

Urgent referrals

- Please consider this only in cases where there is suspected **clinical** urgency and with reference to available processes and pathways, for example suspected musculoskeletal malignancy, recent trauma that may require orthopaedic intervention, degenerate cervical myelopathy or suspected hip avascular necrosis.
- This referral route **cannot be safely used to seek immediate/emergency review**, for example new onset or recent progression of cauda equina syndrome, or metastatic spinal cord compression. These cases must be escalated through different channels, for example Flow Navigation, ED, 999.
- Currently only 30% of referrals sent as urgent are vetted to urgent or fracture clinic appointments.

Communication regarding a patient who is **already** under care of orthopaedics

- If you wish to submit a query or concern regarding a patient **who is already under care of an orthopaedic clinician for a specific problem**, for example someone who has been listed for surgery, then **please do not submit further referrals via SCI gateway**.
- **Please correspond directly with the relevant clinician by letter +/- email**. The usage of SCI gateway referrals in these instances generates an avoidable clinical and administrative burden.

Patient Initiated Review (PIR)

- Some patients will have been offered '**Patient Initiated Review (PIR)**', which should be mentioned in clinical letters.
- If your/the patient's query relates to this same problem/condition for which they were offered PIR, then please encourage the patient to contact the orthopaedic service directly using the details they have been given. If they have lost the contact details, then you should find them in the relevant orthopaedic clinical letters on clinical portal.

'Advice Only' Referral

- '**Advice only**' referrals are welcome if it is unclear that formal orthopaedic input or referral is required.
- We are happy to review the available clinical information during our vetting sessions and either issue advice, or arrange orthopaedic review/other actions if required.

Requests to expedite review or treatment

- We are aware that a large number of patients are living with pain and compromised quality of life while they await surgical intervention.
- **We ask that any communication requesting expediting of outpatient review or treatment is made directly to the relevant clinician where possible (see earlier guidance), and only if you feel there are reasonable grounds for doing so.** Information will be reviewed on a case by case basis by the relevant clinician.

Onward referral at point of vetting

- If an orthopaedic referral is felt to be more appropriately managed by a different specialty, eg MSK physiotherapy or rheumatology, then it will **be onward referred at the point of vetting**.
- This is particularly relevant to agreed MSK pathway conditions, for example low back pain.

NHSL Lanarkshire Trauma and Orthopaedic Service
Guidance for communication with orthopaedics and best use of SCI gateway referral

The [MSK physiotherapy service](#) can secure prompt access to an orthopaedic opinion via weekly virtual clinics, **once a patient has commenced physiotherapy, and provided an urgent referral process is not required/indicated**. This reduces the need for clinicians to double-refer to MSK and orthopaedics. Please consider alternatives to orthopaedic referral if it is unclear that a patient will require surgical management, is likely to benefit from conservative management and education, or where agreed pathways stipulate commencing a patient's specialist care in the MSK Physiotherapy service.

Useful links and resources

[NICE Knee OA graphic](#)

[NHSL back pain pathway](#)

[NHS Lanarkshire MSK Physiotherapy self-management resource](#)

[Versus Arthritis | A future free from arthritis](#)

[ESCAPE-Pain online. Evidence-based education and exercise for knee arthritis](#)

[Pain Association](#)

[Lanarkshire Group — Pain Association](#)

[Waiting well - NHS inform](#)

[Support for people waiting on hip or knee replacement surgery | NHS inform](#)

[North Lanarkshire Leisure](#)

[South Lanarkshire Leisure](#)

[Lanarkshire weight-management, green health, mental health & wellbeing, and physical activity](#)

We are grateful for all of the efforts to improve our patients' journey and care thus far, and are keen to explore further opportunities for collaboration and to help support learning and development in relation to orthopaedic/musculoskeletal health. Please get in touch if you feel there is anything in particular that you wish to explore.

Kind regards.

Kumar Periasamy
Clinical Director
Trauma & Orthopaedics

Chris Swallow
Clinical Service Manager
Trauma & Orthopaedics

Nick Kinniburgh
Acting Consultant Physiotherapist, MSK

Jim Logan
Service Manager
Orthopaedic Advanced Practitioner Service