



North East London

# Patient Choice

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# Patient Choice of hospital or service

Under the NHS Constitution, patients have a legal right to choose which hospital or service they are referred to;

*“you have the right to make choices about the services commissioned by NHS bodies and to information to support these choices”*

This applies to both physical and mental health (including learning disabilities and autism) services

Patients can also choose any clinically appropriate team led by a named consultant employed by that provider.

Providers must hold a qualifying NHS Standard Contract, this can be with any ICB or NHS England, **for the service required by the patient at the chosen site.**

NB. The referrer is not required to make a referral to a provider or team if they do not believe this would be clinically appropriate.

# Patient Choice – the exceptions

This applies to all referrals to consultant led services\* made by GPs, Dentists or Optometrists with the follow exceptions:

- Urgent and Emergency Care or Crisis services
- Cancer services (subject to the Faster Diagnosis Standard)
- Maternity Services
- Services commissioned by Local Authorities eg Public Health services.

The obligations to offer choice of provider and team do not apply to any person already receiving care and treatment for the condition they are being referred for (although it does apply for new episodes of care regardless of whether a patient has been seen for a condition previously).

They also do not apply when a patient is detained under the Mental Health Act 1983, detained or on temporary release from prison or serving as a member of the armed forces.

# How it works!

- Once a decision has been made to refer, the GP, dentist or optometrist should discuss the different provider options with the patient, this might include relative waiting times, location, clinical outcomes.
- The referrer can either use the NHS e-Referral system (eRS) to book an appointment straight away. Alternatively, they can issue an appointment request, with a shortlist of providers, to the patient for them to make an appointment on eRS once they've had time to think about when and where they want to be seen.
- Patients can access more information on hospital and services including average waiting times from [My Planned Care NHS](#)
- A GP can also use eRS to seek advice from a specialist prior to or instead of a referral. This is called Advice and Guidance.

# How it works!

- If a patient feels they have not been offered choice, first they need to speak to their GP. If they are still not satisfied, they can make a complaint to the ICB responsible who will try to resolve the issue.
- A patient can ask to be referred to a different provider of NHS services if:
  - they have to wait, or have already waited, more than 18 weeks before starting treatment or assessment for a physical or mental health condition, as long as the referral is not urgent and the service you require is led by a consultant
  - they have to wait, or have already waited, more than 2 weeks to see a specialist for suspected cancer

# What NHS NEL is doing to support choice!

- NHS North East London has nominated an SRO for Choice, Charlotte Pomery, Chief Officer for Participation and Place
- NHS NEL is promoting and raising awareness of Choice with patients and GPs. [Patient choice: where can I have treatment - NHS North East London \(icb.nhs.uk\)](#)
- Has set up a system to accredit and award contracts to new providers who wish to provide services in North East London.