



Glasgow Dental Hospital Referral Guidelines Update

Background

The 18 week Referral to Treatment (RTT) Standard will be established by December 2011. In preparation for this, the current National Waiting Time Guarantee for new patient appointments is 9 weeks. In order to achieve the RTT for all patients, acute and primary care staff are required to consider how this can be progressed. Many changes have taken place during the past 2 years as a consequence of the pathways groups and the subsequent suggestions for how patients requirements can be better met. Most of the changes to date have involved staff on the acute sites. Among the key issues that have been acknowledged by staff participating at the pathways events are the need for improved administration and some changes are being progressed. These ultimately impact on primary and secondary care.

Referrals

If you are using electronic referrals these should be submitted as normal.

Written referrals should be submitted on the Glasgow Dental Hospital (GDH) referral form and submitted to GDH. Copies of the referral form and the accompanying guidelines are available on the GDH website – www.nhsggc.org.uk/dentaloralhealth

Vetting

Referrals will be vetted and triaged at GDH. At the vetting stage some referrals cannot be progressed due to a) missing information and/or b) recently taken relevant x-rays not submitted. To date we have continued to see patients where the referral information has been incomplete but this will not continue longer term.

Incomplete referral information

From 1st June 2011 if the information on the referral is not comprehensive enough to allow the vetting consultant to appoint a patient to an appropriate consultant clinic, the referral will be returned to the referrer and the patient will not be added to the waiting list until a revised, comprehensive referral is received.

Accompanying x-rays

Regularly, recently taken relevant x-rays are not submitted with referrals. We are unable to take repeat x-rays if the patient has had one taken in the past two years. We have for the past year been writing and making calls to practices to ask for missing x-rays to be sent in. This has resulted in a number of patients who were referred some time ago still waiting to be appointed. We appreciate there has been some justifiable criticism of our failure to confirm receipt and return x-rays in the past, however, Health Records have recently implemented a new system where they mark on referral letters that x-rays arrived with referral and are immediately placed in a x-ray folder and given to clinicians to vet to reduce the number of missing x-rays. This is working and fewer x-rays are being lost.

From 1st June 2011 if the x-rays are not submitted with the paper referral or not received within five working days of the electronic referral you will be notified that the referral has not been accepted and the reasons why. Similarly, if your referral does not include adequate information for a patient to be appointed to the appropriate consultant clinic then the referral will be returned to you with an explanation.

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