Moray MSK
Community Appointment Day

Patient Follow-up Qualitative Impact Assessment

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Executive Summary

Background

The aim of a Community Appointment Day (CAD) is to move away from treatment led care, aligning with and promoting a holistic and Realistic Medicine approach, offering people the opportunity to receive holistic care and support under one roof, supporting people to better self-manage and engage with preventative activities and support. This document provides a qualitative impact assessment of the Moray MSK CAD initiative. It outlines evaluation methods and the insights gained from patient interviews 7 months post CAD attendance. The aim is to understand how this new model of care supports patients in self-managing their conditions and to identify factors influencing sustained behaviour change.

Findings

Overall, the feedback indicated the 'what matters to you' conversation to be a valuable component of patient CAD attendance, fostering understanding and support. Meeting other people with similar health conditions or experiences had minimal impact although some patients expressed that connecting with others provided them with a sense of solidarity, making them feel as if they were ‘not alone’ in their journey. This sentiment underscores the potential emotional benefits of peer support, even if the overall impact was perceived as neutral by a majority.

Having clinical appointments without time constraints and in non-clinical settings was generally viewed positively by patients. The opportunity for more in-depth conversations and a relaxed atmosphere were highlighted as key benefits. However, challenges such as noise and the nature of exercises in open spaces should be addressed to enhance the patient experience further.

The insights gathered reveal a significant positive correlation between CAD attendance and enhanced patient confidence, primarily attributed to improved understanding and information dissemination. The findings suggest that CADs could play a crucial role in empowering patients, enhancing their ability to self-manage their MSK conditions. Increased confidence gained from CAD attendance led to meaningful changes in patients' daily routines. The reported improvements in exercise adherence, stability, and self-management strategies underscore the importance of supportive practices in fostering patient empowerment and enhancing quality of life.

The MSK CAD has proven to be a valuable resource for patients, promoting health management, lifestyle changes, social connections, and access to essential support services. The positive ripple effects of attending these activities underscore the importance of community-based programs in improving patient outcomes.

The feedback gathered from patients regarding their experiences at the CAD is overwhelmingly positive, with a strong willingness to attend future events. The insights shared highlight the importance of providing diverse services and empowering patients through information. Additionally, the suggestions for improvement emphasize the need for flexibility in how patients can engage with the event, ensuring that all attendees feel comfortable and supported in their participation.

Next Steps

The insights gained from this qualitative follow up impact evaluation can inform future practices and enhance patient engagement in their health journeys in self-managing their health conditions.

Background

In response to the increasing number of referrals and the complexity surrounding patient presentations, it was agreed that the Moray CAD would focus on Musculoskeletal (MSK) Conditions. Focusing on supporting people with joint, bone and muscle problems, the Moray CAD aimed to help patients, referred to the MSK waiting list, to discuss what matters most to them.

The primary goal of this Community Appointment Day (CAD) initiative was to test a different model of care which aims to support people in self-managing their conditions and identify necessary next steps for further treatment by providing unhurried and direct access to a wide range of clinical, third sector and peer support which offered support and advice on health and wellbeing beyond their presenting condition. This is in contrast to the standard service model which, involves a single physiotherapist-led assessment and treatment, appropriate onward referral or discharge.

The MSK CAD evidence review and evaluation interim report (Jan 2025) synthesised findings from both patients and staff who attended the first MSK CAD to be held in Grampian. The initiative's goal, to support and involve patients was achieved with patients reporting on the day that they felt listened to and that their concerns were addressed. The evidence also suggested that patients found personal benefits whilst they attended the CAD which were broader than their MSK condition. The staff experience was positive, supporting the CAD approach of a new way of working and engaging with patients. (For a more detailed breakdown of CAD processes and outcomes from the first MSK CAD please refer to the MSK CAD Interim evaluation report).

Follow-up interviews with patients, after they experience a different model of care, are crucial to allow us to evaluate the effectiveness of CADs to support people to better self-manage their conditions and engage with preventative activities, post CAD. However, evidence often reports an "intention-behaviour gap" which refers to this disconnect between what people intend to do, as reported in the interim MSK CAD evaluation report, and what they actually do. This gap can occur for several reasons, including difficulty translating intentions into action due to external factors like opportunity and time, or internal factors like motivation. Following up with patients, 6 months post CAD, provides the opportunity to explore factors which support positive and sustained behaviour change.

Methods

Post CAD Patient Interviews

Patients who agreed to be contacted post CAD (permissions recorded within patient passport) were contacted by email, 7 months after the MSK CAD, to check if they were still willing to participate in an interview as their circumstances may have changed since they initially agreed. This process respects autonomy and ensures informed consent is maintained throughout the process.

