

Patient Choice – 5 FAQs

NOTE: This guidance relates to Physical Health only

1. What is our duty to ensure patients are offered a choice of provider?

When a patient requires a physical health elective referral for a first outpatient appointment and any subsequent treatment that is required, to a consultant or a member of a consultant's team, they have a legal right to choose:

- Any clinically appropriate provider that holds a qualifying NHS Standard Contract with any ICB or NHS England for the service which the patient needs as a result of the referral.
- Any clinically appropriate team led by a named consultant employed or engaged by that provider.

2. What information is available to help decide when patient choice applies?

The ICB recently shared a patient choice process guide which highlights the circumstances where patient choice would apply and the point at which a choice conversation with a patient should take place. The process guide is attached and provides links to other useful resources.

3. What is a choice conversation and when should this be offered?

If a patient wishes to exercise their right to choose, before making a referral, a conversation with their GP should take place to help with their decision making – this is referred to as a choice conversation. A choice conversation should be offered when a physical health elective referral for a first outpatient appointment is needed and when patient choice applies - see attached process guide.

4. What should a choice conversation include?

A patient can choose a provider based on a GP's recommendation or a provider of their own choosing (if that Provider holds a qualifying NHS standard contract for the service being referred to). A patient's choice should consider things which matter the most to them e.g. waiting times to an appointment, previous experience with a provider, the quality of care and treatment they require, how local a provider is to the patient or how easy is it for them to travel to them and/or if they would prefer a face-to-face or telephone/virtual appointment.

Please note, as per the NHS guidance for Patient Choice, a GP is not required to make a referral to a Provider if they do not believe this would be clinically appropriate. Further information is available from [NHS England » Patient choice guidance](#).

A useful information leaflet for patients 'You Can Choose' is available from [patient-leaflet-digital.pdf](#).

5. Which providers are patient choice providers?

All providers of choice and the services for which they hold a qualifying NHS standard contract to provide should be listed on eRS. It is a provider's responsibility to ensure this list is correct and up to date. Locally, NHS providers of choice will include providers such as UHNM, UHDB and RWT and other providers who have been accredited by the ICB.

Making a referral to a patient's provider of choice.

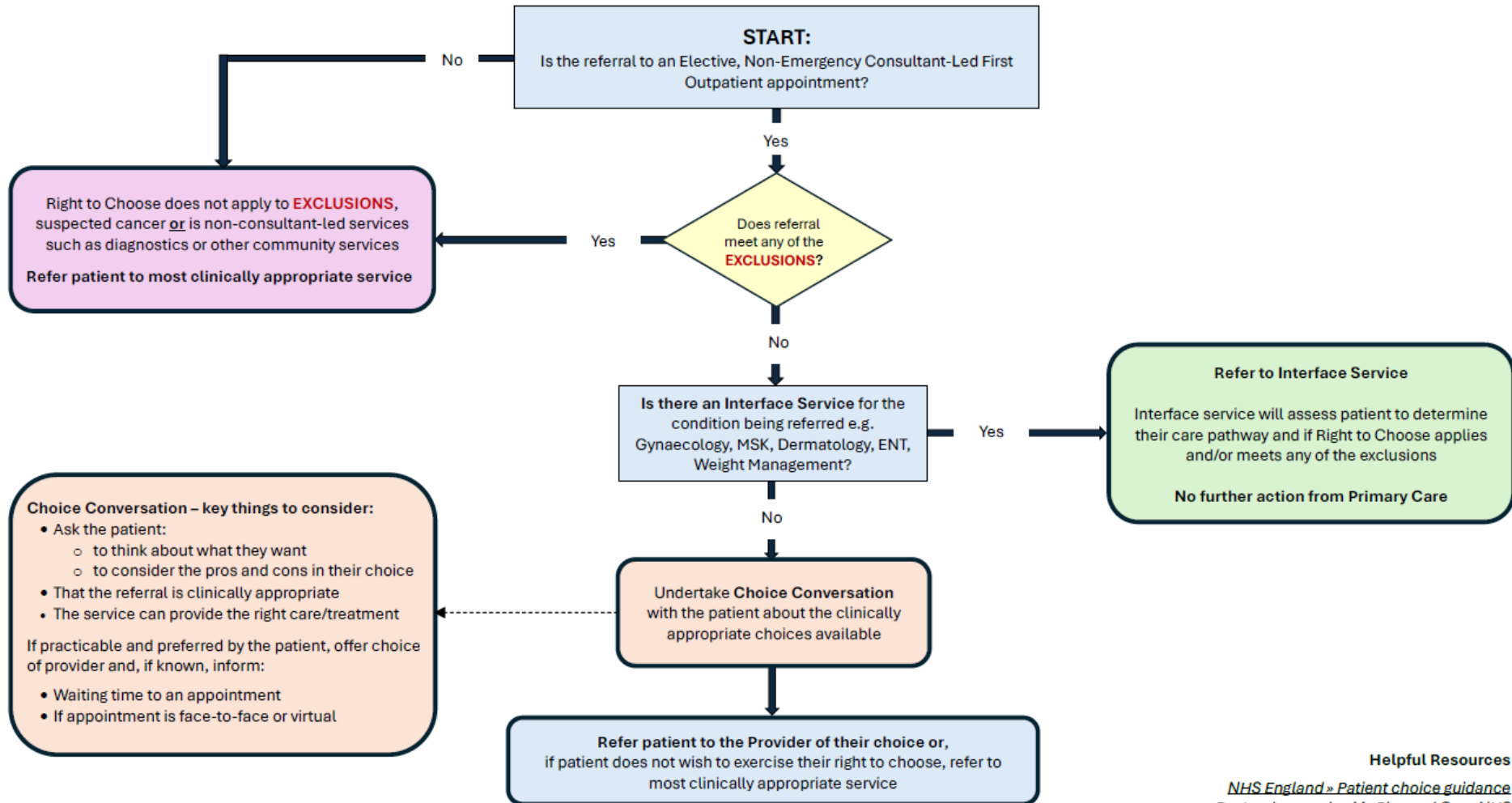
Following a choice conversation, a patient should be referred to their provider of choice. For referrals processed through the ICB Referral Assessment Service (RAS), please remember to include the name of the patient's chosen provider on the referral form - this will ensure that they are subsequently referred to that provider.

Process Guide Right to Choose (Patient Choice): Non-Emergency Physical Health only

V1.0

This guide is to assist Primary Care referrers in the process of Patient Choice. It relates to Physical Health only. See separate guidance for Mental Health.

EXCLUSIONS NOTE: Patient Choice does not apply when the patient requires emergency or crisis care, is already receiving care for the same condition to be referred or has already self-referred to a provider, is a serving member of the armed forces, detained under the Mental Health Act or is in a secure setting e.g. Prison. Primary Care and Local Authority commissioned services are not subject to Patient Choice.



Helpful Resources

[NHS England » Patient choice guidance](#)
[Postcode search – My Planned Care NHS](#)

[Best practice guidelines for referrers - NHS e-Referral Service - NHS England Digital](#)