

## A CASE STUDY

# South Devon Knee Pain Pathway

South Devon Local Health Community (LHC), comprised of Torbay Care Trust and South Devon Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, has used the Map of Medicine as a service redesign tool to help achieve the objectives of their Right Treatment and Choice (Right TRaC) Programme. The aim of Right TRaC is to review the current processes supporting patient referral to secondary care services, ensuring patients receive timely access to secondary care services supported by evidence-based care pathways, comprehensive service information and informed 'Choice'. The care journey for patients with knee pain was selected as one of the first to be redesigned as part of the initial set of localised pathways that included five musculoskeletal pathways.

Over a six month period, the redesign of the knee pain pathway by developing a primary care based specialist physiotherapy service has resulted in a 70% reduction in referrals to secondary care. The Pathway and consequent knee pain clinic are projected to save at least £60,000 for the 2009/10 financial year, even after the clinic costs were taken into account.



"The Map of Medicine is the ideal format to hold up to date

guidance for GPs. It is not unusual when looking at a GP's desk to find piles of paper with clinical guidelines which then slowly get buried by more guidelines. The Map allows me to keep up to date with practice and also with our localised guidelines. I can access patient information, joint formulary, referral forms, and even photographs of conditions."

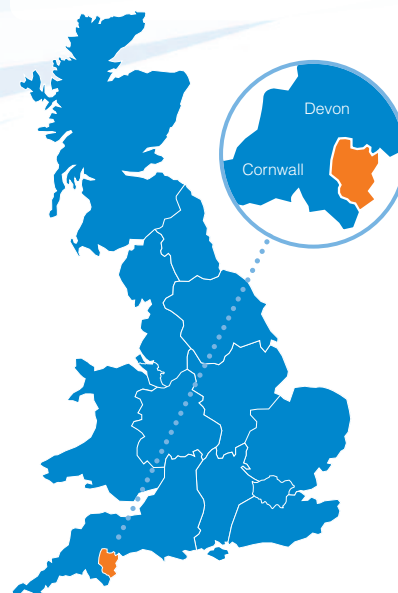
Liz Thomas, Lead GP for Right TRaC, Torbay Care Trust

### Project

The knee pain pathway redesign was led by the clinician to clinician group (which includes consultant leads, GPs, Allied Health Professionals (AHPs), commissioning leads, management leads) within the South Devon LHC. The original idea for redesign of the knee pathway was generated by GPs in Brixham, who felt that some of their knee patients needing an expert opinion could be managed in primary care. An Extended Scope Practitioner (ESP) physiotherapist from secondary care, developed a primary care bookable clinic managed by Torbay Care Trust,

accepting patients from GPs and physiotherapists. After a short pilot, it was felt that this role would be enhanced if the ESP physiotherapist was able to list appropriate patients for surgery directly from the clinic, saving an additional referral to a consultant clinic.

The Map of Medicine was utilised as a service redesign tool to support the process, and was assisted by secondary care consultants working with GPs and physiotherapists to localise the new knee pathway. The Map was chosen because it provided robust current, evidence-based clinical knowledge, displayed in an easy-to-use pathways format.



The community benefitted from the robustness of national Pathways but had the flexibility to customise the pathways to reflect local care provisions and clinical practice.

The pathway redesign process was supported throughout by the Right TRaC programme team, ensuring governance processes were followed, enabling consistency of the publishing process and providing communications, awareness and training support. The Right TRaC Programme hosts regular events to promote awareness of South Devon LHC localised Pathways, progress and successes.

As a consequence of the service redesign, a primary care funded knee pain clinic was created in the South Devon Health Community, which plans to expand to include clinics for NHS Devon patients during this financial year.

## Aims

The aim of the project was to redesign the service for patients experiencing knee pain. The South Devon health community, as a retirement area includes a population older than the national average, and with around a third of those over 50 suffering from chronic knee pain, means it is a high priority care pathway.

The LHC wanted to reduce waiting times in order to meet national targets for referral to treatment. Referrals to a specialist primary care based service would decrease unnecessary referrals to secondary care, and enhance the patient experience of the care journey.

By generating efficiencies, service provision elsewhere could be improved.

## Challenges

South Devon faced two main challenges. The first was commissioning the new ESP physiotherapy clinic across the whole LHC. Initially the clinic was only commissioned in Torbay Care Trust. However, current plans are to now extend the clinic service to NHS Devon, thereby providing access to this service across the whole LHC.

The second was that the ESP physiotherapy clinic initially had a more limited remit, where the physiotherapists could not list patients for surgery. This was identified as an unnecessary delay, as well as requiring an unnecessary consultant clinic appointment in secondary care, so the service was developed to enable the patients who needed surgery to be listed by the ESP physiotherapist.

## Results

The knee pain clinic is available across a number of sites, therefore keeping the service locally available to patients and closer to home.

Over a six month period, redesign of the knee pain pathway and knee pain clinic are projected to save in excess of 400 consultant appointments with a saving of at least £60,000, including the costs of the ESP physiotherapy clinic, over the 2009/10 period.

One of the main objectives of the project was to reduce waiting times. The redesign and clinic have assisted the Trusts in meeting their Referral to Treatment targets for knee conditions. With more patients being seen in primary care, the waiting time for secondary care has fallen due to reduced demand.

The LHC also aimed to decrease the number of referrals to secondary care. From January to October 2008, this figure was reduced by 70%. Benefits were also seen in an increase in the number of appropriate referrals, with an associated positive impact on the patient experience. Only 7% of referrals from the knee pain clinic were discharged from secondary care at the first outpatient appointment, compared to 29% of patients referred directly from GP to secondary referrals.

South Devon LHC is continuing to utilise the Map across a number of specialities as a service redesign and communication tool, assisting them in achieving the objectives of the Right TRaC Programme.

## Aims

- Reduce waiting times for knee pain in order to meet national targets for referral to treatment
- Decrease unnecessary referrals to secondary care
- Enhance the patient experience of the care journey.

## Challenges

- Commissioning the new ESP physiotherapy clinic across the whole community
- Extending the remit of the ESP physiotherapy clinic to enable the listing of patients for surgery, increasing the positive impact of the service.

## Results

- A reduction of in excess of 400 consultant appointments with a saving of at least £60,000, including the costs of the ESP physiotherapy clinic, over the 2009/10 period
- Decrease in the number of referrals to secondary care by 70%
- Increase in the number of appropriate referrals, with an associated positive impact on the patient experience.



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