

Hospital Referral – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

This page explains how referrals from our medical centre to hospital services work, what you can expect, and what you may need to do next.

Why have I been referred to hospital?

You may be referred to hospital if:

- Your condition needs specialist assessment or treatment
- Further tests or procedures are required
- Your symptoms need ongoing monitoring by a specialist team
- Your GP would like expert advice on diagnosis or management

Your clinician should explain the reason for your referral during your appointment.

Who decides if I need a referral?

Your GP or another qualified clinician makes the decision based on:

- Your symptoms and medical history
- Examination findings
- Test results
- National and local clinical guidelines

Each hospital publishes expectations for referrals, including which tests or investigations should have been completed by your GP and how long your condition has been present. These guidelines help ensure your referral contains the necessary information for the hospital to assess and treat you efficiently

Referrals are made when they are clinically appropriate.

Who gets my referral?

Your referral is sent to either the Devon or Cornwall Referral Management System (DRSS or RMS). These services review GP referrals and ensure they are directed to the most appropriate hospital service or specialist for your care. This may be slightly different from the department you were originally referred to, depending on clinical need and hospital pathways.

How long will I wait for my hospital appointment?

Waiting times vary depending on:

- The urgency of your condition
- The specialty you are referred to
- Hospital capacity

The hospital is responsible for contacting you with appointment details.

What is the difference between an urgent referral and a two-week wait referral?

Urgent referrals are made when your clinician believes you need to be seen quickly.

A two-week wait (2WW) referral is a special kind of urgent referral where a GP needs to rule out cancer. Once cancer is excluded, you are discharged from this service and would normally go back to your GP for further management or onward referral.

Can I choose which hospital I am referred to?

In many cases, you have the right to choose which hospital or clinic you attend.

Some specialist services may only be available at certain hospitals, depending on your condition and local service availability.

We mainly deal with Derriford Hospital as we have easy access to their blood test and scan systems, which helps streamline your care.

What if I have not heard from the hospital?

- You will usually get contacted by the Referral Management System to confirm they have received your referral. If you have not heard anything, you can contact them on 01626 883888.
- Once you know that the referral management system has passed on your referral you may also contact the hospital's appointments department directly.
- Our medical centre does not get notified about when your appointment will happen and does not hold waiting time information.

- If your symptoms change significantly, you should make an appointment with your GP to discuss this.
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Can I change or cancel my hospital appointment?

Yes. If you need to change or cancel, please contact the hospital as soon as possible using the details provided in your appointment letter or message.

Missing appointments may lead to delays or discharge back to your GP.

Can my GP chase the hospital for my appointment or results?

Any tests carried out by the hospital will go to the person at the hospital who ordered the test. They will then decide on any next steps. The GP does not usually have access to these results.

Once a consultation takes place the hospitals will send a clinic letter your GP. This may take some time after your appointment.

If you have concerns about delays or results, it is usually best to contact the hospital department directly.

Can I be referred privately?

You may choose a private referral. This is something that you would organise with a private provider or insurance company.

Please be aware that should a private consultant advise off licence or hospital only medications, they may need to be prescribed and monitored by the private provider at an ongoing cost rather than by the GP practice.

Who can I contact if I have questions about my referral?

For questions about:

- **The reason for your referral** – contact the medical centre
- **Appointments or waiting times** – contact the hospital directly