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NHS Gloucestershire ICB: ADHD Shared Care Requests – Considerations for GPs

- Which NHS providers can patients/carers request GPs refer them to for an ADHD assessment?
- Responding to GP requests for the prescribing of ADHD drugs following diagnosis
- Patients diagnosed with ADHD by any provider as part of their NHS commissioned activity
- Informing patients of the implications of referral to different NHS Choices providers
- Locally endorsed Shared Care Guidelines (SCGs) for the prescribing of ADHD medication
- Categorising requests for the primary care prescribing of ADHD meds – summary flowchart

1. Which NHS providers can patients/carers request GPs refer them to for an ADHD assessment?

As in most areas across the NHS, there are unfortunately currently long NHS wait times within local Gloucestershire providers for both children and adults to be able to access a specialist assessment for investigation of possible ADHD.

Under **NHS choices**, all patients being referred for an ADHD assessment (or other mental health assessments) have a [Right to Choose](#) which NHS provider their referral is directed to. This could be any provider (NHS or private) who is contracted by an NHS commissioner somewhere in England to provide ADHD assessment services on the NHS. The NHS contracted activity of all these NHS 'Choice' providers is included within NHS choices. NHS Gloucestershire ICB has in effect an implicit, indirect NHS contract with all these NHS contracted 'Choice' providers for the patients that they see within their NHS contracted activity. This can create issues if the patients local NHS services are not fully aligned with the NHS contracted Choice healthcare providers care pathway, or where there may be any informal concerns on service quality. (Formal concerns on service quality will need to be addressed with the NHS commissioner who has contracted with the Choice provider for delivery of the NHS service involved.)

For ADULTS there are Choice providers of ADHD services contracted by the NHS to provide **BOTH** assessment and ongoing patient management. **For CHILDREN**, at the date of issue of this guidance, there are only currently Choice providers contracted to the NHS to provide assessment but **NOT** ongoing management under the NHS.

2. Responding to GP requests for the prescribing of ADHD drugs following diagnosis

If a patient (or their carer) approaches you with a request for ongoing care after a recent diagnosis of ADHD, then firstly, you **need to establish if the ADHD assessment has taken place on the NHS or privately?** Confusion can occur if a patient has been referred to an NHS contracted private provider for an NHS assessment but the patient has then accepted care privately from that provider to speed up their assessment process. This can be clarified by being able to answer the Q – has the patient paid for any part of the diagnosis either directly or indirectly (ie. via medical insurance)?

If any part has been paid for, then this represents **a request to bring private sector healthcare activity under the NHS**. If a GP considers that the request warrants NHS consideration, then the patient should be referred to an NHS service provider for assessment and review within normal NHS processes and their associated timescales. The supporting information provided by the private provider will be considered by the NHS provider at the patient's initial appointment and the appropriate level of NHS assessment will then take place before ongoing NHS care. Whilst waiting for this NHS assessment, the patient will need to continue any privately recommended treatment in the private sector. Additional details on the general principles involved can be found in [Gloucestershire Guidance on the Transfer of Private Prescribing into NHS](#).

3. Patients diagnosed with ADHD by any provider as part of their NHS commissioned activity

If the patient has been assessed by an NHS contracted service/Choice provider **as part of their NHS contracted activity**, then the GP should consider the **NHS request to accept clinical responsibility for shared care** according to the general principles that apply ie:

1. Does the GP have confidence in the diagnosis based on the information available?
2. Are the details of exactly what shared care responsibilities are being requested clear?
3. Does the GP consider that the shared care request details are reasonable?
4. Does the GP feel confident in accepting the clinical responsibility involved in the shared care?
5. Is the shared care in the patient's best interests for ongoing provision of safe and quality care?
6. Are all other parties involved in the shared care in agreement with their part within it?

An agreed Shared Care Guideline (SCG) can help to formally clarify the shared care clinical responsibilities involved and are nationally recommended to support the prescribing of ADHD drugs.

- **IF the answers to the above questions are YES** – then GPs should be prepared to enter into shared care with the requesting NHS contracted provider.
- **IF answers to any of the above questions are NO** – then the GP should decline the request for shared care and inform the provider accordingly, together with the reasons for this decision. In which case ongoing NHS care would need to be fully provided by the specialist provider who initiated the treatment.

