

Reference:	FOI.8203.22
Subject:	Musculoskeletal (MSK) Services
Date of Request:	11 February 2022

Requested:

I am writing to request information regarding services that you provide for musculoskeletal conditions, and specifically low back pain. I would appreciate your help with the following questions. The questions are all with regards to outpatient and/or community physiotherapy services:

1. What is the current average waiting time for a musculoskeletal physiotherapy appointment for a new referral or self-referral for non-specific lower back pain? (if you are not able to answer this specifically for low back pain please provide the figure for musculoskeletal physiotherapy more generally)
2. How has the waiting time for musculoskeletal physiotherapy appointments for lower back pain changed over the historical time period for which you have data? If possible, an annual figure for each of the last 5-10 years would be most helpful. (Again, please answer for general musculoskeletal physiotherapy services if you do not hold specific data for back pain).
3. How many patients are currently on your waiting list(s) for physiotherapy services for lower back pain?
4. How many patients are currently on your waiting list(s) for physiotherapy services across all musculoskeletal conditions?
5. Does your musculoskeletal physiotherapy service(s) accept self-referrals from patients for back pain (as opposed to requiring a GP or primary care referral)?
6. What percentage of general practice appointments within your region are for back pain? (or musculoskeletal conditions more broadly if this is the only data level held)
7. What is the average healthcare spend per patient in your region for non-specific low back pain?
8. How does the average healthcare spend per patient for non-specific low back pain break down across different services and costs?
9. Do you currently commission NHS musculoskeletal physiotherapy services from any private providers? If yes, what proportion of your overall MSK physiotherapy spend is with private providers?

Response:

1. Hywel Dda University Health Board (UHB) does not record average waiting times. All referrals received into the Physiotherapy Service are triaged as urgent or routine. Urgent patients are seen as a priority, usually within two (2) weeks; with routine patients targeted for treatment within fourteen (14) weeks of referral. The UHB currently has one hundred and eighty three (183) patients waiting over the fourteen (14) week routine target.

- The UHB does not record average waiting times. Annual waiting times vary depending on many factors and there have been significant fluctuations over the last five (5) years, e.g. workforce fluctuations, agency availability, recruitment challenges, referral demand and more recently the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, the UHB provides overleaf, a screen shot of the UHB's Physiotherapy and Clinical Musculoskeletal Assessment and Treatment Service (CMATS) dashboard, detailing the total waiting list for the last twelve (12) months for urgent and routine breach status and a breakdown of urgent versus routine patients by priority.



- The UHB confirms that there were 623 lumbar or sacroiliac joint problem MSK physiotherapy patients on the waiting list, as recorded at 3 March 2022.
- The UHB confirms that there were 2,010 MSK patients on the outpatient waiting list, as at 3 March 2022.
- The UHB confirms that its MSK Physiotherapy Service does accept self-referrals from patients with back pain.
- The UHB does not hold the information for all GP Surgeries, as with the exception of the Managed Practices, they are all managed independently. These GP Practices hold their own

information and consequently, the UHB does not have access to all of the details you require. Therefore, this information would need to be requested directly from the individual GP Practices. Contact details for each of them can be found via the following link:

<http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/862/directory/gps/>

The UHB regrets to inform you that it does not hold the information requested for its Managed Practices; Tenby Surgery, Ashgrove Medical Centre, Meddygfa Minafon and Meddygfa'r Sarn.

7. The UHB does not hold this information.
8. The UHB does not hold this information.
9. The UHB confirms that it does not commission MSK Physiotherapy Services from private providers.