties to a very high standard, they need to be in excellent physical health themselves. Therefore reducing the levels of sickness absence due to MSDs was a key driver for the Trust.

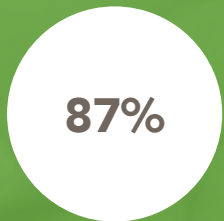
In an 11 month period, a total of 226 cases were progressed by Physio Med, with 84% being treated via the PAL service and 16% being Fast Track routed for face-to-face treatment after initial assessment. At the point of referral 57% of the employees referred were absent from work due to injury, while the remainder were at work with pain and therefore operating at reduced productivity levels and highlighting the hidden cost of presenteeism.

The initial assessment appointment took place within an average of 1.9 days – compared to four weeks under the previous system. A total of 66% of patients were discharged after just ten days, as their condition had either resolved or they were able to effectively self-manage their condition.

In financial terms the reduction in sickness absence and improved productivity of those who had been injured, has been significant, saving hundreds of working days that would otherwise have been lost and delivering an estimated saving of almost £329,000 (based on an average employee cost of £91.56 per day) - which equates to an ROI figure of almost 17:1 This played an important role in the Trust maintaining its service levels to the general public, meeting NHS targets and of course saving the Trust money.

Physio Med reported back to the Trust on a host of other criteria – including anatomical site of the injury, referring locations, job roles and further breakdown of the impact of the service on pain levels and productivity – identifying trends to help the Trust put practices and measures in place to reduce future injuries and issues.

### Other outcomes included:



of those off sick at the point of referral returned to work with average reported reduction in pain of 65%



improvement in productivity and function - equating to 2.5 days per week per person working a five day week



reduction in sickness absence levels among those suffering an MSD - 28 days reduced to 12 on average

# CASE STUDY 2

## Brief

The Trust employs circa **3,500 staff** across 65 sites, providing mental health, substance misuse, learning disability and community physical health services. The Trust serves a population of approximately one million people.

The nature of the services provided by the Trust mean that many of the job roles are physically demanding, with nursing and healthcare workers particularly prone to suffering from musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) as a result of, or exacerbated by, moving and handling tasks.

This was putting the Trust’s in-house physiotherapy service under increased demand, resulting in staff suffering from musculoskeletal disorders having to wait for an appointment. This in turn was leading to employees being absent from work or working at reduced levels of productivity. So, the Trust decided it needed to find a way to support its employees in accessing quality physiotherapy treatment much more quickly in order to:

- Reduce MSD-related employee discomfort and pain levels
- Minimise associated absence and facilitate an early return to work
- Improve productivity
- Reduce the risk of further absence due to recurrence of MSD

## Solution

After a successful trial, the Trust tasked Physio Med with implementing a blended model of physiotherapy service which provides **fast-track access** to treatment in order to support staff health and wellbeing, improve productivity and reduce sickness absence.

Employees who suffer a musculoskeletal injury or disorder are referred to Physio Med by either their line manager or the occupational health department. The employee is then contacted by Physio Med’s team for a telephone triage, within as little as **two hours** and a maximum of four, to ensure they are appropriate for treatment.

All appropriate referrals then receive an initial assessment within **two days**, with acute conditions going through Physio Med’s award winning Physiotherapy Advice Line (PAL) service and chronic injuries being referred directly to the face-to-face (F2F) service via Physio Med’s network of clinics.

The PAL initial assessments are carried out over the phone by a Senior Chartered Physiotherapist and incorporate a series of evidence-based clinical questions and a series of movements to **facilitate diagnosis**. The employee is then advised on the best way to self-manage the condition, thereby assisting the physical healing process. This includes:

- Appropriate advice regarding their work station, lifestyle, medication, posture and methods of symptomatic relief
- Realistic advice on modifying the working day to accommodate the injury
- An individually tailored progressive exercise programme created by the physiotherapist to speed up healing, communicated via comprehensive video exercise files, and accessed via a computer, smartphone or tablet.
- Employees referred directly for face to face treatment receive an appointment, usually within two days, at one of 780 practices across the Physio Med UK network.

## Outcome

In order for staff to be able to look after their patients and carry out their duties to a very high standard, they need to be at work and in excellent physical health themselves. Therefore, reducing the levels of sickness absence due to MSDs was a key driver for the Trust.

