



David Meech

MSK First Contact
Practitioner (FCP) &
ZoomPhysio Partner
david@zoomphysio.co.uk

Stories of change

ZOOMPHYSIO: DELIVERING A DIGITAL FIRST PHYSIO PLAN WITHIN THE MSK PATHWAY

Providing rapid access to physiotherapy plans online without having to first speak to a clinician for people with common, non-complex musculoskeletal (MSK) conditions in Derbyshire



What we did

We designed and developed an online service for patients needing rapid access to physiotherapy advice. The goal was to provide physio-plans online without people waiting to for a medical appointment. Following a referral, patients register, and a physiotherapist checks that online physio is safe and appropriate. A four-week plan is then provided online. It is not a replacement for seeing a clinician but gives people choices, enabling them to start straight away with safe, effective movements. In December 2020, NHS patients began using ZoomPhysio. Our online NHS plans have been accessed by 1500 NHS patients. It has been encouraging to learn that 51% of users are aged 51-70 and 10% are over 70 years of age.

Our motivation

To provide easy access to trusted physiotherapy advice at time when accessing physiotherapy services became difficult due to lengthily waiting times. To challenge the assumption that older patients will not readily access online services. To provide a democratic online space for health information.



The difference we are making

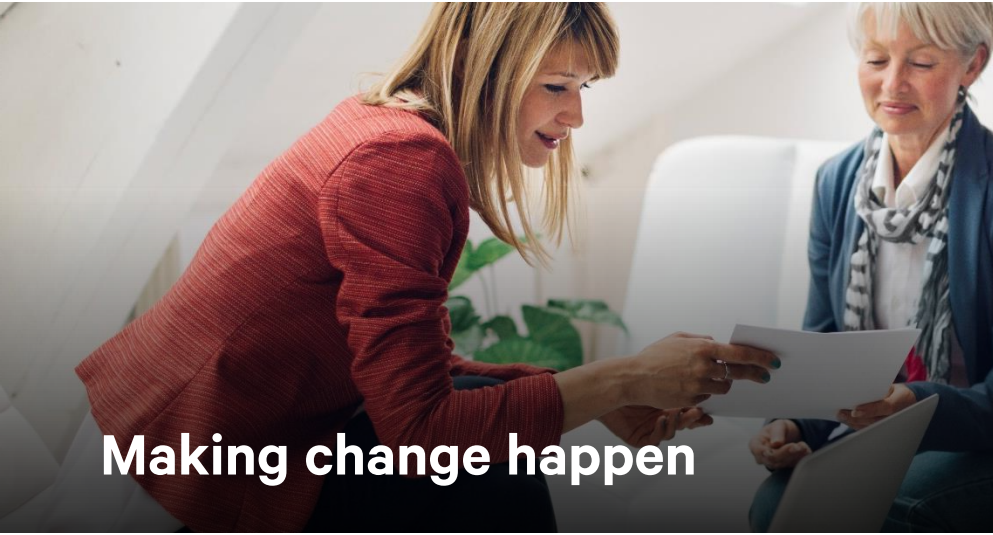
We demonstrated very high levels of engagement with online physio-plans. Over 60% of users who undertook a ZoomPhysio plan reported they could self-manage on plan-completion at 4 weeks. We calculated a saving of over 230 hours of GP surgery time and a cost-saving of at least £27,000 compared to the standard physiotherapy pathway

What's next?

We have an app release planned for 2022. This will provide an exciting opportunity to deliver some significant innovations to our online patient services.

We plan to incorporate a locality-based social prescribing pathway into our plans, and we hope to become embedded within integrated care systems.





Making change happen

We are now providing ZoomPhysio to a population of over 140,000 NHS patients.

The drive to deliver rapid-access to physio-plans came from our learning around the multiple barriers that patients with arthritis would encounter when trying to get timely advice for MSK conditions as waiting list pressures grew. As our work progressed, we learned that our project had the potential to be adopted into the existing MSK pathway. We decided to model it to support the First Contact Physiotherapy Practitioner role in general practice. By undertaking an online physio-plan and submitting an outcome, ZoomPhysio users (patients) were able to demonstrate how they had engaged with our self-help measures. We were interested in understanding what proportion of patients could then continue to self-manage on completion of the online physio plan.

As we mapped out the project, we decided that we needed to include a registration process so that we could allocate plans, outcomes and data-points back to individual users. As well as the requirement to register, we had to design robust safety-netting and staff training to help to identify users who were not suitable to partake in an online physio plan, and to allow users within plans to be able to leave the digital pathway and be brought into the existing clinical pathway if direct (person to person) assessment was required.

We have had to work hard with our GP partners to promote the service, gain and nurture engagement, and champion the digital-first format. If we had to do it all again, we would plan to resource a member of staff specifically to be a stakeholder engagement champion.

“Trusted healthcare advice online should be universally available. As professionals, we need to embrace the challenge of creating great content for our patients.”

Top tips:

- Pick a good team with plenty of readily transferable skills
- Be prepared to find extra time as you develop your project
- Lots of self-belief and resilience is required, it will pay off

Want to know more?




Contact David Meech

david@zoomphysio.co.uk

www.zoomphysio.co.uk



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