

# If your GP refers you, you can choose.

## Choosing your hospital or service

easy  
read



# About this document



This document was made with the NHS by CHANGE, a charity led by people with learning disabilities.



This document uses easy words and pictures to help you understand more about how to choose your hospital or health service.



You might want to read through it with someone else to help you to understand it more.

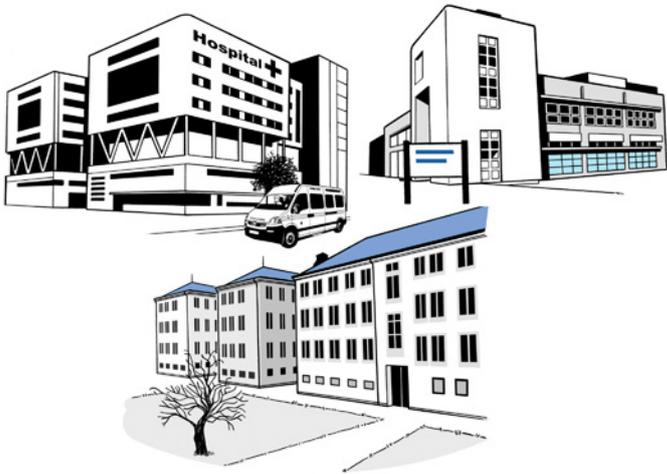


There is a **Word Bank** at the back of the booklet to help with hard words. Any words in **bold** you can find in the Word Bank on **page 17**.

# What can I choose?



If you have a physical or mental health condition, and your doctor needs to **refer** you, you will usually have a legal right to choose which hospital or service you go to.



You may be able to choose from different private or NHS hospitals which provide health services to the NHS.



You may also be able to choose the team that cares for you, which will be led by a consultant or a named healthcare professional.



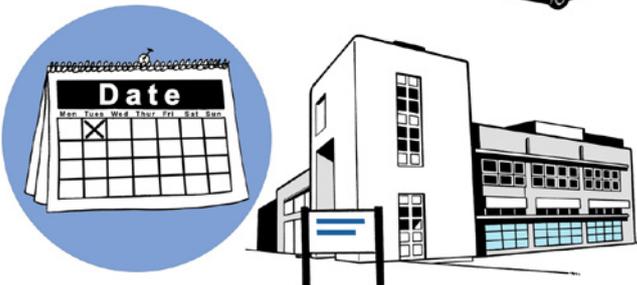
GP surgeries usually **refer** patients to hospitals or services in the local area.



However you can ask your GP if you want to be **referred** somewhere else in the country.



You can also ask your GP to find out if you can be seen more quickly at another hospital.



If your GP has a **clinical** reason they think you shouldn't go somewhere else they will tell you.



You can choose a hospital or service based on what is most important to you.



This could be waiting times, quality of service, your previous experience, the opinions of other patients, the location of the service, or where your GP thinks you should go.



This leaflet explains some of the things that you might want to know if you are choosing where you will be **referred** to for treatment.

# Is a choice available to everybody?



You have a legal right to choose where you are **referred** to for your first appointment where you do not have to stay in hospital overnight if:

- Your GP needs to **refer** you for treatment or tests that are not an emergency



- You are not a member of the armed forces, a prisoner or on temporary release from prison.

- You are not detained under the Mental Health Act 1983, in a secure place such as a hospital.

This is sometimes called being sectioned.

- If you meet all of the above, then the steps below can help you. If not then please ask your GP what choices are available to you.



# Why should I choose where to have my treatment?



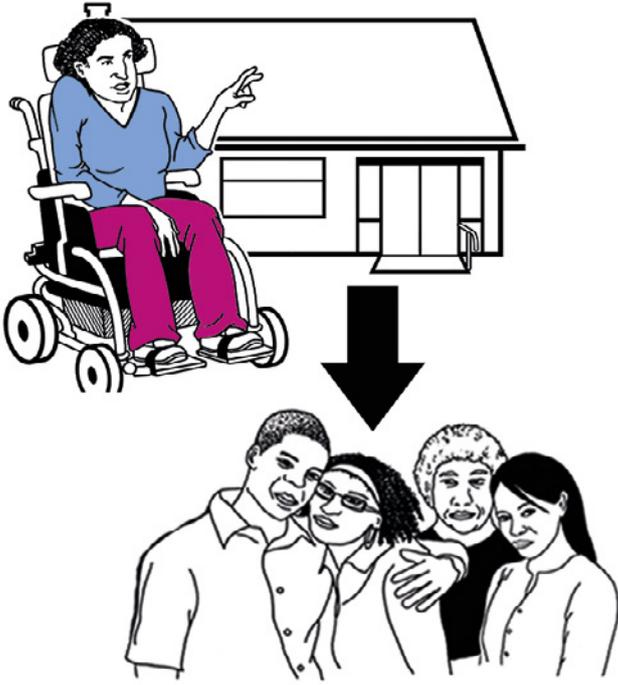
People tell the NHS that they want to be more involved in making decisions and choosing their own healthcare.



