

Wednesday 12 February 2025

Dear GP colleagues,

**Neurosurgery referrals changing to advice and guidance (A&G) from March 2025**

The neurosurgery department will be changing their referral service to advice and guidance (A&G) only from 1 March 2025.

This is due to the service being under extreme pressure with patients experiencing long waits for new outpatient appointments, which is impacting both patient care and experience. To improve the pathway, the department will be streamlining the suitability of patients referred to the service and provide clear guidance to GPs of appropriate services to access for management of their patient's neurosurgical condition.

We are currently the only London Trust providing neurosurgical services, that is not managing routine referrals via an advice and guidance (A&G) pathway. The benefits of the change for patients will be in:

- reducing the wait time for the first outpatient appointment through the reduction of high volumes of referrals to the service
- managing patients in the most appropriate settings as quickly as possible

To aid the transition, we are in the process of updating our Directory of Service (DoS), which will be circulated once complete, and we have produced specific guidance and criteria within the DoS to guide GPs before they make a referral. Aside from aligning with other London Trusts, we will also be following best practice and Getting It Right First Time (GIRFT) guidance for management of these pathways.

Patients requiring our specialist care can be converted into a referral with detailed guidance for GPs on patients who can be managed in other settings. As this will be a change in practice, we endeavour to work in partnership with GP colleagues through the transition, while also keeping an open dialogue for improvement in a collaborative approach of working smarter together.

If you have any questions or require further information, please contact deputy general manager, Claire Ansbro, via email:

Email: [claire.ansbro@nhs.net](mailto:claire.ansbro@nhs.net)

Kind regards,

GP liaison on behalf of the neurosurgery service