

Private referrals and interface with Private Providers at NFCMG

A private provider is any consultant, hospital or other organisation that charges for healthcare. References to private providers on this page will refer to the person or body who is providing you with private healthcare.

Private referrals

If you are already under the care of a GP here at the surgery and you wish to discuss a private referral, please do so at the time of your consultation. The following describes some other situations regarding private referrals.

Selecting a private provider

Please note that you must yourself select which private provider you wish to attend as any recommendation from us directing you towards a particular private provider may be seen as being anti-competitive. We can however supply information as to which providers may be available, but you still need to make the choice yourself.

You can self-refer to a private provider

Contrary to popular belief about needing a GP referral letter, any patient can self-refer to any private provider without any input from a GP. You do not actually need a GP referral letter. You simply contact the provider and ask to be seen. To facilitate your self-referral, if you need it, we can supply a summary printout of your record free of charge to take with you to your appointment.

Referral letters if already under the GP

If you are under a GP, and they have agreed with you that you need a referral, they will supply a referral letter for you to take to the private provider and you can then book your own appointment. This is free of charge.

Referred to NHS but now want to go private

If your GP was going to refer you or has already referred you to an NHS hospital, but you wish to go private instead, we can supply the referral letter that we would have sent to the NHS hospital. This is free of charge. Simply discuss with your GP at the time, or, if you have already been referred, please contact our admin team to facilitate this.

Insurance forms requiring completion before being seen

If your insurer or private provider requires an insurance form completing before they can see you, we can fill out the form for you, but this will be chargeable, in line with our current fees policy.



Referral proformas requiring completion before being seen

Referral *proformas* are different from referral *letters*. Referral letters are traditional letters dictated by the GP and typed up by their secretary to help facilitate a referral, and which have been used ever since the inception of the NHS and well recognised as the standard of communication between health professionals.

Referral proformas are different. These are custom document templates supplied by a provider for the GP to complete a series of questions about your condition. In recent years there has been an explosion of such forms, almost all which GPs have not had a hand in developing, and furthermore, which have not formally approved for use before roll-out. It is impossible as well as completely inappropriate for any GP surgery to accommodate custom document templates for every single provider available, of which there are hundreds.

Often referral proformas are excessively long, very specific in their line of questioning, take an inordinate amount of precious GP time to complete, require information that the GP is not actually in possession of, used by providers to make rejection of referrals easier (see section below), or are intended to inappropriately use the GP to perform a full triage and assessment service for the provider - such a service is actually the responsibility of the provider themselves to be carried out in discussion with the patient, either in their actual appointment or in some form of pre-appointment assessment.

Referral proformas

GPs are **under no professional or contractual obligation to complete any referral proforma from any hospital, organisation or other provider**, whether NHS or private. For the avoidance of doubt, **we will not complete any referral proformas for any private referral**. Please also see section below regarding rejected referrals related to referral proformas.

If you meet the criteria for a referral and the referral has been agreed with you, then the GP can write a referral letter with the salient information, as we would ordinarily do with most

referrals. This is more than sufficient, and the GP will have fulfilled their GMC and GP contractual obligations by referring you in this manner. In the case of self-referral, you may refer yourself to a private provider without a GP referral letter, as described in section above.

Rejected referrals

Please be aware that some private providers may reject your referral if a referral proforma has not been completed, even though they may have already received an entirely appropriate referral letter. We must emphasise that where a private provider requires further information, whether that be in the form of a referral proforma or some other data, the private provider themselves *can contact the patient directly to obtain the relevant information*. For the avoidance of doubt, **we will not complete any referral proformas even if your referral has been rejected**.

Tests and/or medications after attendance

Please note that where GPs have made a referral to a private provider, whether this is at your own or at the GP's instigation, this does not obligate the GP to carry out any tests or prescribe any medications should these be requested by the private provider. Please see the section immediately below on investigations, medications and shared care.

Disclaimer statement

Any patient requiring a referral from the GP to a private provider is required to confirm that they understand that any tests and/or medication requests from the private provider may not be honoured by us. The reasons for this are detailed below.

Test requests and medication



Contrary to popular belief, NHS GPs have no obligation to perform any investigations or prescribe any medications following attendance at a private provider. The following section describes each type of request in more detail.

Investigations

NHS GPs are not obliged to perform or request any tests that are required as a result of a patient attending a private provider. This is especially so, if such a test falls outside ordinary care usually provided by the GP and where the interpretation of the result of such test would fall outside the GPs knowledge, skills and competence. Such tests can be requested and actioned by the private provider themselves.

Any private provider that requires investigations to be carried out as part of the care they provide must be able to arrange, provide or commission the investigation themselves. **It is not the responsibility of the GP to carry out any investigations to enable the private provider to carry out their work.** Examples of such investigations include:

- ECGs (heart tracings) prior to commencing ADHD medication
- Blood monitoring for vitamin deficiencies following gastric band surgery
- Blood tests as part of a pre-operative assessment

Medications

Again, NHS GPs are not obliged to prescribe medications that are required as a result of a patient attending a private provider, nor are they required to convert privately issued prescriptions to a GP issued ones.

However, where such requested medications are within the scope of ordinary care from a GP and where we would normally issue such medications, we will consider such requests on an individual basis and if agreed, prescriptions will be processed in line with our usual



medication process and timescale. It must be emphasised, if we choose to write an NHS script, it will be processed as non-urgent.

There are no circumstances in which we will issue urgent medications at the request of any hospital, private or otherwise . If your private provider indicates that you need your medication urgently, then in line with usual hospital processes, they must supply it directly themselves