

Information on obtaining prescriptions following a private consultation

This leaflet provides information for patients who are considering or have seen a doctor or other healthcare professional privately in the UK

Private healthcare consultations



Private healthcare professionals/clinicians, including private GPs are not allowed to issue NHS prescriptions.

You may be issued a private prescription following a consultation. This will not affect your entitlement to other medications prescribed by your NHS GP. However, do check with your private specialist or GP for any interactions/contraindications with your regular medications.

Obtaining medicines on a private prescription

You can take the private prescription to any pharmacy of your choice. If you have any question or difficulty obtaining the medicines, you should speak to the clinician that issued the private prescription to discuss what to do next.



If you have difficulty obtaining medicine from the private prescription, the private clinician may recommend an alternative medicine for prescribing by your GP on an NHS prescription. The private clinician may liaise directly with your GP or they may ask you to liaise with your GP.

Private vs NHS prescriptions



Private prescriptions – you will need to pay the full cost of the medicine plus a dispensing fee (cost may vary depending on the medicine and the dispensing pharmacy). It is worth asking more than one pharmacy how much they will charge.

NHS prescriptions – you pay a fixed NHS prescription charge per item (unless you are entitled to free NHS prescriptions).

No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF)

A person who has **no recourse to public funds** can still access NHS treatment. However, a person's immigration status will affect whether they are required to pay for some types of treatment.

Scan the below QR codes for further information



Charges and entitlement for free NHS prescriptions

Help with paying for your prescriptions



Private health insurance

Immigration status and entitlements



What if I am not able to afford the medicines privately?



It is important to consider all potential costs when accessing a private consultant and this includes medicine costs. If you have private medical insurance, you should check with your insurance provider to see what costs are covered.

Your GP may be able to issue a prescription on the NHS in some special circumstances, however, you will need to discuss this with your GP.

If your GP is unable to prescribe the medicine on an NHS prescription, you should speak to the clinician that issued the private prescription as they may be able to recommend a less costly alternative medicine.



Asking my GP for an NHS prescription after seeing a private clinician

There are a number of reasons why your GP may not be able to issue an NHS prescription for the medicine recommended by the private clinician, including:

- The medicine is on the NHS blacklist and is not allowed to be prescribed by anyone on the NHS or not recommended for routine primary care prescribing (e.g. certain over the counter medicines including homeopathic medicines).
- The medicine is not included in the normal NHS treatment pathway and/or is not included in the local preferred medicine choices (medicines formulary). An alternative medicine may be offered to you by your GP, if appropriate.
- The medicine is not licensed in the UK or is being used for a purpose not included in its UK licence.
- The medicine is only suitable for specialist or specialised prescribing. Your GP may be required to refer you into the NHS specialist pathway so you can be assessed and receive the treatment. Note that this may be some time therefore you should discuss with your GP what to do in the interim.
- Your GP may not agree with the choice of medicine being recommended and/or the medicine is included further down the treatment pathway. An alternative medicine may be offered to you by your GP, if appropriate.

Note: links to external sites have been included for further information. NHS North East London is not responsible for the content of these external sites.