Patients were offered a range of dates and times for an arranged telephone interview. Interviews were conducted by one researcher (AG). A draft questionnaire was developed on MS Forms and reviewed by Physiotherapy lead (AB). The semi-structured interviews conducted were based on a simple set of questions which explored with patients the following areas;

- *Supporting Conversations*
- *Patient Reflections*
- *Patient Impact*
- *Behaviour Change*
- *Wider Impact*
- *Attending Future CADs*

Patient responses were captured within the MS Form by the researcher during the interview process, themes were shared with the participants to ascertain if they were a true reflection of their opinions.

Patient interviews, were analysed using high level thematic framework analysis (Gale. N.K *et al*. 2013). Thematic analysis involves identifying patterns and themes in qualitative data such as interview transcripts, coding and categorising into themes using NVivo 12 software.

Thematic analysis of patient interviews can yield rich insights into their experiences, perspectives, and behaviours, leading to several key outcomes. These include understanding patient experiences, identifying patterns in how people respond to changes in service delivery, and gaining a deeper contextual understanding of mechanisms leading to changes in behaviour. This method is particularly useful for exploring complex experiences, understanding the "why" behind actions, and identifying patterns across different perspectives.

Findings

Table 1 summarises the number of patients contacted, interviews carried out, average length of interview and age range of patients.

Table 1: Patient participation in interviews by sex and clinical service referral.

F = female M = male	**Sent Interview Invitation (n)**	**Agreed**	**Average length of Interview (mins)**	**Average age (range)**
Physiotherapy (F)	36	10	28 mins	58 (40-78)
Physiotherapy (M)	11	3	31 mins	61 (42-78)
Podiatry (F)	18	5	25 mins	64 (57-66)
Podiatry (M)	8	2	21 mins	60
Total	73	20	28 mins	60 (40-78)

Supporting Conversations

Patient were asked whether they found the ‘what matters to you’ conversation helpful. Eighty percent of respondents (n=16) reported that they found the 'what matters to you' conversation helpful.

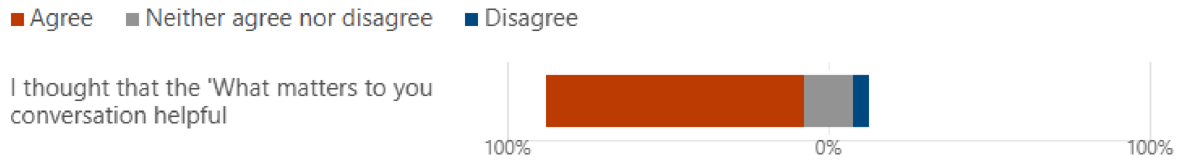


Figure 3: Supporting Conversations

Gale, N.K. et al. (2013) Using the framework method for the analysis of qualitative data in multi-disciplinary health research. BMC Medical Research Methodology, 13, 117

When asked to elaborate on why they found these conversations beneficial, two key themes emerged: (*Box's contain example patient quotes in Italics*);

1. **Clarification of the Process**: Patients appreciated that the conversation provided a clear explanation of what would happen during their attendance at the CAD. This clarity helped to alleviate anxiety and set expectations.

"I had no idea what the day was going to involve"

"It was a good introduction to find out what would happen whilst I was here"

"Really good to have that initial check in and go through the process"

2. **Identification of Supporting Resources:** The conversation aided patients in identifying both condition-specific and broader health and wellbeing support that they could access. This aspect was particularly valued as it empowered patients to take an active role in managing their health and accessing necessary resources.

"I had specific needs so it was some help"

"It helped me to be directed to the right service and support"

"It helped me to think about what other different services would help, not specifically for my condition, other things that could help me, with other things happening in my life".

In conclusion, the 'what matters to you' conversation has proven to be a valuable component of patient CAD attendance, fostering understanding and identification of support among patients. The insights gained from this evaluation can inform future practices and enhance patient engagement in their health journeys in self-managing their conditions.

Patient Reflections Post CAD

Patients were asked to reflect on how they felt each of three following statements had impacted on them whilst attending the CAD.

