

Frequently asked Questions about Shared Care for Patients and Carers



What is shared care?

- Shared care is a formal local agreement that enables General Practitioners (GPs) to accept responsibility for the safe prescribing and monitoring of specialist medicines.
- Shared care provides transfer of care from a specialist to the GP, where this is suitable and in the patient's best interests.
- The patient is not usually discharged by the specialist and care is shared between the patient, the GP and the specialist.

What is the specialist's role in shared care?

- Confirm the diagnosis and start prescribing the medicine.
- Provide the patient with written and spoken information about the medicine.
- Prescribe and monitor the medicine until the dose is stable.
- Explain shared care to the patient, answer any questions and discuss any concerns.
- Write to the GP and request shared care when the condition and medicine are stable.
- Prescribe and monitor the medicine while waiting for the GP to decide about shared care.
- Provide advice to the GP if this is asked for.
- Review the medicine at regular intervals to make sure it is still safe and effective.



What is the GP's role in shared care?

- Review specialist requests for shared care of medicines promptly.
- If the GP doesn't agree to shared care, they will write to the specialist within 14 days, giving reasons.
- If accepting shared care, prescribe and monitor the medicine as set out in the specialist's instructions and in the shared care agreement.
- Report any serious side effects to the specialist.
- Make sure the patient is given appointments for monitoring the medicine.



What is the patient's role in shared care?

- Take the medicine as agreed.
- Request repeat prescriptions from the GP in enough time.
- Attend follow up monitoring appointments with the GP and the specialist.
- If not able to attend an appointment with the GP or the specialist, inform them as soon as possible and make another appointment.
- Report suspected side effects to the specialist or GP.



Is shared care possible between a private healthcare provider and a GP?

- Shared care with private healthcare providers is only possible when this service is being provided for the patient on behalf of the NHS.
- If a patient is seeing a private specialist, and that service is not being provided on behalf of the NHS, shared care medicines would usually need to be supplied by the private specialist.
- If a patient would like to obtain the shared care medicine through the NHS, they should talk to their GP about having care for their condition transferred to the local NHS service.