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Policy on Managing Requests for GP Prescribing, Including Shared Care Agreements with Private Providers

Purpose:

To establish a clear, consistent, and safe approach for handling requests for GP prescribing, including shared care agreements with private providers. This ensures patient care is managed effectively while maintaining the integrity of NHS services.

Scope:

This policy applies to all staff involved in the management and administration of GP prescribing requests, including shared care agreements with private providers, within the practice.

Policy Statement:

The practice is committed to providing high-quality care to all patients. Requests for GP prescribing, including shared care agreements with private providers, will be considered on a case-by-case basis, taking into account clinical appropriateness, capacity, and governance implications. Shared care with private providers is generally discouraged due to potential governance and quality assurance issues, as well as the risk of promoting health inequalities.

However, the practice offers patients the option of referral to an equivalent NHS specialist if

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they wish to access ongoing NHS advice or medication for their condition, rather than continuing with a private provider.

Guidelines:

1. Assessment of GP Prescribing and Shared Care Requests:

- All requests for GP prescribing or shared care agreements with private providers must be submitted in writing and include comprehensive details of the proposed care plan.
- The practice will assess each request based on clinical appropriateness, capacity, and the ability to maintain high standards of care.

2. Criteria for Acceptance:

- GP prescribing or shared care agreements may be accepted if the private provider is delivering commissioned NHS services and appropriate shared care arrangements are in place.
- The practice will only accept shared care agreements where:
 - The referral to the private provider was initiated by the practice.
 - The provider is an accredited service, and the practitioner is appropriately qualified.
 - The proposed treatment is an established treatment for the condition, such as being licensed or included in national guidelines.
 - The practice has experience in prescribing the medication for the specific indication.
 - The patient agrees to attend regular appointments with the private provider for the duration of the shared care agreement.
 - The private provider is readily accessible to address any complications, side effects, or medication availability difficulties.
- If the request for shared care prescribing is not accepted, the practice can offer to refer the patient to an equivalent NHS specialist for ongoing advice and management.

3. Communication:

- Decisions regarding requests for GP prescribing or shared care agreements will be communicated to the private provider and the patient in a timely manner.
- If a request is rejected, the practice will provide a clear explanation of the reasons for the decision, along with the option for NHS referral.

4. Documentation:

- All requests for GP prescribing, shared care agreements, and related communications will be documented in the patient's medical record.

5. Review and Monitoring:

- This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains relevant and effective.
- Feedback from staff and patients will be considered in the review process.

Conclusion:

The practice aims to manage GP prescribing requests, including shared care agreements with private providers, effectively. The primary focus is on patient safety and the efficient use of NHS resources, while offering alternative NHS referrals when appropriate.