Most people say it is helpful to be able to choose where and when they access NHS services.



Even if you don't mind where you go, it is important to know that you have a choice.



It may be that you want to go somewhere away from home but closer to your family.



Or perhaps you want to start your treatment as quickly as possible.



It's up to you to decide.

# Where can I find information to help me choose?



There are a lots of places where you can find information about hospitals and services:

- You can ask your GP about what might be the best choice for you, once you tell them what is most important to you.

- You can compare information about hospitals, services and consultants online at: [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)



This website includes information about the quality of care, waiting times, parking and travel.

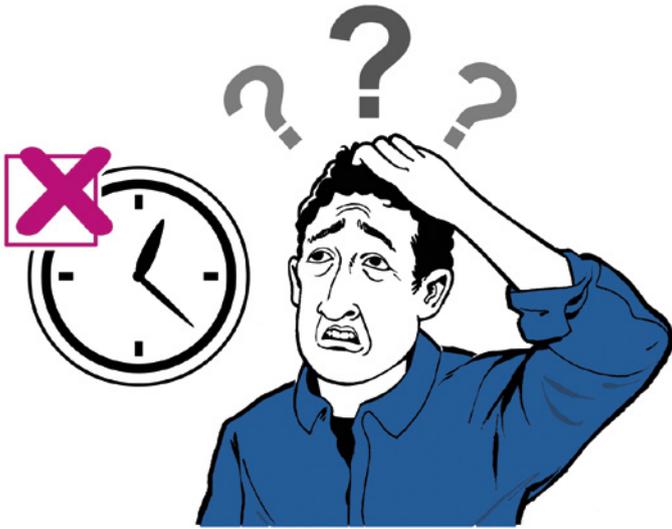


Simply search using the 'Services Near You' option available at the top of the website.



You can also search by looking at the operations and treatments that the hospitals or services offer.

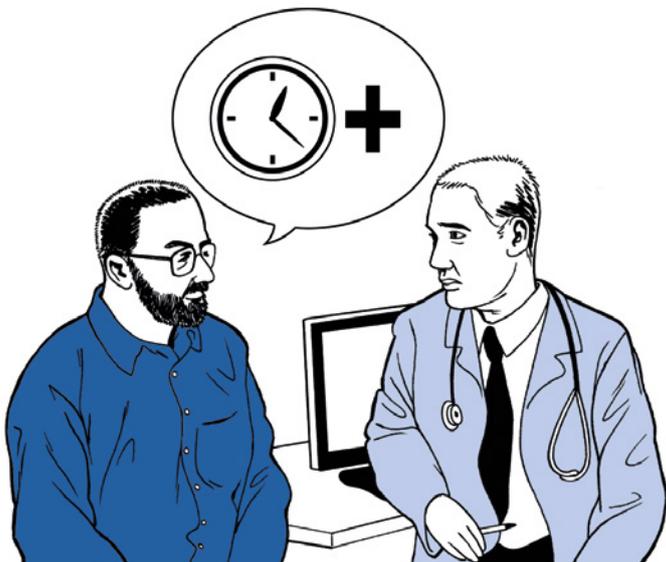
## Do I have to choose straight away?



You do not need to choose straight away.



You can take some time to think about the information you've seen and decide in the next few days.



You just need to tell your GP that you need more time and they will tell you what to do.

# Once I have made my choice, how do I book a hospital appointment?



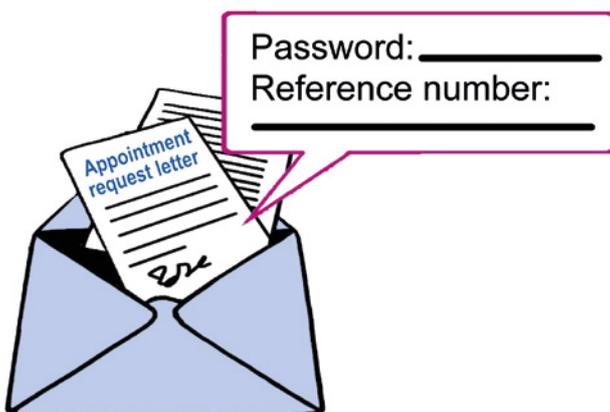
There are several ways to book your appointment: You may be able to book on the online NHS e-Referral Service. Your 'Appointment Request' letter will explain how to book.



There will be a list of hospitals or services in the letter you receive.

