

## **Patients Choosing to Undergo Private Treatment or consult with private GPs**

There can be many good reasons why you might wish to choose non-NHS treatment: whether it's because of shorter waiting times, a personal recommendation or perhaps because you benefit from membership of a private medical scheme. Whatever your choice, it is important for you to know about limitations to NHS treatment related to the care episode you have elected to receive private medical treatment for.

As with all NHS care, once a patient is referred to a hospital or other healthcare provider, the responsibility for care for that episode passes to the chosen provider and they remain responsible for all service aspects, procedures and follow-ups until final discharge back to your GP. The same too applies to private providers.

All pre-treatment connected with your private care is the responsibility of the provider you have chosen, for example:

- All pre-operative checks
- Assessments
- Pathology (including all biopsies and other tests)
- All blood tests which are advised, whether or not they are available on the NHS
- All physiological checks such as BPs, ECG etc. (related to any assessment or procedure triggered by the private referral).
- All diagnostic imaging (X-ray, ultrasound, CT and MRI)

You cannot elect to have some parts of these undertaken by the NHS and others by your private provider. Your provider must arrange these privately as part of your care package so it is important to make sure you have budgeted for them or that your personal medical insurance policy covers these costs. This is to ensure your safe, continuity of care and follow up of results for which they have become responsible.

All post-operative care for the episode is the responsibility of the health provider you have chosen. For example:

- You may need a prescription for medication during a period of post-operative recovery or as part of a longer term medication regime. It is your responsibility to obtain private prescriptions from the consultant in charge of your care. You may also be responsible for paying the drug costs even though you hold an exemption based upon medical or age grounds, particularly for those drugs not routinely available in the NHS. For safety and legal reasons, our GPs cannot simply issue repeat prescriptions for drugs initiated by another doctor.
- All suture removals, dressings and post-operative care checks need to be undertaken by your private provider.
- All blood test results follow up, including further tests or management of results.
- All post procedure reviews must be undertaken by the provider as they know exactly what procedure was performed, any difficulties or complications that occurred during surgery, and what post-operative complications might be expected, if any.

Any complaints relating to your care or the level of service you have received from a private provider, needs to be directed to them. We cannot become involved in dealing with third party complaints. Your provider should have their own complaints policy which should be readily available to you. You are entitled to return at any point to the NHS for treatment; all you need to do book a phone call with your GP who will discuss with you NHS pathways available, which may differ from private providers, and make arrangements for any necessary onward NHS referrals or tests. We hope this guidance will help clarify some of the more common questions asked by patients when making a decision about choosing private care.