

Patient Choice

Standard Operating Procedure

NHS care: what choices are available to the Patient

The government is committed to giving patients greater choice and control over how they receive their healthcare, and to empowering patients to shape and manage their own health and care.

This framework sets out some of the choices available to the patient in the NHS.

It explains:

- when patients have choices about your healthcare
- where to get more information to help the patient choose
- how to complain if they are not offered a choice

When patients are referred for cataract surgery, they have legal rights to "choice" and must be given these choices by law.

The entitlements to "choice" set out in this guide reflect those in the NHS Constitution.

This guide applies to people of all ages in England.

Patients choices

Patients can:

- decide which NHS organisation they would like to receive care from as an outpatient
- choose the clinical team who will be in charge of your care within an organisation

These choices only apply at the point of referral.

Are these legal rights?

Yes, but there are circumstances in which you may not choose. These are set out below.

Patients do not have legal rights to choose if they are:

- already receiving care and treatment for the condition for which they are being referred and this is an onward referral
- using emergency services
- in need of emergency or urgent treatment, such as cancer services where you must be seen in a maximum waiting time of 2 weeks
- a prisoner, on temporary release from prison, or detained in 'other prescribed accommodation' (such as a court, secure children's home, secure training centre, an immigration removal centre or a young offender's institution)

- someone who is held in a hospital setting under the Mental Health Act 1983
- a serving member of the armed forces
- using maternity services (see section 6: 'Choosing maternity services' for more detail)
- referred to services commissioned by local authorities, as your choice will depend on what has been put in place locally

Information and support to help your patient choose

Patient should be directed to the NHS website (www.nhs.uk) to find out more information about the organisations they can choose from. This is a national website for patients. This website includes information about quality of care, waiting times, parking and travel.

The patients can search for services near to them by using the 'NHS services' tool on the home page, or they can use the search function to find information on specific hospitals and clinics.

Optometrists providing choice should review this website site so as to have a general knowledge of the local providers of cataract surgery.

The optometrist as the referring clinician must also provide the patient with information regarding their options, the information given must be a minimum of

- Distance of the surgery provider from the patient's home address
- Waiting times as provided on eRs

Patients should be given time to consider their choices if they wish to do so.

What a patient can do if they are not offered these choices

If a patient feels that they have not been offered these choices, they should first speak to their referring optometrist.

If a patient still feel that they have not been offered choice, they may wish to complain to Primary Eyecare Services <https://primaryeyecare.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/PE-Complaints-A5-Leaflet.pdf>

Patients are also entitled to take their complaint to the CCG or independent Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman. The ombudsman is the final stage of the complaints system.