

Guidance for NHS patients considering private referral medical consultations

Self-referral for Private Care

If you choose to refer yourself to a consultant independently of your GP for additional privately funded care (i.e. outside the NHS), whether in the UK or abroad, you are expected to pay the full cost of any treatment (including medication) you receive in relation to the package of care provided privately (including medication and non-emergency complications).

Private referral through your GP

Following a private referral made by your GP, you must pay for any medication prescribed by your private specialist.

If there is a need for you to continue treatment, you may initially be given just one private prescription (which you will need to pay for) and advised to return to your GP to see if further prescriptions can be provided on the NHS. However, in order for this to happen, your GP must have received a full clinical report from the private specialist.

It may not always be possible or appropriate for the medicine(s) recommended by your private specialist to be prescribed by your GP for the following reasons:

- **Specialist medication**

If the medication is not something GPs would generally prescribe, it is for the individual GP to decide whether to accept clinical responsibility for the prescribing decision recommended by another doctor. They may not accept that responsibility when the prescribing request is outside their usual expertise and experience or if it is not one usually recommended by locally agreed policy or national guidance.

- **Medicines considered unsuitable for routine prescribing**

The private consultant may ask the GP to issue a NHS prescription for medicine(s) that has been 'considered unsuitable for routine prescribing locally'. In these situations, your GP may substitute the medicine for another one which is on the locally agreed formulary.

If your GP does not feel able to accept clinical responsibility, then the GP may consider:

1. Asking the specialist to retain responsibility for your treatment because of its specialist nature, and to provide further prescriptions, for which you will need to pay.
2. Offering a referral to an NHS consultant to consider whether the recommended medication should be prescribed as part of ongoing NHS funded treatment.

Note: For drugs not available on the NHS, a GP may issue a private prescription if they feel it is clinically appropriate and they are happy to take responsibility for the prescribing decision.

Further information available please click on the link for further information:

<http://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/cp-12.pdf>

This leaflet has been reviewed by NHS Waltham Forest CCG Patient Reference Group

Approved: Medicines Optimisation Committee Dec 2016

Date of Review: Dec 2018