

Letter to patients explaining why NHS prescribers may not always be able to prescribe following recommendations from clinicians accessed privately.

Re: Request to prescribe private consultation recommended medications on NHS prescription.

Sometimes patients decide to see doctors or other healthcare professionals in the private sector for their healthcare needs. Occasionally, following this appointment(s) the private healthcare clinician asks a GP to take on the prescribing element of a treatment plan under the NHS.

Your GP will consider these requests and will make a judgement as to whether they are able to meet this request. NHS Gloucestershire's Integrated Care Board (ICB) has produced a guideline for GPs and other NHS prescribers to help when making decisions.

In some situations, your GP will decide that they are unable to agree to accept medical responsibility for this private prescribing and this letter is to explain a little more about that decision.

Prescribing a medicine for a patient is a very complex activity. Professional bodies for healthcare clinicians advise Doctors, and other prescribers, that they should assess every situation individually and only prescribe if they are competent to do so. This means that prescribers are not obliged to prescribe on behalf of other prescribers and cannot be "told" they must prescribe against their clinical judgment.

More information from the General Medical Council (GMC) can be found here: Good practice in prescribing and managing medicines and devices (gmc-uk.org)

Prescribers should only prescribe if they:

- a) have the necessary information about the patient and their medical conditions, and especially relating to the condition being treated,
- b) are sufficiently knowledgeable about the requested medicine to feel confident to prescribe safely (and sometimes have access to ongoing specialist advice and support),
- c) will be able to safely look after the patient whilst they are taking the medication (e.g., any required monitoring to ensure your safety and treatment benefit)
- d) are not restricted in prescribing the drug by the local ICB (NHS prescribing of some medicines is restricted locally).

If the GP feels that one or more of these conditions are not met, then they may decide they are unable to prescribe.

If your GP is unable to prescribe, they will advise or discuss options with you. These may include obtaining a private prescription from the private clinician you have seen or being referred to an NHS specialist clinician (where appropriate).

If you have any further questions, please contact PALS at glicb.pals@nhs.net or 0800 0151 548. *Please be aware the PALS team is unable to change clinical decisions made by a GP or other healthcare professionals.*