

Private referral FAQs

Do I need a referral letter?

If you are self-funding then a referral letter is NOT required. All our patients have the ability to access their medical records online via the NHS app or Patient Access. You can provide your private consultant with the medical details they might require from your online access.

If your private health insurer requires a GP referral. This would be non-NHS work and a payment for the letter will be required prior to preparing.

How long does a private referral letter take and cost?

If required, all letters take 5-10 working days for our secretaries to process. The cost is £40 which you may be able to recover from your insurer.

I am on an NHS waiting list, will a private assessment mean I can be seen sooner on the NHS?

No. Specialists are not allowed to prioritise NHS patients because they have assessed them privately. Some private consultants only work privately and so do not have NHS lists. If you see a consultant privately and they also work in the NHS they can refer you directly into the NHS service. You do not need us to do that for you.

I just want to get a private scan; can I do this?

If you are insured most insurers will not allow stand-alone scans, you will need a specialist referral and the specialist will book any investigations and interpret the results.

If you are self-funding you will need to speak to your GP who must agree to the scan and then complete a booking form. As this is non-NHS work there will be a charge for completing the booking form. You will then have to contact the private hospital to pay for the scan. Please be aware you will receive the scan on CD and/or as a report. It will still have to be clinically interpreted and this requires a specialist opinion. We will NOT be able to interpret the result for you

I am not insured, and my specialist wants me to have investigations/monitoring. Can my GP arrange these tests via the NHS, or do I have to pay for them?

In the majority of cases, you will need to pay for these through your private specialist.

Your GP can only arrange tests if they would normally be ordered by your GP for an equivalent NHS patient. This is because any tests outside of the normal NHS protocols:

- May not be available to your GP i.e. they require a specialist's referral
- Are outside your GP's expertise, this is unsafe.
- Require repeated communication with your consultant. Compared to making a single referral through the NHS this is not an efficient or appropriate use of GP time.
- Where your private specialist has requested blood tests, e.g. for testosterone related to menopause, we will be unable to provide these tests. Your specialist will need to arrange and interpret the tests and plan further treatment as required.

The specialist has suggested I start medication, can I have this as an NHS prescription?

Your NHS GP does not have to take over the prescribing of any medication started privately. However, we will generally take over prescribing medication if we would for an equivalent NHS patient. All drugs are categorised by an NHS traffic light system. This is as follows:

- **Over the counter** – Must be purchased by the patient at a pharmacy
- **Green** – Can be prescribed without supervision by your GP
- **Amber** – Can only be prescribed by your GP with supervision by a specialist (a 'shared care agreement'). Normally the specialist must start and stabilise the medication.
- **Red** – Specialist only
- **Black** – Cannot be prescribed by any NHS doctor

Therefore, we can and will convert private prescriptions to an NHS prescription **if the drug is green** but not otherwise.

In the case of amber drugs a "shared care agreement" is required between the private consultant and your GP. As this would generally fall outside of our GP's "area of experience" we will NOT enter into "shared care agreements" as this would be unsafe.

Should your private specialist suggest drugs to be initiated, e.g. for ADHD, post bariatric surgery and other conditions, these would need to be provided by your specialist with a private prescription. Your specialist will be responsible for continuing issues of medication, any further blood tests and any required follow up. These are NOT funded by the NHS.