



Brighton & Hove Referral Management Service

GP Practice Guidance

Updated July 2017

Contents

An Overview of the Service	3
Making Referrals – a step-by-step guide	4
The Process – through a patient’s eyes	6
Referral Templates	6
General Questions and Answers	7
Key Contacts at RMS	10

Please note: All materials are available on the General Practice section on Brighton and Hove CCG website:

www.gp.brightonandhoveccg.nhs.uk/gp-services/brighton-and-hove-referral-management-system

If you require appointment cards please email the Referral Management Service at BHCCG.BrightonReferrals@nhs.net with your request. A lead time of 2 weeks is normally required.

An Overview of the Service

What is the Service?

The Referral Management Service, managed by Optum aims to be a 'one-stop-shop' for all referrals within Brighton & Hove CCG.

There are a number of specific exceptions where the RMS is not involved in the process.

Strict turnaround times have been agreed within the service for all referrals.

For urgent and routine referrals this is 3 working days.

All referrals are administratively reviewed to ensure each one contains the sufficient information to be able to direct it to the right place and meet the requirements of that provider.

Additionally in some cases, a local GP colleague may review the referral to ensure that it is in line with local referral guidelines.

Please access the General Practice section of the Brighton and Hove CCG website to view the current triage specialties and exceptions.

We aim to understand variation in referral practices by giving comparative feedback on referral patterns to the CCG and GPs thus promoting the sharing of good practice amongst GPs.

NHS e-Referrals

The RMS receives the GPs patient referral via NHS e-Referrals and then processes the patient bookings via this system where the provider sites have clinics available.

For patients where choice has not been specified and where there is a not a directional pathway the RMS will attempt to make contact with the patient to understand their choice and share with them information on appointment availability and waiting times. It is very important to have all of the patient contact numbers. Where we are unable to reach the patient on the telephone numbers provided the RMS will book on behalf of the patient (or defer if no appointments available). In all cases the RMS writes to the patient and provides the patient within 7 days with details of how to change their appointment if not suitable, including how to contact the RMS to do this. Appointments are sought within a 20 mile radius of patients address unless otherwise specified or if reasons provided as to the needs of patients that would inhibit travel in this area. Where patients have limitations we ask GPs to discuss choice and specify this on the referral form.

The Service for Patients

All referrals are processed between 5 – 10 working days. At this point the patient receives a letter from the RMS explaining how their referral has been processed and what to do next. A freephone number 0800 0311 6639 is available for patients who have questions about the status of the referral or questions about the process.

Patients will then receive information about the next steps of the process from their hospital/community provider within three weeks of their referral being initiated.

At the time of the appointment it would be appreciated if patients could be given a card with the RMS contact numbers on it (these cards are available to all Practices on request from BHCCG.BrightonReferrals@nhs.net).

Making Referrals – a step-by-step guide

Step 1

Complete the appropriate referral form for the patient being referred. The minimum data of patient information as set-out in the standard referral template is:

- Patient name and address
- Indication as to whether the patient requires:
 - Assistance with booking
 - Transport arrangements
 - An interpreter
 - Service personnel
- GP's name and address
- Referring GP's GMC number
- Clinical Specialty (as per NHS e-Referrals)
- Referral reason and clinical notes
- Clinical data as required by the Service provider e.g. BMI

Step 2

Submit the referral to the RMS via:

NHS e-Referrals

In exceptional circumstances referral may be emailed to
: BHCCG.BrightonReferrals@nhs.net

This process is less robust and the preference is to use NHS e-Referrals.

Step 3

The RMS processes the referral.

If any essential information is missing from the referral, the RMS will send back the referral via the NHS e-Referrals work list.

GP staff should monitor this work list and take appropriate action.

Step 4

If the referral is reviewed clinically and the GP triager feels that the referral does not meet the criteria within the available guidelines (national and local) the referral will be returned to you via the NHS e-Referrals work list with feedback. The practice should then advise the patient.

The Process – through a patient’s eyes

Referral made by GP

Information Card, to be handed to patient advising that they will have contact from the RMS within 7 days.

Please advise patient to wait at least 7 days to allow time for the referral to be processed before contacting the RMS.



You have been referred for an appointment by your
doctor

Within 7 days
of

Today's date

You will receive contact from the Referral Management
Service giving details of where you will be seen.

If after 7 days you have not been contacted please call **0800 031 6639** or the local
number **020 3824 2001** with your NHS number _____

(Opening Hours 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday excluding Bank Holidays)

You may hear further from the Referral Management Service or your doctor
if a different course of treatment is later considered.



Referral sent to RMS

The RMS will book an appointment on the patient’s behalf if

1. Choice has been specified on the referral
2. There is a mandated referral pathway
3. Unable to reach the patient by telephone

Information regarding how to change the appointment, if it is unsuitable, will
accompany the letter.

Referral Templates

All referral templates are available on the General Practice section on the
Brighton and Hove CCG website:

www.gp.brightonandhoveccg.nhs.uk/gp-services/brighton-and-hove-referral-management-system

General Questions & Answers

This document is intended as a guide to general questions and answers – please do not hesitate to contact the RMS on 0800 031 6639 / 0203 824 2001 or via email BHCCG.BrightonReferrals@nhs.net if there are any additional questions you would like to see included in this document.