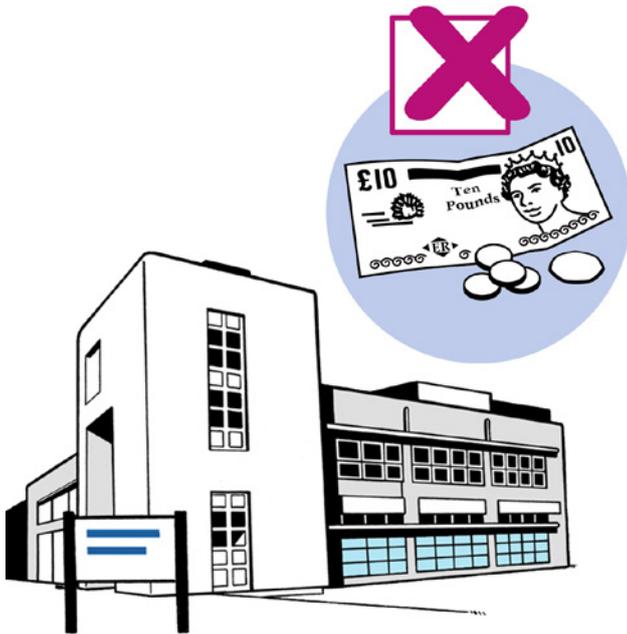


Your GP creates this list of hospitals for you to choose from, based on what is important to you. So be sure to talk to your GP about your needs.



In the letter you will be given a password and reference number. This will help you to book your appointment online or over the phone.

# Do I have to pay if I choose a hospital?



Once you have chosen a hospital or service with your GP, you will not be expected to pay for your treatment or care.

## Before your appointment



**1.** You can find out about the choices you can make on the website: [www.nhs.uk/patientchoice](http://www.nhs.uk/patientchoice)

**2.** Think about what things are important to you when you choose where you are **referred** to.

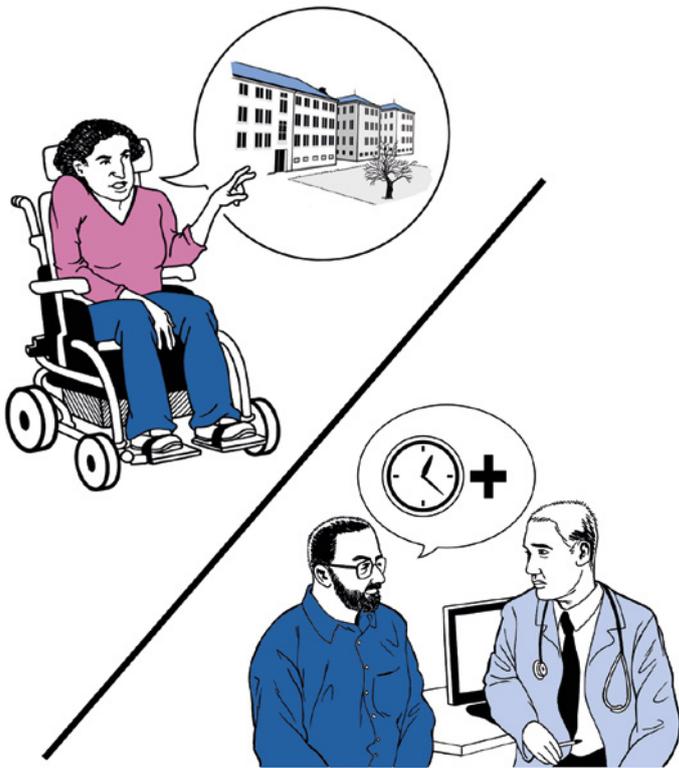
## During your appointment



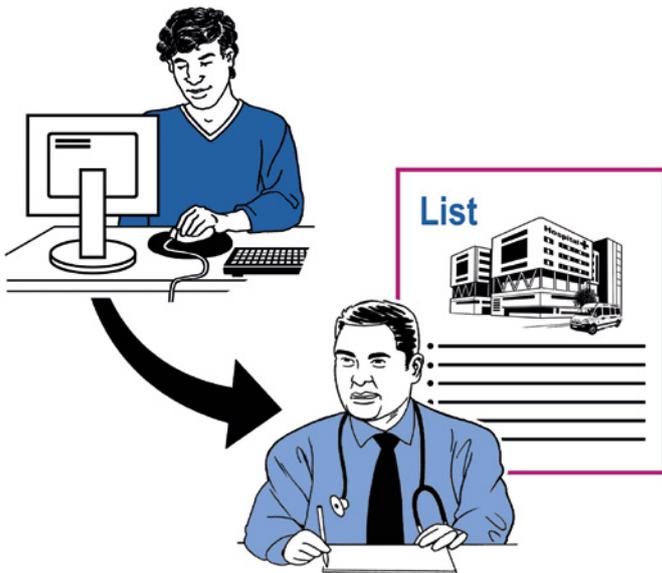
**3.** Discuss your choices with your GP and decide whether or not you want to have treatment.