In a 21 month period, from April 2015 to December 2016, a total of 520 cases were progressed by Physio Med, with 54% being treated via the PAL service and 46% with chronic conditions being routed directly for face-to-face treatment.

At the point of referral, 21% of the employees referred were absent from work due to injury, while the remainder were at work with pain and therefore operating at reduced productivity levels and highlighting the hidden cost of presenteeism.

A total of 64% of patients on the PAL service were discharged after just ten days, as their condition had either resolved or they were able to effectively self-manage it.

Employees discharged from the F2F service received an average of just over five sessions each, including the initial assessment.

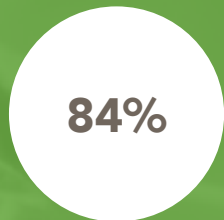
Of the 520 appropriate referrals, only 18 remained off work and there was a reported pain reduction of more than 60% amongst those who returned to work.

In financial terms, and based on the average daily cost of a Trust employee being £131.81\*, the service has delivered significant returns.

The improved productivity and function multiplied by the days saved in not waiting to access NHS treatment delivered a total estimated saving of £1.44million over the 21 month period – which equates to an ROI figure of 17:1

This played an important role in the Trust maintaining its service levels to the general public, meeting NHS targets and, of course, saving the Trust money.

## Other outcomes included:



of those off sick at the point of referral returned to work



improvement in productivity and function - equating to 1.75 days per person per week working a five day week



average days of access to Physio Med services vs average time to access NHS physiotherapy of 71.5 working days\*

\* Reported by the Trust’s OH department in January 2017



## PATIENT COMMENTS



This service is extremely helpful and the Physios were friendly, professional and knowledgeable. I would definitely recommend this service to my colleagues and I wouldn't hesitate to use it again if necessary. Thank you.

**PAL Patient 18/10/2016**



I found the service to be reliable & helpful. At the end of the intervention I was more informed about my condition & more able to understand aspects of my pain & its sources.

**PAL Patient 20/11/2016**



It has been so helpful to have the short videos to watch to help me do the exercises correctly. Thank you.

**PAL Patient 02/09/2017**



The service was simple and easy to use, the Physio herself was knowledgeable, empathetic and very helpful. The service was recommended by a colleague and I would be happy to recommend it myself.

**PAL Patient 17/11/2016**



I was very impressed to be sent easy to follow guides and to be able to see how to do the exercises correctly. I will certainly recommend this service to colleagues.

**26/01/2017**



The service is very easy to use and so quick! I am very happy with the service provided. The staff were very helpful and friendly, and I would definitely use the service again.

**PAL Patient 16/01/2016**



I was frightened, in a lot of pain and alone. Dani helped more than she will ever know x

**18/02/2017**



Excellent service. Couldn't ask for more. Thank you for all your help.

**PAL Patient 01/03/2017**



I think it is a wonderful service and I am very pleased to have access to such a speedy, effective and empowering way to help myself get better.

**PAL Patient 17/01/2017**



Easy to access and very helpful advice given throughout. Would definitely recommend the service to others.

**PAL Patient 02/03/2017**



I thought it was marvellous to have the videos to follow and not just pictures. The physio I spoke to listened to what my problem was and gave me the appropriate exercises, which I continue to use. Thank you.

**PAL Patient 15/01/2016**



Because of the great service and exercises I received, I have recommended PAL to lots of colleagues. Thanks for all your help.

**PAL Patient 12/12/2016**



Overall a really good service and best of all the exercise plan really helped with my back issues. Thank you :)


**PAL Patient 02/01/2017**



# WE CARE ABOUT YOUR STAFF


Our physiotherapists don't see your staff (their patients) as a number on a management information report. The care and recovery of every one of our patients is vitally important to our treatment team.

## OUR TEAM



**There When You Need Us**

We have a responsive team of account managers and physiotherapists within a network of 780 locations.




**Always Communicating**

Communication is key to Physio Med. Regular updates with your account manager and detailed information through our client access portal.



**Experience**

We have been providing occupational physiotherapy for large employers for 20 years. We continually innovate and improve our services.



**Focussed on Results**

Our number one goal is to deliver results, everything we do is a contribution to improving health and wellbeing, productivity and profitability.

