

ELBOROUGH STREET SURGERY

Private Treatment Referral Guidance for patients

You have been referred at your request to a private consultant.

We understand that some patients will opt to have some or all their treatment privately and support the patient's 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 happens if my Private Consultant wants me to start medication? Can I take the private prescription to the GP surgery to convert this into an NHS prescription after I have seen the consultant?

No, you will always be required to obtain the first private prescription from your consultant and pay for this.

Your first prescription for any new medication must be issued by the private Consultant. You will be able to take this to any community pharmacy for dispensing. You will have to pay a charge for the drugs on this prescription even if you are normally exempt. Your private health insurer may not pay for any prescription costs, and it is up to you to check with them beforehand. **It is in your interest that you are aware of this possibility before a private consultation.**

If I need this medication on an ongoing basis, can I get this medication from the GP on an NHS prescription?

Your first prescription must be issued by the private consultant. Sometimes, you may be advised to take this medication on an ongoing basis and the 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.**

What does the GP need to consider?

full clinic letter signed by a **GMC registered Consultant**. It must outline 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. Patients should allow at least **fourteen days** to allow this letter to arrive before contacting your GP. If a prescription is needed sooner than this, you should contact the consultant's team (usually via the 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, the patient will need to continue to receive the prescriptions from the consultant.**

Will the GP practice be able to arrange any tests and investigations that the private Consultant suggests.

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No. If GPs receive requests from private providers to arrange tests or investigations, it is important to note that complying with such requests - regardless of the GP's management and treatment of the patient - is outside the scope of NHS primary medical services.

You will be required to pay for any investigations and tests, including blood tests, that have been requested by a private consultant. The private consultant will need to arrange these for you.

Will the practice be able to give me a copy of the results of any private tests that I have?

Yes- if your private Consultant sends these results in writing to the GP practice then we will add these to your NHS medical records. You will be able to view the clinic letters on the NHS app. The private doctor who arranged the tests has a legal duty to convey the results of the tests to you so we will ask you kindly to discuss any results with your private doctor.

Can you give me more information on why the GP can't just write an NHS prescription for everything my private specialist wants to me take?

Let us explain.

Prescribing Policy

- GPs at Elborough Street surgery believe that providing quality care to our patients is our top priority. When a prescription is necessary, our main considerations are effectiveness and safety.
- To prioritise patient safety and the best value to the NHS, we are bound to prescribing from an approved list of medications within the SWLondon ICB formulary.
- The practice may not be able to issue the patient 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 formulary recommendations.
- If the medication is not generally provided within the NHS
- If the medication is of a very specialised nature requiring ongoing monitoring, which includes medication that we can prescribe on the NHS but requires what is known as a Shared Care Agreement, we may not be able to accept responsibility for prescribing.
- Without a Shared Care Agreement in place with an NHS provider of care we are unable to safely prescribe and monitor certain medication.
- Please note as a practice we do not accept any new shared care agreements with any private consultant.
- If we are unable to issue an NHS prescription, patients can still obtain the medication recommended via a private prescription from the consultant you have seen but we would recommend that patients investigate the cost of this and associated monitoring before proceeding.

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My private doctor wants me to have 'shared care prescribing'. What is this?

Shared Care is only currently set up as an NHS service. All shared care arrangements are voluntary, so even where agreements are in place, practices can decline shared care requests on clinical and capacity grounds. The responsibility for the patient's care and ongoing prescribing then remains the responsibility of the specialist.

At Elborough Street surgery, we do not offer shared care prescribing with any private doctor. The private doctor must take responsibility for your prescriptions on a private basis with you. Shared Care with private providers is not recommended due to the general NHS constitution principle of keeping as clear a separation as possible between private and NHS care.

Can I transfer my care back to a specialist in the NHS?

Yes. If after seeing the Consultant privately patients want to be back under NHS care, and national regulations allow for patients to transfer back then you can. This transfer ideally needs to be done by the private Consultant who is overseeing the care but if this is not possible patients should request that their consultant writes directly to the practice to request this. Due to NHS waiting times, patients may have to continue paying under the private care while waiting for them to be accepted under NHS care.

The NHS wait is too long- can my GP just prescribe for me?

No. We appreciate that there are either long waits or no comprehensive local NHS service for some specialities especially where there is a need for an NHS Shared Care Agreement. This is a commissioning gap which is outside of the control of the GP practice and which we hope will be rectified in the future. The change needs to be supported by feedback from patients and GP practices. If patients would like to complain to our commissioners to raise awareness and apply pressure on them to prioritise this matter, please direct your feedback to contactus@swlondon.nhs.uk

Please follow the link to the further information from the South West London Integrated care Board :

<https://www.southwestlondon.icb.nhs.uk/contact/>

Thank you for taking time to read