4. Informing patients of the implications of referral to different NHS Choices providers

NHS Patient Choice Adult ADHD diagnostic assessments require a GP referral. To help patients make an informed choice of which provider to be referred to, it would be beneficial to discuss with the patient and consider whether a subsequent shared care request from the provider involved would be likely to be acceptable to the GP prior to making the initial referral for assessment, including raising any informal clinical concerns/unfamiliarity the GP may have regarding assessment quality. **A local summary for patients on the implications of their choice of ADHD assessment providers is available for ADULTS HERE and for parents/carers for CHILDREN HERE.**

Unfortunately, there is no readily accessible, up to date NHS produced list of which providers are currently contracted to provide NHS Patient Choice ADHD services, either assessment and/or ongoing care. To promote access by patients, [ADHD UK](#) do however publish such a list on their website, the content and updating of which is the responsibility of ADHD UK.

For any NHS Choices care providers who are NOT contracted to the NHS to also provide ongoing NHS care after an NHS commissioned ADHD diagnosis, either as shared care or specialist only care, then

after ADHD diagnosis the GP will need to refer the patient to an alternative NHS provider who **IS** contracted to provide ongoing NHS care. The patient would then go onto the relevant ongoing care providers NHS waiting list for specialist agreement and acceptance for ongoing NHS care. In the interim, NHS ongoing care cannot be provided ie. a delay between the NHS diagnosis and NHS treatment. **The specialist service that undertook the initial assessment should inform the patient that they will need to be accepted onto an appropriate NHS pathway for ongoing care before this can commence** and that following an ADHD diagnosis by that provider, they will need to be referred by their GP onto the NHS waiting list of a different NHS service provider to access the NHS ongoing care pathway involved.

At the time of writing of this guidance **access to the Gloucestershire local NHS care pathway for ADHD is the same, whether a patient has already undergone an assessment by a non local specialist provider or not.** This applies equally to patients assessed privately or under NHS contracted service activity. The initial specialist appointment will involve a review of the patient case based on the information available and a decision made on the route through the local NHS care pathway. Patients who have **already undergone an assessment by an NHS Choices provider as part of their NHS contracted activity** will normally be moved directly onto ongoing care if considered appropriate for their circumstances. The need to reassess patients **already diagnosed under private healthcare** will be a decision for the NHS specialist involved.

5. Locally endorsed Shared Care Guidelines (SCGs) for the prescribing of ADHD medication

There are currently a locally agreed **NHS Gloucestershire shared care guidelines** (SCG) to support the prescribing of ADHD drugs for both **adults and children available [HERE](#)**. This SCG only applies to the providers who have agreed to its content (ie. local Gloucestershire NHS providers) as is based on the local Gloucestershire ADHD care pathway that exists.

GPs can enter into ADHD prescribing shared care prescribing guidelines for the sharing of ongoing care with alternative NHS contracted providers, if the GP agrees with the content of the SCGs involved and is prepared to accept the associated clinical responsibility, including confidence in the care pathway.

In response to increasing local requests for **ADHD shared care prescribing for ADULTS** from a particular NHS contracted private provider, **Psychiatry UK (PUK)** within their NHS contract, Gloucestershire ICB has considered and locally endorsed **[a PUK shared care guideline](#)** for the prescribing of ADHD meds **for adults** to support ongoing NHS care initiated by PUK. At the time of issue of this guidance there are no Gloucestershire ICB plans to provide local endorsement of any other providers ADHD shared care prescribing guidelines. All locally endorsed SCGs are included in the usual NHS Gloucestershire list of SCGs **[HERE](#)**. Any questions on local SCGs can be directed to Gloucs ICB: glicb.medicines@nhs.net

At the time of writing of this guidance, there are **No NHS Choice providers contracted by the NHS to provide ongoing ADHD shared care for CHILDREN**. Therefore, there is currently no Gloucestershire ICB intention to agree shared care ADHD prescribing guidance for CHILDREN with any NHS Choice non local provider. As with any other requests received by Gloucestershire GPs from a private healthcare provider for ongoing ADHD care for children, if considered appropriate, GPs should refer such children involved to an NHS contracted provider of ADHD care for children (eg. the local Gloucestershire care pathway) for NHS review and assessment as considered appropriate by the NHS specialist provider involved.

6. Categorising requests for the primary care prescribing of ADHD medication

- see summary flowchart on next page

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