



Patient Choice

30 May 2023

Patient Choice

- On 25th May NHS England published a letter to the NHS on measures to improve Patient Choice
- This follows on from the Secretary of State for Health's oral statement to Parliament on the same day on Patient Choice and the way improvements in patient Choice can help reduce waiting times
- The letter sets out actions to be taken in Primary Care, Acute Care and by ICBs

Primary Care measures

- Referrers are asked to shortlist on average 5 choices from which patients can choose – eRS functionality was updated in March to facilitate this
- Encourage the use of ‘Manage Your Referral’ on eRS or the NHS App
- Resources for Primary Care to support offering Patient Choice are found via <https://digital.nhs.uk/services/e-referral-service/helping-patients-manage-their-referral-online>

Secondary Care measures

- Where a CAS (Clinical Assessment Service) is in place, these need to be offering the same level of choice as Primary Care i.e. minimum of 5 providers - ICBs should amend Service Specifications where these are in place
- By 31 August, all NHS Trusts should have rolled-out the Digital Mutual Aid System (DMAS) to support the provision of mutual aid for long waiters
- A Patient Initiated system (PIDMAS) is in development (due October 2023) which will allow patients to 'opt-in' to move providers (where waiting over 40 weeks)
- Further details on PIDMAS are due in the coming weeks. For DMAS support Trusts can contact england.dmas@nhs.net

ICB measures

- ICBs need to have system level plans for ensuring compliance with Patient Choice and raises the profile of Patient Choice
- ICBs have to identify an SRO for Patient Choice
- ICBs are asked to ensure patient transport costs are not prohibitive to patients exercising Choice
- As with CAS, RMCs (Referral Management Centres) have to offer the minimum of 5 providers
- ICBs should ensure they have a 'robust' accreditation process in place for new providers entering the market for Choice services

Further support

- Webinars in June and July for ICBs to assist in enabling Patient Choice – dates tbc
- Research programme (with 6-monthly refresh) launched with Ipsos Mori to establish baseline data on Patient Choice

Patient Choice Letter:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/patient-choice/>

**Health and Social Care Secretary Oral Statement on Patient
Choice:**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/health-and-social-care-secretary-oral-statement-on-patient-choice>