

## **Private referrals and providing Private Prescriptions**

If you would like to be referred privately to a private consultant, clinic, or specialist, you will usually need a letter from your GP. If using health insurance, this is usual practice. Occasionally the GP may need to complete a form.

We are happy to arrange a referral to a private service, where the GP agrees a specialist or private appointment is of benefit to your health and are pleased to say **we will not charge for a private referral letter**. It is also possible to refer you without a GP appointment in most cases. Please contact us, preferably via our online consultation portal (PATCHs), to request a private referral and provide us with the following information.

- Please provide as much detail as possible as to why you wish to see a specialist. Information about your symptoms, how long you have them, what you are worried about or what you expect (e.g. a diagnosis, treatment, surgery etc), is extremely helpful
- Please indicate if you are self-funding, or whether you are using health insurance.
- Your GP will review your request for a referral and indicate if you need a GP appointment first.
- If you are using health insurance, you will need to contact them directly once a private referral has been agreed by your GP. You will receive details from them as to how you arrange a private appointment (some insurance companies deal with certain private providers).
- If you are self-funding the referral, you need to contact a private hospital yourself and arrange an appointment. The GP may be able to advise you on the type of specialist you need to see. You may also have to do this if you have health insurance, having been instructed to do so by your insurer.
- Once you have an appointment, please let us know (via PATCHs) who you are seeing, when, and where.
- We will then prepare a letter. Please let us know if you need the letter sending to you directly, to a specific consultant (please give us their contact details), or whether you wish to collect a paper copy of the letter from our surgery. Our secretaries will then contact you when the letter is

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done. We will attach any previously arranged investigations or NHS / Private letters or assessments related to your condition for their information.

- If you have a separate referral form to complete (sometimes requested by a health insurer) this is usually completed by the consultant/specialist. However, if the GP is expected to complete a referral form there will be a charge (dependent on the length of time required to complete the form)

Please note, if having had a private consultation, the specialist requests the GP to complete investigations on the NHS, we reserve the right to refuse to carry this out. It is the responsibility of the private specialist, the insurer (if applicable), and the patient, to fund further investigations recommended by the private specialist in most cases.

### Prescribing following assessment or treatment in the private healthcare sector

It is the position of Middlewood that GPs can provide some medicines to patients on the NHS on advice from a clinician in the private sector. However, there are several circumstances when GPs may decline the request or offer to prescribe an alternative medicine.

GPs will not prescribe an unlicensed medicine. He or she may also refuse to prescribe if:

- 1) A clinical letter explaining the full rationale for the treatment has not been provided by the consultant in the private sector.
- 2) The GP feels the medicine is not clinically necessary.
- 3) The medication is prescribed outside of its licensed indication.
- 4) The medication is not one a GP would normally prescribe.
- 5) The medication needs specialist monitoring.
- 6) The use of the medication conflicts with NICE guidance or locally agreed protocols.

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7) An equivalent but equally effective medicine is recommended locally as per the Cheshire CCG Joint formulary. In this situation you will be offered an equivalent medicine.

In any of these circumstances you will retain the option of purchasing the recommended medicine via a prescription from your consultant in the private sector.

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

Thank you for your understanding.