

# What happens when you are referred to see a Specialist Privately?

This leaflet describes what you can expect to happen if you ask your GP to refer you to see a specialist doctor privately.

## What happens next?

Your GP will write a referral letter if they think that it is appropriate to refer you. The letter will be sent to you by text or email (unless you would prefer to collect it) so you can send it to your insurance company or the Consultant that you have specified. The letter will include any relevant medical details about you. If an insurance company requires a specific form to be completed, you will be required to pay a charge for this additional work.

You should then contact the Consultant's team directly to organise an appointment. Should there be any appointment issues in the future, you should contact your Consultant's team and not your GP practice.

Please note, unless the appointment is urgent, it will not be possible to produce a referral letter at short notice. You can select the 'Referral query' tab on our practice website 'Contact us' facility to let us know the details of your Consultant.

## Seeing the Consultant:

### What happens if I need a test or procedure?

If the Consultant thinks that you need any tests (including blood tests), or a surgical procedure, the Consultant is responsible for:

- arranging the tests and any medications that might be needed for this, as well as explaining how and when you will receive a date and what to do if the date is not suitable for you;
- giving you the results and explaining what they mean (this may be done in a separate appointment with the Consultant or by letter).

You should not visit your GP surgery to discuss the results of tests organised by others, it is the Consultant's responsibility to discuss these with you.

### What happens if I need new medication?

The Consultant might suggest prescribing new medication for you or might want to make changes to the medication that you are already taking.

The Consultant is responsible for giving you the first prescription for any new medication that you need to start taking straightaway.

In some cases, The Hall Practice can convert a private prescription to an NHS prescription upon request, or continue to prescribe these medications on the NHS if the following conditions are met:

- We have received a letter from the specialist explaining the full rationale for the treatment, the dose and regime instructions, and any monitoring and planned follow-up

- The prescribing clinician at The Hall Practice agrees the medication is clinically necessary, appropriate and in line with usual prescribing practice
- The use of the medication is in line with NICE guidance or locally agreed protocols
- If the medication is unlicensed or prescribed outside of its licensed indication, the letter from the specialist must clearly document that this has been discussed with the patient, otherwise the letter can be returned to the consultant to clarify this or a routine GP appointment arranged
- The medication does not require any special monitoring that we do not have the expertise to provide
- If the medication does require monitoring, a relevant Shared Care Protocol document has been completed by the specialist and received by us

Occasionally the medication may be switched to an equivalent but equally effective medicine which is prescribed locally under prescribing advice from the Integrated Care Board.

As we receive over a thousand clinical letters per week, ***we require 7-10 working days to process any request to convert a private prescription once the above conditions are met.*** For this reason, you may choose to pay for your initial prescription privately to enable you to start your new medication promptly.

Private consultants may suggest medications to patients which would not normally be prescribed by NHS GPs. If this is the case, you will need to continue to receive them from the Consultant - please contact them directly to organise this.

There is no provision for refunding any money already spent on private treatment, including medication.

### **What happens if I need to transfer my care back to the NHS?**

If after seeing the Consultant privately you want to be transferred back to NHS care, this would need to be in line with current local referral guidelines. This transfer needs to be made by the private Consultant who is overseeing your care, and should not be passed back to the GP to do. There are a few reasons why:

- it delays your care
- your Consultant knows the full details of your condition and where best to refer you to
- it wastes precious NHS General Practice time.

### **What if I need a Fit Note (previously known as Sick Note)?**

If you need to be certified as unfit for work following treatment by a Consultant:

- the Consultant is responsible for issuing you with a Fit Note, this includes after operations;
- the Fit Note should cover the period they expect you to be unfit to work, or until your next contact with the Consultant.

You should not need to see your GP to get a Fit Note following hospital treatment unless your inability to work is unexpectedly prolonged.

### **What if I need a follow-up appointment?**

The Consultant will discuss with you whether you should attend for ongoing follow-up care or whether you should be discharged back to your GP. If the Consultant thinks you do need to be seen again, they will give

you another appointment or tell you when to expect this. If you do not hear anything, please contact the Consultant's office, rather than your GP surgery.

### **What do I do if I have any questions?**

If you have any specific questions related to your care, you should contact the Consultant's team directly. It is important that you make sure you know how you can contact your Consultant's office. Thousands of appointments are wasted with NHS GPs discussing issues that should be dealt with by Consultants.

This leaflet has been developed using information from the British Medical Association (BMA) as well as NHS information from General Practice.

*Reviewed and updated: July 2023*