Information about shared decision making can be found on the website: [sdm.rightcare.nhs.uk](http://sdm.rightcare.nhs.uk)

**4.** Talk about what you want with your GP. For example would you like to see a particular consultant's team or would you like to have treatment later?



**5.** If you know where you want to go or if you need more time to consider the information, tell your GP and they will help you.



**6.** Your GP will create a shortlist for you to choose from

# After your appointment

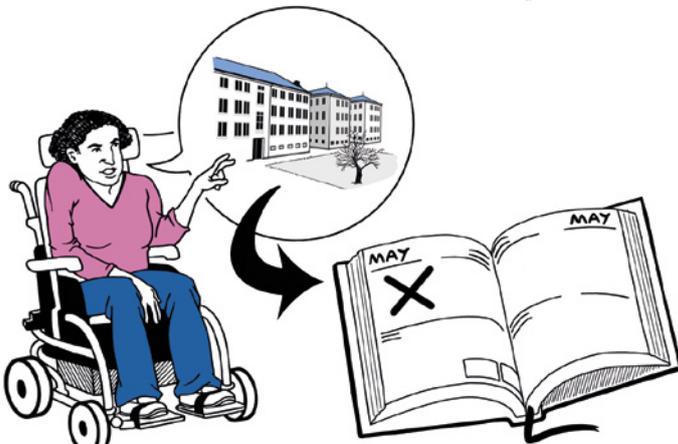
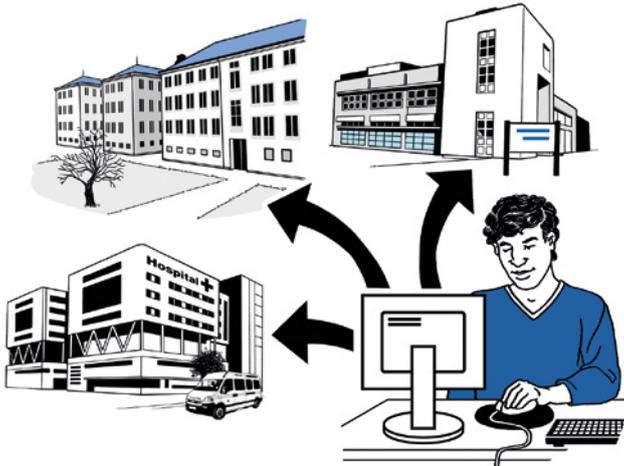


**7.** Think about what you want to do, and talk with friends and family, or ask for advice from your surgery.

**8.** Find and compare services and consultants online at: [www.nhs.uk/patientchoice](http://www.nhs.uk/patientchoice) using the 'services near you' tool.

**9.** Once you have decided where you want to be treated, you can book your appointment.

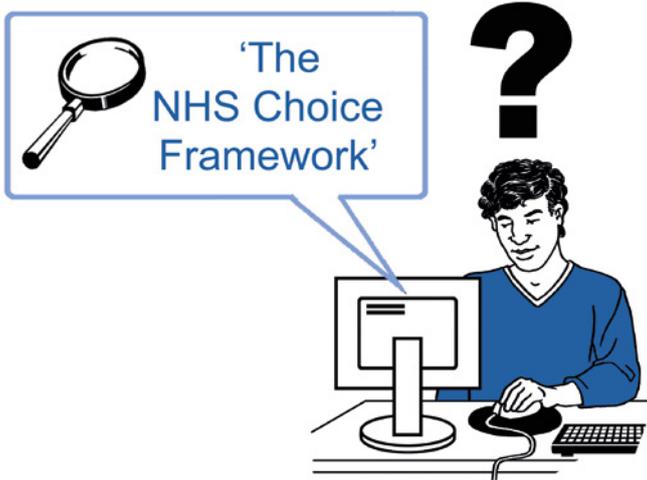
You can do this either at your surgery, or by following the instructions on your 'Appointment Request' letter to book online or over the phone.



# What can I do if I am not offered a choice of hospital?



If you feel you are not being offered a choice, talk to your GP.



If you have any more questions you can go online and search for 'The NHS Choice Framework' at: [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)



This website tells you what to do if you are not offered a choice.

# Word Bank



## Clinical

Medical observation or treatment of a patient.



## Consultant

A consultant is a senior medical professional who works in a hospital, and has special training.



## Refer/referred

When your doctor sends you to be treated by another medical professional or to a different service, so you can receive specialised care.



