

## First Contact Practitioner Service Drumnadrochit Health Centre, NHS Highland

### **Challenge**

The shortfall of GPs in Scotland is particularly felt in rural communities where recruitment challenges are widespread. Services offered are under pressure leading to health inequalities and burnout.

### **Background**

Drumnadrochit is a Highland village lying on the west shore of Loch Ness, 15 miles from Inverness. The GP practice in Drumnadrochit serves the population of the village and the surrounding area with a list size of 2400.

### **Vision**

To embed a musculoskeletal physiotherapy service in Drumnadrochit Medical Practice to support practice workload and improve patient outcomes.

### **Strategy**

- 0.3 WTE Advanced Physiotherapy Practitioner (APP) recruited to a one year pilot project in Drumnadrochit Medical Practice starting May 2018
- Physiotherapy services advertised via posters in the GP practice, local community Facebook groups, posters in the community, flyers attached to all repeat prescriptions sent out from the practice
- Training provided for reception staff
- Local policies designed with GPs for arrangement of medication requests
- APP training
  - IRMER
  - SCI Gateway Referral
  - Injection Therapy

### **Barriers**

- Culture change for patients and existing staff
- Adequate governance structure and supervision for APP

### **Solutions**

- Provide clear advertising and communication via appropriate channels
- Provide mentoring support and supervision from senior colleagues

## Outcomes May 2018 – February 2019

- 71% of patients seen have accessed the APP directly via reception reducing demand on GP appointments
- Only 7% of patients seen have required onward referral to physiotherapy (rehab classes, pain management workshops, hydrotherapy) reducing overall service demand
- Since the start of 2019 100% of patients referred by the GP attended the GP with multiple problems, allowing the GP to signpost to the APP and focus on medical issues

### Patient Feedback

- “Great service. Please keep it up.”
- “I found today’s consultation very informative and helpful.”
- “Having someone to deal with my knee pain swiftly and knowledgably was a real bonus.”
- “I feel more confident after being given advice.”
- **100% of patients surveyed have been very satisfied with the service received**

### GP Feedback

- “I like being able to discuss problems seen and feed back with APP”
- “Excellent service. I have had good feedback from patients who have made contact.”
- “Onsite presence of APP allows and encourages communication with GP as regards patient care.”
- “I am able to pass on issues and concentrate on other things.”
- “A very accessible service.”

### Next Steps

- ★ Continue data collection and complete the pilot scheme to support the roll out of APP Primary Care posts across NHS Highland in 2019
- ★ Expand the APP remit to include non MSK conditions to increase value in the practice (e.g. vestibular, continence, respiratory)

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