

Understanding Advanced Practice Physiotherapists in GP Practices (GP APPs) A Guide for Patients in Glasgow

Who are GP Advanced Practice Physiotherapists (GP APPs)?

GP Advanced Practice Physiotherapists are highly skilled healthcare professionals who specialise in diagnosing, treating, and managing musculoskeletal (MSK) problems. These include conditions affecting your muscles, bones, joints, and soft tissues.

GP APPs are the first point of contact for patients with MSK issues within many GP practices. This means you don't need to see your GP first.

What do GP APPs do?

GP APPs offer expert advice and treatment for people over the age of 14 with MSK problems, such as:

- Back pain
- Neck pain
- Arthritis
- Sports injuries
- Sprains and strains
- Joint and muscle pain

They can:

- Assess and diagnose your condition
- Advise you on self-management to reduce pain and improve movement
- Refer you to specialist services, such as imaging, podiatry, or orthopaedics, if needed
- Recommend exercises or other treatments

Why See a GP APP?

- **Quick Access to Care:** GP APPs are available directly, so you can avoid waiting for a GP appointment
- **Expertise in Musculoskeletal (MSK) Care:** They specialise in MSK problems, such as bones, muscles and joints, ensuring you get the right care promptly
- **Holistic Approach:** GP APPs focus on helping you stay active, manage pain, and regain mobility
- **Collaboration:** If needed, GP APPs can work alongside your GP and other healthcare professionals

How Can I See a GP APP?

- **Self-Referral:** Some GP practices allow you to book an appointment directly with a GP APP
- **Referral from Reception:** When you call your GP practice, explain your symptoms. The reception team will direct you to the GP APP if appropriate

What to Expect at Your Appointment

During your appointment, the GP APP will:

- Ask about your symptoms and medical history
- Perform a physical exam to assess your condition
- Discuss treatment options and next steps

Appointments are usually up to 20 minutes long.

When Should I See a GP APP?

Many MSK conditions can be managed at home without the need to see a healthcare professional. You can access self-help guidance here: www.nhs.uk/healthcare-professionals/mskphysio



You should book an appointment with a GP APP if you have:

- A new or ongoing MSK problem which you have been unable to manage
- Pain or discomfort in your joints, muscles, or bones
- Questions about exercises or treatments for MSK issues

When Should I See a GP Instead?

You should see your GP if you:

- Have a general health concern not related to your muscles, bones, or joints
- If you are seeking review of medication for a chronic condition (For example, pain relief or other prescriptions)
- Experience symptoms such as unexplained weight loss, fever, or persistent swelling alongside MSK issues

Get the Right Care, at the Right Time

Seeing an Advanced Practice Physiotherapist ensures you receive specialist care for musculoskeletal problems quickly, helping you get back to doing what you love.

For more information about your condition, visit NHS Inform.