

Media release

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New back and leg pain pathway will help sufferers take control

Patients in south west Essex seeking help for low back or leg pain can now benefit from a new streamlined service thanks to an initiative led by both Basildon and Brentwood Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Thurrock CCG.

The new back pain care pathway follows best practice guidelines from Arthritis Research UK and the British Pain Society, and recognises that the most effective way to treat most back pain that has no serious underlying cause is for the sufferer to make changes to their lifestyle, taking exercise and, if appropriate, medicines to help manage your pain recommended by your GP.

Dr Aravinda Guniyangodage, Planned Care Lead for Basildon and Brentwood CCG says, "Up until now there has been no clearly defined referral pathway for patients who see their GPs with low back pain, and as a consequence many patients will have spent time waiting to see various hospital consultants, before finding out that their back pain could have improved more quickly with exercise and changes to their lifestyle."

Dr Rajesh Yadav, Musculoskeletal GP clinical lead for Thurrock CCG, said: "GPs are now able to manage their patients' back pain in what has been shown to be the most effective way – which means that many patients will not need to wait to see a hospital consultant, and can take control over their own condition. GPs are also well placed to offer the right help and support for associated conditions such as anxiety or depression that can make a patient's symptoms worse and affect their quality of life."

For the majority of patients, six weeks of active management by their GP will significantly improve their pain – but if this approach doesn't improve the patient's pain, the GP will refer the patient to a physiotherapist for more intensive treatment and further advice, who can then refer to a hospital specialist if appropriate.

ENDS

Notes to editors

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