

PRE AND POST TREATMENT SUPPORT IN PRIMARY CARE FOR PRIVATE PATIENTS

This communication provides clarification regarding pre and/or post treatment¹ support for individuals wishing to buy private healthcare from private healthcare providers². It only covers the provision of such support within Primary Care by General Practitioners (GPs) who deliver General Medical Services (GMS). It does not cover support by private GPs.

Pre and/or Post Treatment Support in Primary Care for Private Patients

Individuals choosing to buy healthcare privately from private healthcare providers are effectively stepping outside of the health and social care (HSC) system. In these circumstances, irrespective of whether the private treatment has been purchased within or outside Northern Ireland, **there is no obligation on GPs to provide pre and/or post treatment support.**

It is therefore important that individuals wishing to buy private healthcare ensure that all pre and post treatment support costs are included in the overall package of care obtained from the private healthcare provider.

In instances where any ongoing treatment and/or medication is recommended but is not provided by the private healthcare provider as part of the private service individuals should be prepared to pay for any associated costs.

Whilst not required, a GP may choose to provide pre and/or post treatment support for individuals buying private healthcare. This decision will be based on a GP's clinical judgement.

¹ 'treatment' refers to any planned treatment, including surgery, which is procured privately from a private healthcare provider.

² Whilst care has been taken to ensure the information provided is accurate at the time of issue, the content and guidance referred to may be subject to review and therefore may be updated or withdrawn at any time.

Private Prescriptions

A GP is not required to provide an HSC prescription to a patient based on the recommendation of a private practitioner.

A GP may choose to issue an HSC prescription under the HSC terms of service if:

- the GP considers that ongoing prescribing of a medicine is appropriate for supply through the HSC service.
- the GP is content that the treatment falls within their clinical remit.
- Appropriate shared care arrangements have been agreed with the private practitioner, the HSC prescriber and the patient/carers, where necessary.

Emergency Care

In line with normal practice, individuals buying healthcare privately will continue to be able to access emergency care within the HSC where necessary.

HSC patients receiving care in the Independent Sector

If a patient is receiving care in the independent healthcare sector as an HSC patient, pre and post treatment care will be provided by the HSC as normal.