

LOCAL ACCESS POLICY

Introduction

This policy sets out how Heart Networks UK Limited ensures that patients are able to access timely and appropriate clinical care. The purpose of this policy is to outline Heart Networks UK Limited's and associated Commissioners' requirements and standards for managing patients' access from referral to treatment and discharge. The policy covers the processes for booking, notice requirements, patient choice and waiting list management for all stages of a referral to treatment pathway (RTT).

Referral to treatment pathway (RTT) - The NHS Constitution confirms that all patients have the legal right to start NHS consultant-led treatment within a maximum of 18 weeks from referral, unless they choose to wait longer or it is clinically appropriate that they wait longer.

The intention of the policy is to create a fair and transparent process to ensure that the best interests of the patient are a priority at all times to deliver the best patient care. The Service will ensure that the management of patient access to services is equitable and consistent in line with national waiting time standards and the NHS constitution and this will include taking account of known health inequalities.

The policy should be adhered to by all staff and/or contractors within the Service.

Objectives

Patients are able to access information, care or treatment by an appropriate member of the Organisation in line with their clinical needs.

The ability of patients to access the above does not vary on account of characteristics such as age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment or socio-economic status. However, the Service is not commissioned to see patients under the age of 18 or patients that are pregnant.

Clinicians and staff are able to manage available resources to meet demand effectively so that the best possible levels of service and access are maintained at all times.

Patients and carers are aware of how to get the best from the Service and are involved in monitoring and developing the systems and procedures to ensure that their needs are met.

Patients' Rights

As a patient you have the right to :-

- Easily accessible information about the Service
- Clear information about your treatment in a suitable format and language so that you and the clinician may make an informed decision about the best course of action
- Privacy and confidentiality

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- Be treated with dignity and respect at all times (including access to a chaperone if required)
- Comment or complain if you are not satisfied with the service provided
- Choice of clinic location for appointment

Patients' Responsibilities

As a patient, it is your responsibility to :-

- Treat all staff with respect
- Ensure you attend any appointment made at the Service and arrive on time
- Cancel any unwanted appointment as soon as possible so it can be offered to someone else
- Inform the Service if you have any special needs, including communication needs, so that the Service can make any necessary arrangements
- Let a member of staff know if you are unsure about or dissatisfied with your care so that it can be explained or put right
- Do your best to look after your own health
- Provide accurate information about your health, condition and status
- Use the services of the Organisation appropriately

Organisation Opening Hours and Appointment Times

The Service operates from the following premises:

Heart Networks UK Limited

15 Christie Way

Manchester

M21 7QY

We also run clinics out of premises in North Manchester at –

The Manchester Institute of Health and Performance

299 Alan Turing Way

Manchester

M11 3BS

Heart Networks' telephone number is 0161 749 4755

The website is www.heartnetworks.org

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Our opening times are Monday to Friday, 09:00 – 17:00

Appointments are made by GP referrals in North, Central and South Manchester localities via the NHS E-referral Service.

The Service provides a standard appointment length of 20 minutes. Appointment times can vary in length dependent on the nature of the consultation. Longer appointments are available on request for patients who feel they need more time.

Between the hours of 17:00 and 09:00, the phone system will automatically direct callers to an answerphone system.

Occasionally the Service is closed for staff training or essential meetings. Details are displayed on the website and within the clinic.

If you miss your appointment or are late

There would be much shorter waits for appointments if every unwanted appointment was cancelled and so available for another patient to use. It is frustrating for Services to be under pressure to provide better access when appointments are wasted by people who simply do not turn up.

- Appointments can be cancelled via telephone or via appointment reminder message.
- If you attend late for your appointment, it may be difficult to fit you in without making other patients wait longer. Please try to attend just before your appointment slot but not too early.
- Where possible we will aim to see patients who arrive late, however, you may have to wait and be seen at the end of the clinic.
- Members of the Reception team will advise patients when the clinic is running late upon arrival, so that you have the option of re-booking.
- Patients who did not attend (DNA) an appointment and a further appointment may result in the RTT clock being stopped and/or the patient being discharged back to the care of their GP.

Communication

All communications with patients and anyone else involved in the patient's care pathway (e.g. GP or person acting on the patient's behalf), whether verbal or written, must be informative, clear and concise. Copies of all written correspondence or a brief summary of all verbal communications with the patient must be kept in the patient's electronic record.

GPs or the relevant referrer must be kept informed of the patient's progress in writing (digitally or on paper). When clinical responsibility is being transferred back to the GP/referrer, e.g. when treatment is completed, this must be made clear in any communication.

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Improving Access for Patients

The Service is always pleased to receive comments and suggestions about its services including how easy it is to access them. Please contact the Business Manager at 15 Christie Way, Manchester, M21 7QY if you have comments or suggestions to make or alternatively you can submit feedback via our website.

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