Introduction of a Multidisciplinary Team Approach to Chronic Pain in NHS Dumfries and Galloway

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**Background:**
The chronic pain service in NHS Dumfries and Galloway was a consultant led medical model, with limited multidisciplinary input. All referrals to the chronic pain service were triaged by the consultant and 100% of patients received a consultant outpatient appointment. A case review identified around 35% of patients could have been appropriately treated with physiotherapy and/or psychology. A proportion of patients also did not have a good understanding of chronic pain and self management techniques. This resulted in reduced efficiency of the consultant appointment. This current medical model results in an extended patient journey while awaiting a consultant appointment and reduced efficiency of appointments.

**What we did**
- A MDT project group was established
- Case review completed to identify current system and scope for improvement
- Reviewed other chronic pain services across NHS Scotland
- Recruited a chronic pain physiotherapist (2 days per week)
- Developed process with booking team and information services
- Education class
- Regular MDT meetings to support triage process and physiotherapist in new role
- Close working with the GPs was required to both communicate the new triage pathway and to manage patient’s expectation.
- Data was collected and circulated on a weekly basis.

**Outcome and Results**
- 100% of patients are triaged using MDT criteria
- 100% of patients invited to education class
- 27% of patients have been redirected from consultant to physiotherapy or psychology.
- Improved multi disciplinary team working has helped provide better services for these patients using a biopsychosocial model.

**Patient feedback**
- “Made me think about approaching things differently”
- “It helped me understand how pain works”
- ‘Helped me to look forward’

**Key learning**
- Regular multi disciplinary project meetings
- Inclusion from the start of the project and continued communication with primary care and regular communication

**Next Steps**
- Further 6 months testing
- Capture complete patient journey experience
- Request for permanent funding based on clinical outcomes as well as improved waiting times

**References**
The Modern Outpatient: A Collaborative Approach 2017-2020