

# The Gateshead Council approach to health and wellbeing and ESCAPE Pain in the workplace

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# Gateshead Council

## Escape Pain

### Journey

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# Demographics of Gateshead

Gateshead Population (2018):

**202,258**

People living in Gateshead aged 45-64 (2018):

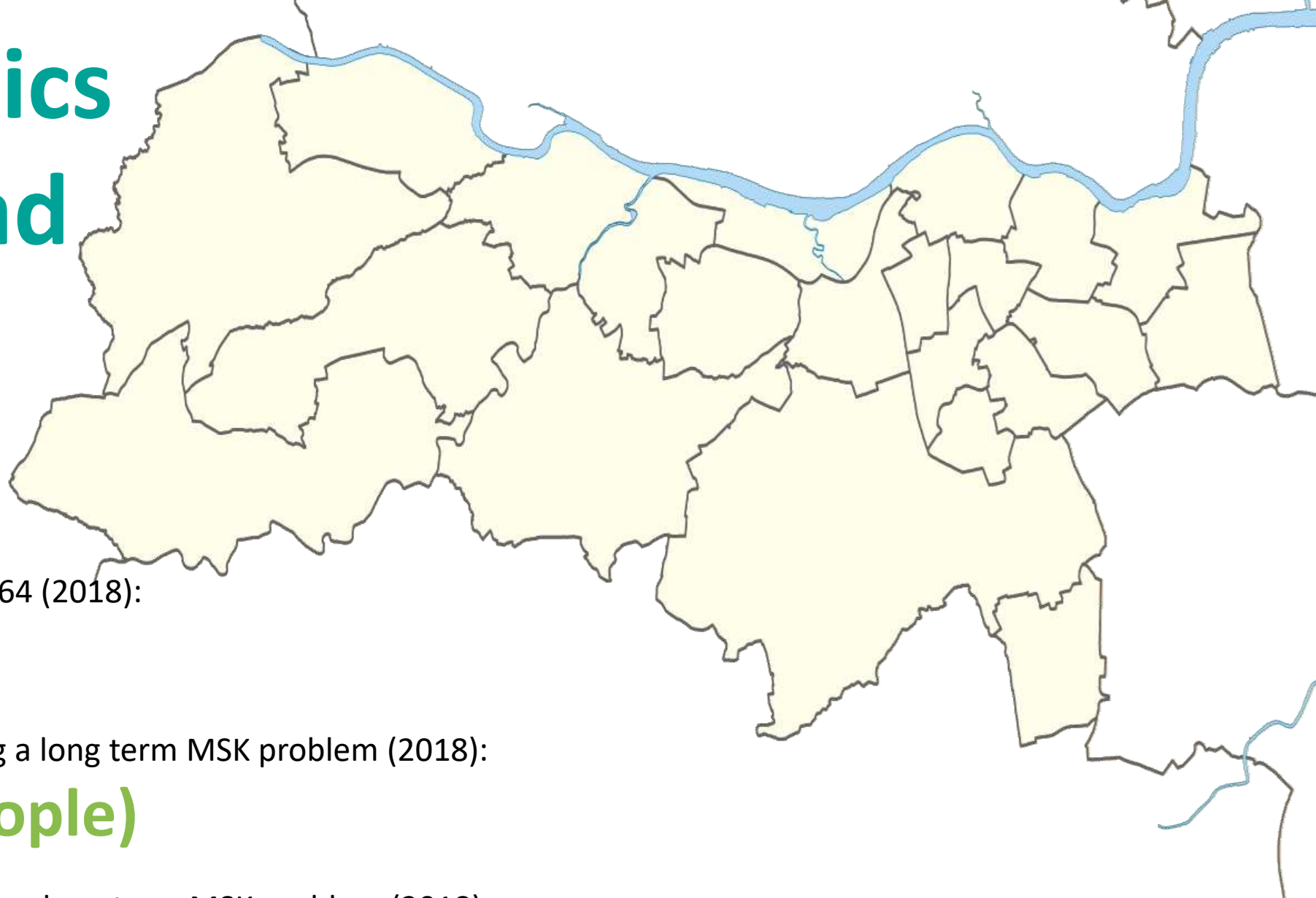
**53,597**

People living in Gateshead reporting a long term MSK problem (2018):

**21.9% (44,294 people)**

England average or people reporting a long term MSK problem (2018):

**16.9%**



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# Demographics of Gateshead



Communities and Environment Employees (2019):

**4,152**

No of staff with MSK problems (2019):

**87**

FTE Days Lost (2019):

**2964 = 423 weeks = 8 years**

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# MSK Impact on staff sickness

The top three reasons for referral remained at:

## Referral Criteria (5)

- Are the symptoms worsening and may lead to absence?

