

Expediting Hospital Appointments

Hospital appointments are scheduled and prioritised by the hospital based on clinical need and their waiting list policies.

GP practices do not control hospital waiting lists and cannot usually bring appointments forward.

We do not have any special hotline numbers to the hospital, and we are not notified in advance of any hospital appointments or operation dates you might have- therefore if you need this information, we urge you to get in touch with the hospital.

We are aware that patients are often told by the hospital to 'get a letter from the GP' so that their appointment can be expedited. This is in fact unnecessary and creates an additional administrative burden on already stretched GP services.

Please be aware that simply waiting a longer time than you would wish does not make your request urgent. We cannot write letters to expedite your appointment for this reason.

As per hospitals contract (April 2017), hospitals are now obliged to respond to any queries you might have about your care. This is not for your GP to chase.

The only time we would/can try to expedite appointments is if your clinical condition has SUBSTANTIALLY changed or worsened.

What you can do:

- Contact the hospital department or bookings team directly (number on your clinic letter/Text). Ask about:
 - Being added to a short-notice cancellation list.
 - Any alternative sites/clinicians within the Trust
 - Whether further information is needed from you or us
 - Contact PALS (patient advice and liaison service) Sherwood Forest hospital 01623 672222, Nottingham hospitals 0800 183 0204
- If your symptoms have significantly worsened since the referral, please let the hospital know as they may need to re-triage your case.
- If you feel your condition is now urgent, please contact NHS 111 or, in an emergency, 999/A&E.

What we can do:

- We ensure referral letters are complete and sent promptly.
- If the hospital requests additional information, we will provide it.
- If your clinical situation has changed, please get in touch by phone or submit an online request to us so a clinician can review and, if appropriate see you to reassess or update the hospital.

Important:

- Hospitals should not discharge you for being unavailable within a fixed time frame. You should be offered a choice to book outside that window. If you have been discharged after a single missed appointment, please contact the hospital to reinstate your booking. If they insist on a new GP referral, let us know and we can write to the provider/ICB challenging this practice in line with BMA guidance.