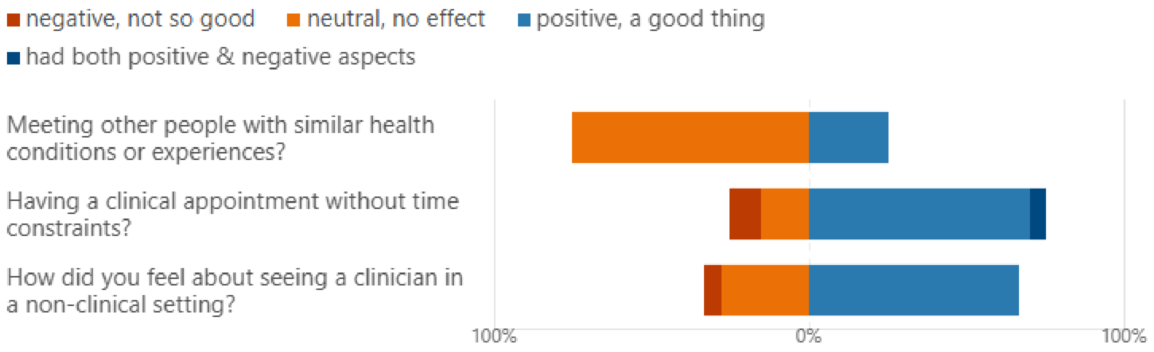


Figure 2: Patient Reflections

Peer Interaction

When asked if meeting other people with similar health conditions or experiences had any impact, 75% (n=15) of respondents indicated that it had a neutral or no effect on them, while 25% (n=5) reported a positive or beneficial experience.

Upon further inquiry into their responses, a significant number of patients noted that they did not engage in conversations with other patients.

"No impact as didn't really speak to any other patients there"

"I was there for me, I didn't speak to any others there"

However, some patients expressed that connecting with others in similar situations provided them with a sense of solidarity, making them feel as if they were 'not alone' in their journey. This sentiment underscores the potential emotional benefits of peer support, even if the overall impact is perceived as neutral by a majority.

"I didn't talk to anyone about my problems, but it was a feeling that you are not alone, some people are worse than you, gives me a feeling of confidence"

"I am quite young with rheumatoid arthritis, so it was good to meet other people who are in a similar position to me"

"Knowing that everyone was there understood what I was going through, although I didn't speak to anyone else it was good to know that I wasn't alone"

In conclusion, while many patients may not actively seek out peer interactions, those who do often find comfort in shared experiences, highlighting the complex nature of social support in health contexts.

Clinical Appointment with No Time Constraints

Patients were asked about the impact of having a clinical appointment without time constraints, the responses were overwhelmingly positive. Specifically, 70% (n=14) of participants indicated that the experience was good or positive. They appreciated the opportunity to have more time to talk and felt more relaxed during their appointments.

"I had a chance to speak with physio, time to explain, I felt like I could take time to explain, not rushed, traditional appointment you come out thinking I didn't mention this or that, but this way I had the time to remember to say everything"

"I can get a bit of white coat syndrome, I come out and think that is not what I was trying to say, I feel rushed, so get more nervous and under pressure. I felt more relaxed here, not rushed, I was not on the clock, I was able to take my time and explain my situation"

In contrast, 15% (n=3) reported a neutral or no effect regarding the time constraints, while 10% (n=2) expressed a negative or not-so-good experience. Additionally, 5% (n=1) noted that their experience had both positive and negative aspects. This feedback suggests that while the majority found the lack of time pressure beneficial, there are still some patients who may not have felt the same way.

Clinical Appointments in Non-Clinical Setting

The sentiment towards seeing a clinician in a non-clinical setting was similarly favourable. When asked about this experience, 70% (n=14) of patients responded that it was a positive or good thing. They expressed that the non-clinical environment was much nicer than a traditional hospital setting, contributing to a more comfortable experience.

"It did not have that sterile feel of a clinic, which was good"

"It was less intimidating being in a community sports centre"

"It reminded me when we were sent to the centres for the COVID jabs, and that was non clinical, so felt a bit like that, perhaps Covid has normalised this"

However, 30% (n=5) of respondents felt that the non-clinical setting had a neutral or no effect on their experience, while 5% (n=1) described it as negative or not so good.

Despite the positive feedback, some challenges were noted. Patients identified noise as a significant issue, which could detract from the overall experience. Additionally, some patients were surprised by the need to perform exercises in an open environment, which may have contributed to discomfort for some individuals.