## Referral Criteria (6)

- Are the symptoms affecting the employee's ability to work safely and effectively?

## Referral Criteria (3)

Are the symptoms considered to be related to work tasks or working practice?

Communities & Environment (27% of Physio referrals) remained the second highest referring council group.

Spinal related symptoms again remain the most predominant

Age distribution showed that age ranges of 50-59 (39%) remain the most predominant users of the Physiotherapy service

Chronic conditions (55%) were the highest symptom stage seen.

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# Process

Raising awareness of the benefits Escape Pain to benefit Gateshead Council employees has been a lengthy but worthwhile process. The conversations started with:

Operational Lead for  
TIMS raised  
awareness of EP

Next involved  
Gateshead Public  
Health team in the  
discussions as to its  
advantages

Highlighted to  
Gateshead Council  
Sports & Leisure the  
advantages of EP

Engaged Gateshead Council  
Better Health At Work Award  
the task & finish groups to help  
them understand the  
advantages for staff

Contacted AHSN to  
discuss potential for  
rolling it out within  
Gateshead Council

Took a proposal to  
Gateshead Council  
Public Health Senior  
Management Team

Progressed to  
discussions involving  
Occupational Health

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# Process

Agreed on the best service to pilot the EP programme

Met with the Senior Management team at Local Environment Services (LES)

Held an MSK Awareness Event at LES to find relevant potential participants

Contacted various line managers for the potential participants to gain consent for participation

Embarked on the journey to gain consent for participants to be given time to participate within their working day and not their own time

Scheduled in first discussion session between senior management teams, line managers and potential participants

Scheduled in first pilot programme

# Timeline

**August 2018:** Initial awareness of Escape Pain through discussions with TIMS

**November 2018:** Attended training for Escape Pain in own time

**January 2019:** First meetings between Gateshead Council teams

**February 2019:** Joint meetings with Gateshead Council teams and Gateshead VCS organisations

**July – August 2019:** Audit of data of which services would benefit the most

**June 2019:** Proposal to deliver EP within Council environment

**April – May 2019:** First delivery within VCS sector of Gateshead

**March 2019:** Joint meetings between Gateshead Council, VCS and AHSN

**September 2019:** Paper taken to SMT for permission to progress

**October 2019:** Involvement of Occupational Health and MSK awareness event

**November 2019:** Initial discussions with Local Environmental Services

**December 2019:** Permission given to access EP in works time; Schedule of programme proposed

**February 2020:** First meetings between Senior Management, Line management and participants from LES services

**January 2020:** Reminder email circulated to all management and participants



# Additional Aspects

## Barriers We Have Overcome:

- a) Changing culture: Permission to attend the full course in work time
- b) Continued investment in prevention: Permission to continue to have this protected time within work time
- c) National pilot: Bringing EP into a local authority culture

## Ongoing Barriers:

- a) Changing mindset of some line management to understand investment in prevention
- b) How can you prove EP has reduced MSK sickness levels
- c) Mixing different levels of responsibility in same programme

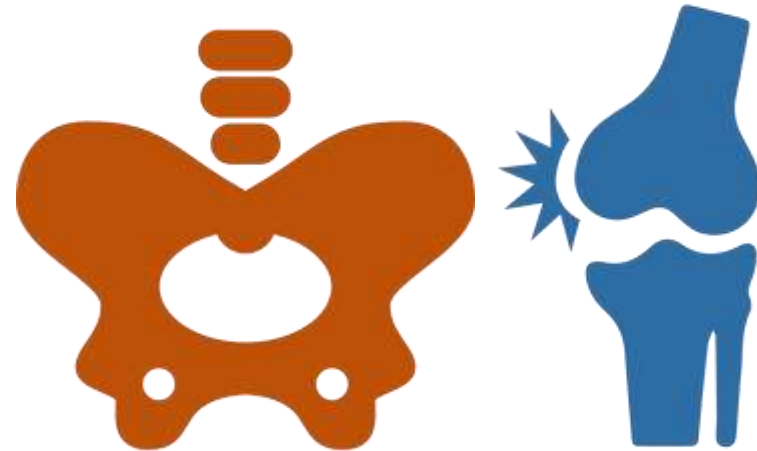
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# The Picture Currently



We have 10 males signed up and participating in the pilot course



We have other services asking to also enable some of their staff with hip and knee pain to attend the programme

# The Next Steps



Keep evaluating



Keep the protected time and space  
for participation after the course



Develop a peer mentor  
support group