
Guide to Devon Referral Support Services (DRSS)

1. What is DRSS?

Devon Referral Support Services (DRSS) is a Referrals Contact Centre which supports patients in getting the right advice, care or treatment in a timely manner.

Referrals are sent from GP practices to DRSS electronically. The referrals are processed and the patient contacts DRSS for an appointment. If a patient does not contact DRSS, they will be contacted directly by phone and by letter.

2. Who are DRSS?

DRSS is based on two sites: Windsor House in Plymouth and Bridge House in Newton Abbot.

The service is primarily delivered by administrative staff, Patient Choice Facilitators (PCFs), and GP Referral Facilitators (GPRFs).

GPRFs are available at DRSS every day to support the PCFs, make decisions about referrals which do not comply with CCG policy, and answer queries from primary and secondary care.

3. Do all referrals go through DRSS?

The vast majority of referrals are processed by DRSS. There are a few notable exceptions including: emergency referrals, antenatal clinic referrals, GUM clinic, family planning clinic and fracture clinic.

Referrals for suspected CVA and TIA should be referred direct to local emergency medical services.

For NHS New Devon CCG's Eastern and Northern localities 2 week wait referrals, Community Bladder and Bowel Services, and CAMHS are not processed through DRSS. Please send these referrals directly from the Practice.

For South Devon and Torbay and Eastern and Northern Localities 2 week wait referrals are booked by the GP Practice. The referrer should agree the date and time of the appointment with the patient at the time of referral to avoid patients rebooking outside of the 2 week period. If there are no appointments available on Choose and Book then practices should use the "Defer to Provider" button and the provider will contact the patient directly to book their appointment.

4. Why has my referral been returned?

Referrals may be returned by DRSS to the practice for a number of reasons:

- I. The referral is to a speciality not covered by DRSS (see above)

- II. The referral does not contain enough information to direct the patient to the most appropriate service
- III. The referral does not meet referral criteria (see below)
- IV. The referral is considered to be suitable for a 2 week wait.

For reasons 1-3 the referral is returned to the practice electronically via Choose and Book with comments from the GP Referral Facilitator as to why the referral has been returned and, if necessary, what information is needed if the referring GP wishes to pursue the referral.

If the referral is considered suitable for a 2 week wait the GPRF will contact the practice to discuss this with them directly before returning the referral for it to be booked as a 2 week wait if necessary.

5. What Referral Criteria do I need to know about?

There are several specialities that have referral criteria or Commissioning Policies that apply to referrals.

It is worth familiarising yourself with those guidelines prior to referring a patient, as it is possible the referral will be returned if the referral criteria are not met, or not detailed within the referral letter.

Some of these are listed below, but this list is not exhaustive and is liable to change as the CCG introduces new policies and referral criteria:

- a. Benign Skin Lesions policy including : warts, lipomas, sebaceous cysts etc
- b. Low Priority Treatments including cosmetic treatments
- c. Procedures of Limited Clinical Effectiveness e.g. tonsillectomy, grommets, circumcision, hallux valgus surgery, varicose veins
- d. Carpal Tunnel, Dupuytren's and Ganglion Policies
- e. Infertility Referral guidelines
- f. Heavy Menstrual Bleeding guidelines
- g. Pain Clinic Referral guidelines
- h. Hip and Knee referrals in the Eastern locality.

6. Where can I find out more about these referral guidelines?

The Formulary and Referral Websites contains details of all the referral guidance and commissioning policies:

For Western locality and East Cornwall - <http://southwest.devonformularyguidance.nhs.uk/>

For Northern and Eastern localities - <http://northeast.devonformularyguidance.nhs.uk/>

If you have any other questions about DRSS or local referral guidelines and policies do not hesitate to contact us on the DRSS helpdesk: tel: 01626 883 888 or email: cab.helpdesk@nhs.net.