"There was a bit of an echo, sound was not great"

"It was not set up for an ideal consultation with the noise in the hall, if I had been working in that environment I would have found that hard, really hard to concentrate"

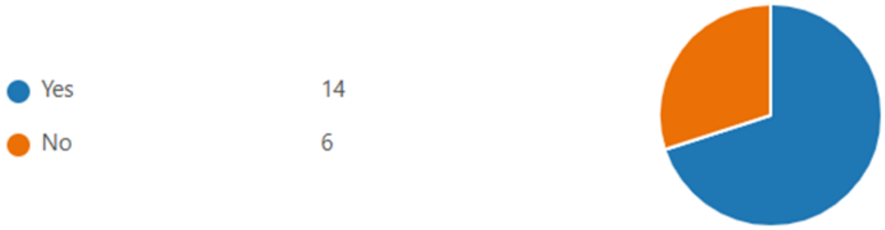
"The initial conversation with the physio was behind a screen, so that was fine. I was a bit taken back at being shown my exercises in front of everyone"

"It didn't bother me that the exercises were out in the open, but you were kind of out on display"

Overall, the feedback indicates that having clinical appointments without time constraints and in non-clinical settings is generally viewed positively by patients. The opportunity for more in-depth conversations and a relaxed atmosphere were highlighted as key benefits. However, challenges such as noise and the nature of exercises in open spaces should be addressed to enhance the patient experience further.

Patient Impact

During the interview, patients were asked whether attending the CAD had any impact on their confidence to self-manage their condition. More than half of patients (n=14) indicated that they thought attending the CAD had a positive impact on their confidence to self-manage their condition.



Patients were asked what may have facilitated this change in confidence. The majority of patients spoke of how they now have increased confidence due to the information they received and consequently an increased understanding of their condition as a whole. This newfound knowledge has enabled them to self-manage their condition with more confidence;

> *“I’m more confident in managing my condition, I didn't understand what was happening before, I now know what my condition is, and I know what I need to do to help myself”.*
>
> *“I’m more confident, I manage and understand my condition more, know how to support myself”*
>
> *“It gave me the confidence to realise that there was more wrong with me than just lack of balance”*
>
> *It’s had a massive impact, it has really helped, and getting information from Versus Arthritis and speaking to others has been great. It has given me more confidence to raise things with my consultant”*
>
> *“I got lots of information which has helped with my confidence, motivation and my mental health”*

The findings suggest that educational programs like the CAD play a crucial role in empowering patients, enhancing their ability to manage their health effectively. This empowerment is essential for improving health outcomes and fostering a proactive approach to self-management of their conditions.

Behaviour Change

Patients were asked whether as a result of this increased confidence whether they had made any changes to their daily routine as a consequence. Many patients who attended podiatry appointments reported making significant changes to their footwear. This adjustment was often accompanied by a commitment to continue with prescribed exercises. Patients noted that these behaviour changes not only improved their comfort but also had a direct positive impact on their conditions. By addressing or removing symptoms, patients experienced enhanced muscle strength and overall better foot health;

> *“The advice I was given for specific footwear has helped, I have seen improvement and I have not had to have any further help, the new shoes have addressed my condition”*
>
> *“I go to the gym 3 times a week now for weight training so that has improved my muscle strength”*
>
> *“I have continued to do the exercises since the CAD, I can move a lot better and have no more symptoms”*

The insights gathered from the interviews highlight the importance of educational programs like the CAD in empowering patients to take control of their health, leading to meaningful changes in their daily lives.

Patients receiving physiotherapy reported similar benefits. The exercises and techniques provided by physiotherapists contributed to improved stability, which in turn enabled patients to walk more confidently. Many expressed enthusiasm about joining local walking clubs, indicating a shift towards a more active lifestyle. This newfound stability allowed them to engage in physical activities they may have previously avoided due to discomfort or fear of falling;

> *"I have joined the walking club, the walking aids that the physio gave me, showing me the different ways and techniques to keep myself stable, and using the bands to exercise, have all aided my stability"*
>
> *"I'm doing more walking, yoga and stretching, I'm doing an exercise routine with the bands that they gave me at the appointment"*
>
> *"Physio has helped a lot with walking, really got me started, I was introduced to a walking club which I have been going to regularly"*

Additionally, several patients shared how they were able to implement positive changes that supported self-management of their conditions during their working day and in everyday activities. These changes included incorporating exercises into their daily routines, making ergonomic adjustments at work, and being more mindful of their physical limitations. Such proactive approaches not only empowered patients but also contributed to a greater sense of control over their health;

> *"My doctor has managed to get me transferred from one area of my work to another so that I have a lighter load of work which has helped with my arthritis"*
>
> *"I now also get up from my computer at work more often, walk a bit further to stretch muscles so I'm not so still"*
>
> *"I do things differently to make life easier for myself, I have made small adaptations so I can continue with everyday activities, house hold chores, shopping and driving"*

Wider Benefits

Attending the CAD raised patient's awareness of what was available at the local sport centre that supported them to self-manage their condition, by increasing muscle strength and weight loss. The structured activities provided a platform for patients to engage in physical exercise, which is crucial for managing various health conditions;

> *"I have joined the local gym since the event to help with my muscle strength, it was good to find out what was available"*
>
> *"I started going to the gym, I've had a lot of training sessions for my back that have benefited me tremendously.*
>
> *My muscles have strengthened and I have even lost weight, great benefit, best thing I ever did"*

Moreover, attending the CAD has also seen benefits to patients that extend beyond the health conditions they presented with. Patients spoke of the support they had received to stop vaping and to change their diet, highlighting the holistic approach of the program. This comprehensive support system encourages individuals to make healthier lifestyle choices, contributing to their overall well-being.

