**THE CHALLENGE**

- The Pennine MSK Partnership identified a number of issues with the delivery of MSK services for CYP:
  - Referral pathways were often complex, protracted and inefficient.
  - Patients would experience lengthy waiting times to access specialist paediatric services.
  - There were delays in diagnosis for childhood onset MSK pathologies and subsequent delays in treatment.

**THE SOLUTION**

- In collaboration with Newcastle University, Pennine MSK Partnership developed a bespoke triage and referral guidance for CYP with MSK pathology called ‘Rightpath’.
- Rightpath aims to support allied health professionals (AHPs) with paediatric expertise to promptly identify GP referrals for CYP with MSK pathology and triage them to the appropriate specialist paediatric service or to Rightpath community-based physiotherapy or podiatry (Figure 1).
- To develop the most appropriate triage and referral guidance to enable AHPs to take on this role, the Rightpath team undertook stakeholder consultation events, which included representation from primary and secondary care, specialist services, commissioners and the British Society for Paediatric and Adolescent Rheumatology (BSPAR) parents group.
- AHPs are given bespoke training prior to commencing Rightpath triage.
- Following training, expert MSK AHPs with paediatric expertise to triage referrals for CYP with MSK, once the AHPs have received the appropriate training and support, to ensure that these patients are systematically seen by the ‘right person first time’, and where appropriate, are seen close to home with care delivered by local providers.

**SERVICE AND FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES**

**Service Performance**

- Rightpath triaging as a service delivery in Oldham has reduced the proportion of GP referrals seen by secondary care by 33%.
- During the South Tyneside six-month pilot, 281 referrals were triaged, of which 28% were eligible for Rightpath.

**Clinical Outcomes**

- Rightpath is likely to reduce the issue of seeing multiple different specialties prior to the first paediatric rheumatology appointment by triaging CYP to the right place in the first instance.
- Rightpath may therefore have beneficial effects on clinical outcomes for the patient and on quality of life of the families.

**Financial Outcomes**

- The set-up costs and research evaluation of the Rightpath pilot (Year 1) were funded by a grant (£75,000) awarded by Oldham CCG to the Pennine MSK Partnership, partnering with Newcastle University.
- Year 2 service delivery is supported by Commissioning for Quality and Innovation (CQUIN), pending contracting negotiations.
- Oldham CCG commissions two additional podiatry/physiotherapy three-hour sessions/week from the Pennine MSK Partnership (£21,116/year).
- The primary objective of Rightpath is not cost-savings and, as specialist children’s services are directly commissioned by NHS England, Rightpath does not generate a cost-saving for Oldham CCG directly.
- However, considering the use of NHS resources as a whole, using Rightpath in Oldham avoids costs of approximately £19,000/year to the NHS compared to routine care.

**INNOVATIVE APPROACH AND SCALABILITY**

- Rightpath is the first service to ensure that CYP are systematically seen by the ‘right person first time’ and, where appropriate, are seen close to home with care delivered by local providers.
- Supporting triggers with ongoing training and the availability of medical staff to discuss more complex cases.
- Rightpath has been successfully piloted at a second site, South Tyneside, feedback from this site indicates that it could be successfully modified and effectively rolled out to other centres.
- Uptake of Rightpath at South Tyneside involved modification of the process to address local variation in pathways across primary and secondary care because triaging at this site is normally performed by AHPs based in secondary care. These changes did not compromise patient satisfaction.

**PATIENT FOCUS AND SATISFACTION**

- BSPAR parent groups were consulted during the development of Rightpath and their feedback is obtained on an ongoing basis to ensure that the Rightpath model addresses parental concerns directly.
- Feedback from the BSPAR parents group was that access to care and delay to diagnosis are the most important issues to parents (BSPAR parent survey, unpublished data). Through identifying and triaging eligible CYP to local care quickly, providing earlier reassurance to parents about so-called ‘normal variants’, and offering appointments closer to the home in the community, the Rightpath model addresses parental concerns directly.
- The Rightpath project team sought feedback from Rightpath users throughout pilot studies using the CollaboRATE questionnaire.
  - Positive feedback was received from 74 Rightpath family participants evaluating the Oldham service using the parent/patient satisfaction scores in CollaboRATE Questionnaire (Table 1) and there were no complaints or requests for onward specialist referral.
  - Equivalent high scores for South Tyneside were achieved.
  - 99% (Oldham service) and 100% (South Tyneside pilot study) of service users would recommend Rightpath (Friends and Family Test).

**Table 1. Parent/Patient Satisfaction Scores (CollaboRATE Questionnaire)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent/patient satisfaction scores (n=74)</th>
<th>Score*</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Helped understand your/your child's health issues</td>
<td>8.8/9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listened to things that matter most to you about you/your child's health</td>
<td>8.5/9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Included what matters most to you in choosing what to do next</td>
<td>8.8/9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Acknowledgments**

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