



Patient Choice

For action by:

All staff

Further details and Additional Copies from:Practice Manager
Patient Services Manager**Responsibility for dissemination to new staff:**Patient Services Manager
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Amend No	Issued	Page	Subject	Action Date

Schedule of Review

Date of Review	Reviewed by	Comments Made	For Review

Policy Written By

Practice Manager

Introduction

Introduced in April 2009, Patients now have the legal right to choose which hospital provider in England offering a suitable treatment that meets NHS standards and costs they are referred to by their GP.

Patients can choose which hospital they are seen in according to what matters most to them, whether it's location, waiting times, reputation, clinical performance, visiting policies, parking facilities or other patients' comments.

A choice of hospital is available for most patients and in most circumstances. Exceptions include emergency and urgent services, cancer, maternity and mental health services.

If the patient needs to be seen urgently by a specialist (for example, if the patient has severe chest pain), the GP will send the patient where they will be seen most quickly.

Promoting choice

During the consultation, the patient is given sufficient information in an appropriate form to allow them to make choices in relation to their health needs.

Patients will be invited to ask questions and will be asked about their views about their care, treatment needs, options and management plan which will be documented in their Patient Record. Patients are given time to make a decision / choice about their treatment.

Social and cultural diversity, values and beliefs that may influence the patient's decision about their care are recognised and respected.

All the Practice's patients know how to raise a concern or complaint about the service received and how it will be dealt with.

Periodic feedback from patients is sought through, for example, patient surveys, general discussion

Choose and Book

What is Choose and Book?

Choose and Book is a service that lets the patient choose their hospital or clinic and book their first appointment.

When the patient and their GP agree that the patient requires an appointment, the patient will now be able to choose which hospital or clinic they go to.

The patient will also be able to choose the date and time of their appointment.

What does Choose and Book mean to the patient?

As well as giving the patient a choice of hospital, date and time for their appointment, Choose and Book also gives the patient the ability to:

- Plan and manage around their existing appointments, if they are currently undergoing treatment;
- Fit their treatment in with the patients other commitments, at home and at work;
- Choose appointments that fit with their carer's schedule;
- Check the status of their referral and to change or cancel their appointments easily over the phone or on the internet.

How does Choose and Book work?

When the patient and the GP agree that the Patient needs an appointment with a specialist, Choose and Book shows the GP which hospitals or clinics are available for the treatment.

The GP will discuss with the patient the clinically appropriate options that are available for treating the patient medical condition.

If the patient knows where and when they would like to be seen, the patient may be able to book their appointment before they leave the surgery. The patient will be given confirmation of the place, date and time of their appointment.

If the patient wants more time to consider their choices ,they will have the option to take the Appointment Request letter away with them and book their appointment later.

The Appointment Request letter lists the patient's unique booking reference number, and their NHS number and a list of hospital or clinic options for the patient to choose from. The Practice will also give the patient a password with the appointment Request letter.

The patient then has choices in how they wish to book their appointment; via the telephone, using the national number on the letter or via the internet.

The patient will be informed that whilst the vast majority of appointments can be booked this way, in some cases the patient will need to telephone their chosen hospital directly to make their appointment.

This is because the hospital computer does not link to Choose and Book, but will change over time as the old hospital computers are replaced with new ones.

The option for a GP to book the patient appointment via a referral letter will still be possible if the patient prefers.

The benefits of Choose and Book:

- The patient can choose any hospital in England funded by the NHS (this includes NHS hospitals and some independent hospitals). More information about hospitals is available on the NHS Choices website.
- The patient can choose the date and time of their appointment.
- The patient will experience greater convenience and certainty.

- There is less chance that information will get lost in the post because more correspondence takes place through computers.

Information security

How secure is Choose and Book?

For Choose and Book to work, the patient's personal details (such as name, address, date of birth and why they are being referred) will be sent electronically to the patient's chosen hospital.

The patient will be reassured that Choose and Book meets strict national and international standards and requirements for holding and transferring accurate information electronically, (including ISO 27001 and the eGovernment Interoperability Framework (eGIF) and also the requirements of the 1998 Data Protection Act.

The patient can be certain that their referral information will be held and sent securely and will only be seen by those who are directly involved in delivering their care.

The option for a GP to book the patient appointment via a referral letter will still be possible if the patient prefers.