> *"I spoke to Healthpoint about stopping vaping, I have now stopped vaping with their help"*
>
> *"I've changed my diet, to help with my condition. Being at the CAD, did make me I needed to change my lifestyle to help me feel better about myself"*
>
> "I had a follow up appointment at the Moray leisure centre specifically around weight loss"

Patients described how by discovering other activities available at the centre, they were able to make new friends and connect with others facing similar challenges. This social aspect of the CAD is vital, as it helps to combat feelings of isolation and fosters a supportive community environment;

> *"I'm walking more with the walking club, I've made lots of new friends, I also go to a mobility movement class at the sport centre and have made loads of friends there"*
>
> *"Finding out about Library service, information about groups that I might want to connect with, other places that I can volunteer, also told me more about other people that I can talk to so I can find out what is going on with me"*

Additionally, a number of patients spoke of how they had been supported by Citizens Advice to identify and apply for benefits that would support them and their family. This assistance not only alleviates financial stress but also empowers patients to take control of their circumstances, further enhancing their quality of life.

> *"Citizens Advice helped me to apply for adult disability payments, to do the application myself online"*
>
> *"Citizens Advice has been invaluable, I didn't think I would be eligible for benefits, I had to drop hours at work due to my condition, so this has brought my income back up"*
>
> *"I followed up with and have taken advice from Citizen Advice around my daughter and* benefits"

In conclusion, the CAD has proven to be a valuable resource for patients, promoting health management, lifestyle changes, social connections, and access to essential support services. The positive ripple effects of attending these activities underscore the importance of community-based programs in improving patient outcomes.

Attend Future CADs

Patients were asked if they would attend another CAD if invited, regardless of the health condition being addressed. A significant majority of patients (n=18) expressed a positive inclination to attend future events.

When prompted to elaborate on their willingness to return, patients provided several insightful responses;

- **Diverse Range of Services**: Many patients appreciated the variety of services available at the CAD, which catered to a broad spectrum of health needs. They found the presence of multiple organizations beneficial for obtaining information and advice.
- **Empowerment through Information**: A recurring theme in patient responses was the notion that "information is power." Attendees reported discovering topics and resources they had not previously considered or knew to inquire about.

“All the professionals together, you could get any concerns alleviated on the one day”

“I think it was really good that all these services were in one place, I could talk to anyone I needed to”

“You can come away with all the information that you need”

I didn’t have to go to numerous different places and people for information”

- **Holistic Approach**: Patients valued the holistic nature of the event, which allowed them to explore various aspects of their health and well-being in a supportive environment.
- **Positive Experience**: Overall, the feedback indicated that patients had a favourable experience at the CAD, citing it as a well-organized event.

“Information is power, I found about things I didn’t even know I should ask about, it was a win win situation”

“It was a seamless procedure, you felt like you were being heard and being helped, from start to finish it was a holistic approach which was really good”

“I would go in a heartbeat, there was an air of positivity, great atmosphere, really great day”

“I didn’t feel like I was being hurried, felt like I could take as long as I liked”

A few patients mentioned that they would have liked to engage with more services had they been better informed prior to the event. They expressed a desire for clearer communication about the available resources to maximize their interactions.

> *"Had I known more or understood more before the day I would have spoken to more of the services there, so I would definitely go and speak to more people next time"*
>
> *"Great event, thought it was really good, just more information about how much time it would have taken to go through the event"*

Some attendees felt that not all patients may wish to engage with services directly. They suggested that future events should allow for more flexible participation options, enabling patients to attend without feeling pressured to interact with every service available.

> *"A bit of tailoring the event from the start so if people don't want to talk to other services there is a route which they can take to avoid the other tables, so don't feel pressurised"*
>
> *"Allow people to attend the clinical appointment, and not feel that they have to be filtered into one direction, more options how the patient can attend and experience the day"*

The feedback gathered from patients regarding their experiences at the CAD is overwhelmingly positive, with a strong willingness to attend future events. The insights shared highlight the importance of providing diverse services and empowering patients through information. Additionally, the suggestions for improvement emphasize the need for flexibility in how patients can engage with the event, ensuring that all attendees feel comfortable and supported in their participation.