

Dear Colleague

The Standard NHS Contract places some service specifications upon secondary care providers in regard to the primary/secondary care interface. SYICB is also working locally on guidelines for both secondary and primary care.

The expectations are:

1.  **DNAs and discharges:** The contract requires that a provider's local access policy must not involve blanket administration policies under which all DNAs are automatically discharged; rather, any decisions to discharge are to be made by providers on the basis of clinical advice about the individual patient's circumstances.
2.  **Onward referral:** If a patient has been referred into secondary care and they need another referral, the secondary care provider should make this for them, rather than sending them back to general practice to a further delay before being referred again. Please see [Onward referral guidance here](#).
3.  **Patient care and investigations:** Within the context of the elements of the service which it has been commissioned to provide, a secondary care provider must itself arrange and carry out all of the necessary steps in a patient's care and treatment rather than, for instance, requesting the patient's GP to undertake particular tests within the practice.
4.  **Communicating with patients:** Put in place efficient arrangements for handling patient queries promptly and publicise these arrangements to patients and GPs, and communicate the results of investigations and tests carried out by the provider to patients directly, rather than relying on the practice to do so.
5.  **Discharge summaries:** A discharge summary must be sent to the GP within 24 hours after every discharge from inpatient, day case or A&E care. Discharge letters should highlight clear actions for general practice (including prescribing medications required).

6.  **Medication:** The period for which the provider must supply medication to be determined in a local policy, but this must at least cover a minimum period.
  - a. For medication on discharge following hospital admission, the agreement is 28 days supply from Rotherham Hospital and 14 days supply from Sheffield Teaching Hospitals (unless a shorter period is clinically appropriate).
  - b. Where a patient has an immediate need for medication as a result of clinic attendance, the provider must supply sufficient medication to last at least up to the point at which the clinic letter can reasonably be expected to have reached the GP and the GP can prescribe accordingly.
7.  **Shared care:** The hospital must only initiate care for a particular patient under a shared care protocol where the individual GP has confirmed willingness to accept the clinical responsibility for the patient in question. Where this is not the case, the ongoing prescribing and related monitoring will remain the responsibility of the secondary care team.
8.  **Fit notes:** On discharge from hospital or clinic, provider clinicians must issue fit notes for the full expected duration of time off work (not just 2 weeks), and/or add relevant information of adjustments that could be made to support return to employment to appropriate patients, rather than expecting patients to make a separate appointment to see their GP. Please see [Fit note guidance here.](#)
9.  **Call and recall:** For patients under their care, NHS trusts should establish their own call/recall systems for patients for follow-up tests or appointments. This means that patients will have a clear route to contact secondary care and will no longer have to ask their practice to follow up on their behalf.
10.  **Clear points of contact:** ICBs should ensure providers establish single routes for general practice and secondary care teams to communicate rapidly: eg single outpatient department email for GP practices or primary care liaison officers in secondary care.

Please find enclosed your recent letter which includes a description of an incomplete clinical episode, indicated above. Please contact the patient and arrange to complete the clinical episode yourself or via a member of your team.

We are taking no further action at the surgery.

Many thanks for your support,

Yours sincerely