



Cobbs Garden Surgery

## Private Referral FAQs

We understand that some patients will opt to have some or all of their treatment privately and support your right to do so. However, to prevent any misunderstanding we would like to take this opportunity to explain how the NHS and General Practice work alongside Private providers of care.

### **What do I need to do?**

#### **For patients making use of health insurance e.g. Bupa:**

Your GP will write a referral letter if they feel this is appropriate and it will be emailed to you for you to forward on to your chosen specialist. You can also collect this in person if you prefer. Please note that if an insurance company wishes for a specific form to be completed, you may be charged for this additional work.

#### **For patients who do not have a health insurance policy:**

If you do not have health insurance and wish to book directly with a private clinic, you do not require a letter and can arrange the appointment as you wish. You should contact the consultant's team to organise an appointment. Should you have any questions regarding your appointment you should contact them directly.

### **Seeing the Consultant**

#### **What happens if I need a test or procedure?**

If the Consultant thinks that you need any tests including blood tests, or a surgical procedure, then the Consultant is responsible for:

- Arranging tests and any medications that might be needed prior to the test, as well as explaining how and when you will receive a date for the test, and what to do if the date is not suitable for you.
- Giving you your results and explaining what they mean. This may be via letter or a further face to face. Please do not contact the practice to discuss the results of tests organised by other doctors. It is the Consultant's responsibility to discuss this with you, and the practice may not have access to the results or be in a position to interpret them.

#### **What happens if I need new medicines?**

The Consultant might suggest prescribing new medicines for you or might want to make changes to the medicines that you are already taking. They will be responsible for giving you the first prescription of any new medicine that you need to start taking straight away. Please note if you take a private prescription to an NHS Pharmacy you will have to pay the actual cost of the medication rather than the current NHS standard prescription charge.

In some cases, your GP may be able to continue to prescribe these medications on an NHS prescription. This will need to be considered by the practice and is at the discretion of the GPs.

Prior to this, a full clinic letter from the consultant is required, outlining the reasons for treatment, explaining the precise details of the prescription, what it is being used to treat, how long the treatment is intended for, and what monitoring or follow up is required, before the practice can decide whether we can continue to prescribe. Please allow at least fourteen days for this letter to arrive before contacting your GP. If a prescription is needed sooner than this, you should contact the Consultant team (usually via their secretary) for them to prescribe.

Private consultants may suggest medications to patients which wouldn't normally be prescribed by NHS GPs. If this is the case, you will need to continue to receive them from the Consultant. Please contact them directly to organise this.

### **Practice Prescribing Policy**

Providing the best quality care to our patients is our top priority. When a prescription is necessary, our main considerations are effectiveness and safety. In order to prioritise patient safety and the best value to the NHS, we are bound to prescribing from an approved list of medications called BLMK Formulary. This is a list of medications according to whether they can be safely prescribed by GPs, whether they must be started and monitored by a hospital doctor, or whether they are not recommended as safe or effective treatments.

The practice may not be able to issue you with an NHS prescription following a private consultation for the following reasons:

- If the Practice considers that there is not a clear clinical indication for the prescription, and that in the same circumstances an NHS patient would not be offered this treatment.
- If the private doctor recommends a new or experimental treatment or recommends prescribing a medication outside of its licensed indication or outside of our BLMK formulary recommendations. This includes all prescriptions outside recommended licensed doses or uses as per the British National Formulary.
- If the medication is not generally provided within the NHS.
- If the medication is of a very specialised nature requiring ongoing monitoring, we may be unable to accept responsibility for the prescription. This includes medication that we can prescribe on the NHS but requires what is known as a Shared Care Agreement.
- Without a Shared Care Agreement in place with an NHS provider of care, we are unable to safely prescribe and monitor certain medication. This would include, but is not limited to, Disease Modifying Drugs, IVF associated medications and those to treat ADHD. Therefore, to maintain prescribing safety and quality, we are unable to accept Shared Care Agreements with private clinics of any sort, nor provide drug monitoring (blood tests, blood pressures, ECGs etc.) for private providers.

All such prescriptions will have to be provided and monitored by the clinic themselves, and we expect a legitimate private provider whose service necessitates blood testing and physiological measurement to have their own access to these facilities.

If we are unable to issue an NHS prescription you can still obtain the medication recommended via a private prescription from the consultant you have seen, but we would recommend that you investigate the cost of this and associated monitoring before proceeding.

### **What happens if I need to transfer my care back to the NHS?**

If after seeing the consultant privately you want to be back under NHS care, national regulations allow for you to transfer back. This transfer ideally needs to be done by the private Consultant who is overseeing your care but if this is not possible, please request that your consultant writes directly to the practice to request this. Please be aware this may mean you have to be added to a hospital waiting list.