

## Shared Care Policy

Shared care is a term used within the NHS to describe the situation where a specialist doctor wishes to pass some of the patient's care, such as prescription of medication, over to their general practitioner (GP). This is something that can be requested but the guidance for all medications is that this may only be done if the GP agrees. The GP will need to consider several factors to decide if this is safe.

In shared care arrangements the prescribing Consultant or specialist team would remain responsible for parts of the patient's care. These should be defined in the shared care arrangement and usually include any changes to the medication regime, or any complications related to the medication. The presence of a specialist is also essential for the GP to be deemed to be operating under 'shared care'. Shared care is not 'shared' unless it is shared by the GP with someone else. Without this then GPs may be deemed to operating outside of the GMC's Good Medical Practice.

We are aware that there are multiple issues that are affecting patient hospital waiting times and that ICBs and our secondary care colleagues are working hard to try to address these. It is recognised that General Practice is also struggling to meet patient needs. We need to be mindful of focussing on undertaking essential services to patients first and foremost before agreeing to take on extra specialist work on top of this. We should not be asked to work beyond our competences or over safety limits in order to cover long waiting times for other services or commissioning gaps.

We do not believe that private healthcare follow up is robust enough to ensure safe shared care agreements.

To accept a shared agreement and prescribe the medication we require:

1. An NHS specialist to continue regular follow up
2. A written and signed shared care agreement which has been agreed with NHS Lincolnshire
3. Most shared care agreements require the patient to be on a stable dose (usually of 3 months or longer duration) – this does vary between agreements