

Milton Keynes CCG Choice Planning Guidance

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1. Introduction

NHS Milton Keynes Clinical Commissioning Group (MK CCG) is responsible for the local NHS budget and commissioning healthcare for the residents of Milton Keynes. We commission services to provide a high standard of patient care that is flexible and responsive to the needs of our patients and service users. Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) are required to enable patients to make choices and to promote the involvement of patients in decisions about their care and treatment. The aim of MK CCG's Choice Planning Guidance is to provide clarity on the principles of choice for the benefit of patients, members of the public, partners and stakeholders in Milton Keynes.

The importance of choice for NHS patients sits within a broad legislative and regulatory framework and has been reinforced by recent publications including *The NHS Five Year Forward View*, *NHS England's Mandate 2016/17*, *The NHS Planning Guidance 2016/17-2020/21* and *The NHS Long Term Plan (2019)*. The overall emphasis is that people should be empowered to shape and manage their own health and care and be enabled to make meaningful choices as to where and how that care is received.

2. Background

The NHS Constitution sets out a range of pledges, rights and responsibilities and this includes the right to information to support patient choice. This will help people to make informed choices about their healthcare and the opportunity to compare and make choices to suit their needs.

The Health and Social Care Act 2012 makes clear the duties on NHS England and CCGs promote the involvement of patients and carers in decisions about their care and treatment and to enable patient choice. The Act sets out specific provision in relation to procurement, patient choice and competition which is designed to ensure that NHS England and CCGs procure high quality and efficient healthcare services that meet the needs of patients and protect patient choice.

3. Purpose and Scope

MK CCG's Choice Planning Guidance is designed to make clear MK CCG's position in support of choice for our patients registered with a MK CCG GP Practices.

This Guidance should be considered alongside the Department of Health's NHS Choice Framework ([at Appendix 1](#) or at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-nhs-choice-framework>) which explains in greater detail when choice is available as determined nationally or by local commissioning arrangements and decisions in relation to the following service areas:

- Choice of GP practice and particular GP
- Choice of secondary care first outpatient appointment
- Patients waiting longer than maximum waiting times
- Choosing who carries out a specialist test
- Maternity Services
- Mental Health Services
- Community Services
- Health Research
- Personal Health Budget

- Treatment in another European Economic Area

There are also a range of exclusions laid out in the NHS Choice Framework where choice is not available for certain services, treatments, patients or areas as described below:

Where a patient is:

- A prisoner or detained in other prescribed accommodation
- A serving member of the Armed Forces
- Detained under the Mental Health Act 1983
- Detained in a secure hospital setting
- Using maternity services
- Suspected of Cancer
- Already receiving care and treatment for the condition

Where a patient:

- Chooses to wait longer
- Fails to attend appointments that have been chosen from a set of reasonable options
- Is on the national transplant list
- Is using maternity services
- Is using services not led by a consultant or a member of their team
- Decided not to start or decline treatment
- Cannot start treatment for reasons not related to the hospital (for example, they are a reservist posted abroad while waiting to start treatment)

And also where:

- The treatment is no longer necessary
- A doctor has decided that it is appropriate to monitor the patient for a time without treatment
- Delaying the start of treatment is in the patient's best interests for example, if needing to lose weight or stop smoking before starting treatment

4. Choice and Reasonable Adjustments

If patients have any additional needs for example because of a physical or mental health condition or any other impairment, a discussion should take place between the referring clinician and patient (and where relevant their advocate or carer) to ensure that any additional needs are taken into account when exercising choice.

Referrers and Patients (and where relevant their advocate or carer) should also consider choice implications with respect to transport costs and/or distance to travel which may inform where treatment or services are chosen.

5. Options when choice is not offered

MK CCG expects choice to be discussed and made available to patients by either the health care professional or the Milton Keynes Referral Management Service when referring for treatment to a specialist in secondary care. If available choice options have not been made available, MK CCG would expect the referring organisation to investigate and explain the reasons for this. If patients are concerned that MK CCG, through its commissioning activity has not commissioned required choice options, then patients may wish to approach MK CCG to handle their concern via the organisation's complaints policy and procedures.

6. Delays in starting treatment within expected timeframes

MK CCG recognises its obligations under The National Health Service Commissioning Board and Clinical Commissioning Groups (Responsibilities and Standing Rules) Regulations 2012. MK CCG keeps under review NHS Constitution Referral to Treatment times through quality and contractual monitoring processes and work with relevant Providers to establish assurance mechanisms that support all patients being offered choice where they are at risk of breaching the 18 week or two week (cancer) wait time targets.

At the patient's request, MK CCG will work with Providers to ensure they offer patients an alternative provider when:

- the Provider is unable to make a reasonable commitment to deliver a treatment and;
- wait times go beyond the expected timeframes

The consideration of an alternative provider should include whether the treatment can be delivered at an earlier date than if the patient were to wait for care at the current Provider. If there is more than one suitable alternative known, then all available choices should be offered to the patient.

7. Principles for Ensuring Patient Choice

MK CCG recognises that providing people with greater choice is a priority of the modern NHS. We will regularly review local health provision through our commissioning activity to ensure choice and locations of care are available for patients where relevant. Where gaps in provision are identified, MK CCG will explore a range of options as part of the commissioning planning cycle.

MK CCG commissions a Referral Management Service (RMS) to improve the experience for patients and facilitate the referral process for healthcare professionals in using the NHS national electronic Referral Service (e-RS) system. The RMS also supports and promotes awareness of choice.

MK CCG will support GPs and other health professionals in promoting patient choice from within their services through:

- Advising GP Practices of the availability of Patient Choices materials for display in their practices
- Distributing patient leaflets to GP Practices, Health Centers and Community Health services for display in their services when these are made available
- Promoting choice as a regular agenda item at GP Practice visits by MK CCG's Primary Care Team supported by the Quality Team
- Communicate effectively with Stakeholders when new services are commissioned or changes to services occur
- Key GP Practice staff alerted to new or amended local services and providers
- Guidance, training and on-going support offered for new updates to the e-RS system, new or amended referral pathways and Directory of Services across the locality.
- Provide referrers with the opportunity to escalate issues and concerns to MK CCG via a monitored email 'GP inbox'
- Implementing and supporting national choice initiatives (for example NHS England's e-Referral Commissioning for Quality and Innovation scheme)

MK CCG will monitor compliments, comments, concerns and complaints about Patient Choice and will use information to inform commissioning processes along with oversight and monitoring activity with locally commissioned Providers.

8. Further Choice Information Available

There is a range of information available about patient choice which can be accessed via the following links:

- NHS Choices – www.nhs.uk/
- <https://www.england.nhs.uk/patient-choice/>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-nhs-choice-framework/the-nhs-choice-framework-what-choices-are-available-to-me-in-the-nhs>
- Local Healthwatch -<https://www.healthwatchmiltonkeynes.co.uk/>
- NHS Milton Keynes CCG website - <http://www.miltonkeynesccg.nhs.uk>
- Information on Clinical Trials - www.ukctg.nihr.ac.uk
- Personal Health Budgets - www.personalhealthbudgets.england.nhs.uk and www.peoplehub.org.uk

9. Implementation

MK CCG's Choice Planning Guidance will be available on MK CCG's choice webpage. All managers are responsible for ensuring that relevant staff within MK CCG have read and understood the guidance (and attached appendix) and shared with relevant stakeholders.

10. Monitoring and Review

MK CCG's Quality Committee review the organisation's responsibility for Patient Choice. This Choice Planning Guidance will be reviewed at such times as there are national or legal changes to Patient Choice guidelines.