BACKGROUND TO THE REFERRAL MANAGEMENT SERVICE

1. Why do you need an RMS?

Whilst GPs nationally make more than 10 million referrals to hospitals for elective (planned) care each year evidence suggests that:

- There are patients who need a referral but fail to receive one.
- A number of those currently referred to secondary care could be seen in alternative settings.
- Referral letters can lack the necessary information to aid effective care.
- Appropriate investigations are not always taken place prior to referral.
- Peer review can identify in clinical terms referral activity that is avoidable.

In Brighton & Hove there are around 51,500 referrals made each year via the Referral Management Service.

2. What are the benefits of the RMS?

- Directs referrals to the most appropriate setting
- Works to improve feedback on referral letters
- Provides a body of expertise and guidance about local services
- Provides evidence to support commissioning decisions
- Provides a telephone service for patients with questions about their referral and the process and supports Patient Choice
- Provides a telephone service for practices and providers to contact with questions regarding
- Supports NHS e-Referrals process

4. What are the important contact details I need to know?

Patient Freephone Number: **0800 031 6639**
RMS Main Office Number: **0203 824 2001 (charged at local rate)**
RMS Email Address: **BHCCG.BrightonReferrals@nhs.net**
The address and office for the RMS is:
Optum Referral Services
7 International House
Ealing, London
W5 5DS

5. What are the hours of service?

The RMS is open between the hours of 8am and 6pm Monday to Friday excluding Public and Bank Holidays.

6. How does it affect patient choice?

This service is designed to support patient choice and give patients a resource to discuss their options of care. There is no reduction in GP autonomy and the service does not stop you from making referrals.

Appointments made on behalf of patients may be altered directly by the patient using their log on details for the NHS system or by contacting the RMS by phone.

7. What happens to any referral received where some information is missing?

Depending on the type and the amount of information that is missing, the RMS will return the referral or may contact the referring practice if the referral is urgent to gather the information that is required. The referral will not be progressed to its destination if key information is missing and returned at this stage, the patient may experience delays in getting an appointment.

8. If I have a referral returned to me for clinical reasons what are my options?

The responsibility for the patient remains with you. If additional information has been requested then please resubmit the referral with this information to BHCCG.BrightonReferrals@nhs.net.

If you wish to overrule a triager decision please resubmit the referral ensuring that you clearly state you are resubmitting a previously returned referral to enable the RMS team to ensure the referral is not again returned by triage.

9. What happens if a referral is upgraded to a 2 week wait?

The triager will contact the RMS team who will immediately book the patient an urgent appointment. The RMS will then contact the referring GP to inform them of the triager's upgrade to a 2 week wait referral. If the referring GP submits a 2 week wait referral to the provider, the referring GP must contact the RMS to cancel the urgent appointment.

10. Which Referrals should not be sent to the RMS?

- Emergency and same day referrals
- Two week wait referrals (suspected cancer)
- Urgent / same day and priority 5 referrals to mental health
- Referrals to maternity and obstetric services
- Referrals between community clinicians in community services

- Referrals from General Dental Practitioners

MSK, CPAMs and Diabetic referrals

11. What about patient identifiable data? Does Optum have access to sensitive medical information about patients?

Yes – in order to facilitate the referral process it is necessary to share patient data, but only as much as is necessary to handle the referral – there is no general access to patients' medical records, only to the referral letter sent by the GP. All data is treated in the strictest confidence. All patient identifiable information is handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act and all NHS Confidentiality regulations. Data is only shared with staff working for the Referral Management Service, and we have formal data sharing agreements in place with each practice which regulate and control the way we handle patients' personal data.

12. No available appointment slots on e-Referrals for you to send referral to RMS?

We would appreciate if you immediately contact the RMS team by email on **BHCCG.BrightonReferrals@nhs.net** or call **0800 031 6639**. We will ensure this is investigated and resolved urgently.

13. Referral is returned?

A referral can be returned if it does not contain vital information for the referral to proceed or if it is felt that the referral has not met clinical guidelines, be they local or national. The referral feedback will advise the GP on the next action required.

14. How do I get feedback on my referral quality?

Each week a summary of all feedback will be provided to each GP. These reports are sent to the GP Principle at each surgery.

15. How do I make a complaint and how will it be handled?

Email your complaint to complaints.brightonrms@nhs.net an acknowledgement will be sent to your practice within 3 working days. The final response will be sent to you within 25 working days.

16. Can a patient choose to be seen out of area?

Yes a patient can choose to be seen out of area, the GP must explain to the patient that once they have attended their first outpatient appointment their treatment will continue with the out of area provider. If they decline further treatment they will need to be re-referred by their GP and start the referral process again. The RMS reiterates this when they contact the patient with the appointment details.

Key Contacts - Who is who at the RMS?

Programme Director: *Liz Adair* Liz.Adair@optum.com

Liz has overall responsibility for referral services at Optum.

Area Manager: *Rayid Haniff* rayid.haniff@optum.com

Responsible for liaison between the GP practices, providers and the Referral Management Service.

Head of Operations: *Harry O'Rourke* harry.orourke1@optum.com

Harry runs our day to day operations at the referral services Hub.

Medical Director: *Luke Twelves* luke_twelves@optum.com

Luke is the Medical Director for the referral service.

For further information on the Brighton & Hove RMS, please contact us:

Optum Referral Services

7 International House

Ealing

London W5 5DS

Tel: 0203 824 2001 (local rate)

Email: BHCCG.BrightonReferrals@nhs.net

There is also a freephone number for patients to call:

0800 031 6639