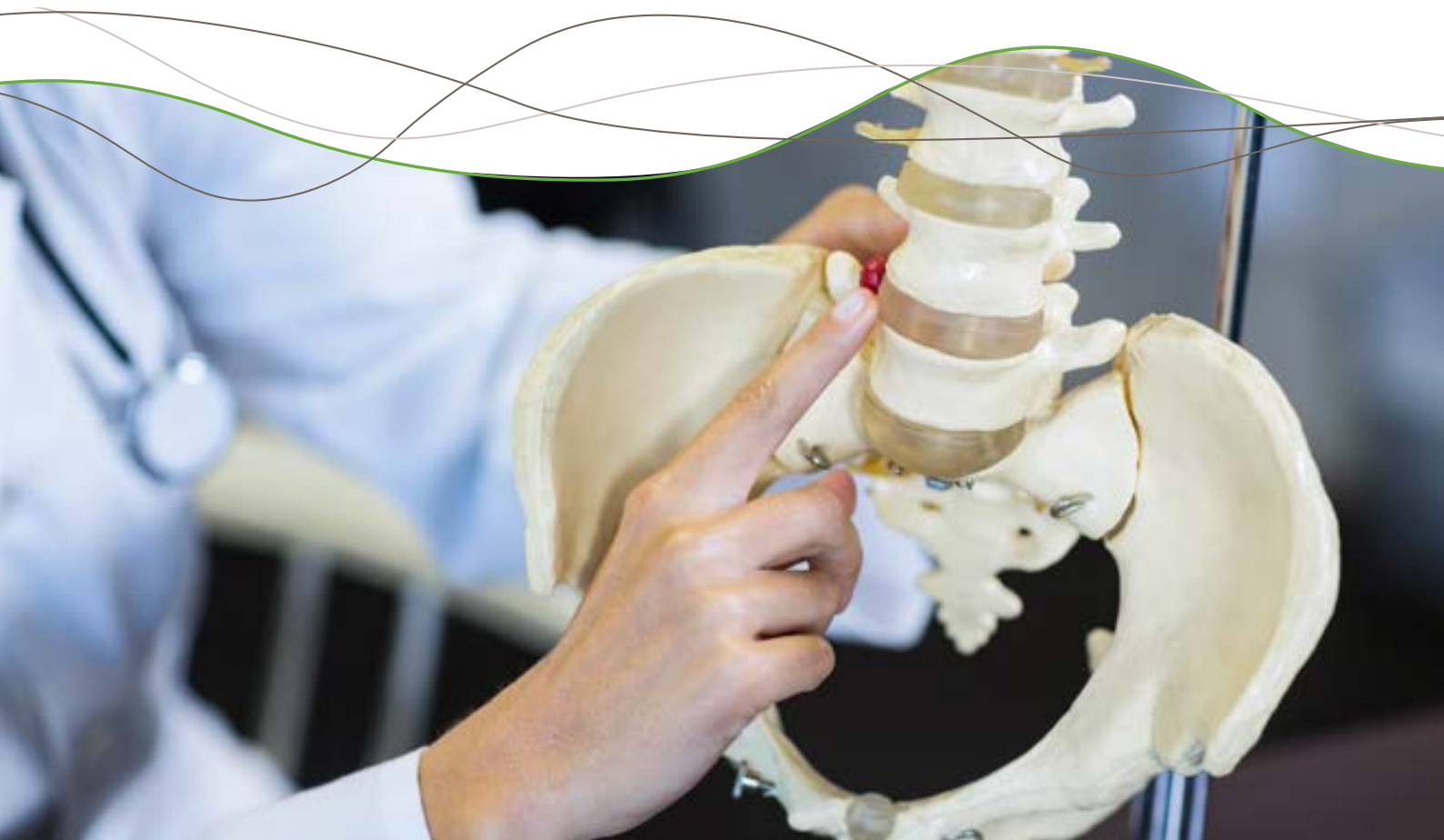


“My experience with Physio Med was remarkable. The physio I had a telephone consultation with actually could have saved my life. I had come into work in a wheelchair the day after I had a plaster cast removed as I could not weight-bear. On that evening I had my telephone appointment with Physio Med and the physio diagnosed from the symptoms I reported to him that I could have a potential DVT. He immediately emailed me a letter for my doctor. I booked an appointment with the doctor and took the email from Physio Med with me, the doctor sent me straight to hospital for a Doppler test which showed a DVT in my calf. I was then prescribed medication and advice...

....I am now back at work full time after agreeing a return to work programme with my line manager. I can't thank Physio Med enough.”

DWP Employee





## KEY CONTACTS



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