

EAST AND NORTH HERTS TRUST E-REFERRAL SERVICE – PAPER SWITCH OFF

PAPER RETURNS PROCESS

For use by out of area GP surgeries

The purpose of this document is to inform the GP community of the process East and North Herts Trust will operate on receipt of a paper, email, telephone or fax referral for Routine and 2WW appointments, following paper switch off on 31 August 2018.

WHY IS THE TRUST SWITCHING TO PAPERLESS REFERRALS?

A new provision, which forms part of the current 2017/19 NHS Standard Contract, will take effect from October 2018; this is Service Condition 6.2A which states that:

“With effect from 1 October 2018, and as provided for in NHS e-Referral Guidance and/or any subsequent guidance published by NHS England and/or NHS Digital, the Provider need not accept (and will not be paid for any first outpatient attendance resulting from) Referrals by GPs to Consultant-led acute outpatient Services made other than through the NHS e-Referral Service.”

Under this new arrangement, providers will return referrals to GP practices that have not been made through the correct e-RS route. East and North Herts Trust (the Trust) has adopted a phased approach to paper switch off, which takes effect on 31st August 2018, one month prior to the national deadline.

ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

CCG	Clinical commissioning group
e-RS	NHS e-Referral Service

REFERRAL RETURN PROCESS

1. The term 'paper referral' is used to denote any referral (including telephone calls, e-mails and faxes) from a GP for a first appointment in a consultant-led acute outpatient service, which is not sent via the NHS e-Referral Service.
2. To ensure referrals are closely monitored and patients are directed to the appropriate care as quickly as possible, the Trust and commissioners have worked together to agree suitable paper referral return processes.
3. The clinical risk and accelerated time frame attached to two week wait referrals is recognised by commissioners and the Trust, and a different pathway for managing routine referrals and two week wait referrals has been developed. These processes are designed to support the Trust in complying with the requirements of Service Condition 6.2A, and to safeguard patients.
4. The Trust pathway for a routine referral and for a two week wait referral are attached as appendices 1 and 2.
5. Appendix 1 shows a routine paper referral return process. The Trust will telephone the GP surgery to request that an eRS referral is made and will ask the surgery to provide an email address. A copy of the paper referral will be emailed to the surgery; the email will have a read receipt request attached. If a read receipt is not returned within 5 days, the Trust will telephone the GP surgery concerned and again request an e-RS referral be made. Where a referral is not made, the issue will be escalated by the provider to a named contact in the appropriate CCG.
6. Appendix 2 shows the process for two week wait referrals which are received on paper. On receipt of a paper 2WW referral the Trust will call the referring surgery to ask that the referral is sent by e-RS on the same working day. If an e-RS referral is not received on the same working day the paper referral will be processed and the patient will be given a suitable appointment.

Where the re-referral is subsequently made through e-RS within the above time frame, no further action is taken. Where the referral is not made, the issue is escalated by the provider to a named contact in the appropriate CCG.

Monitoring and Governance

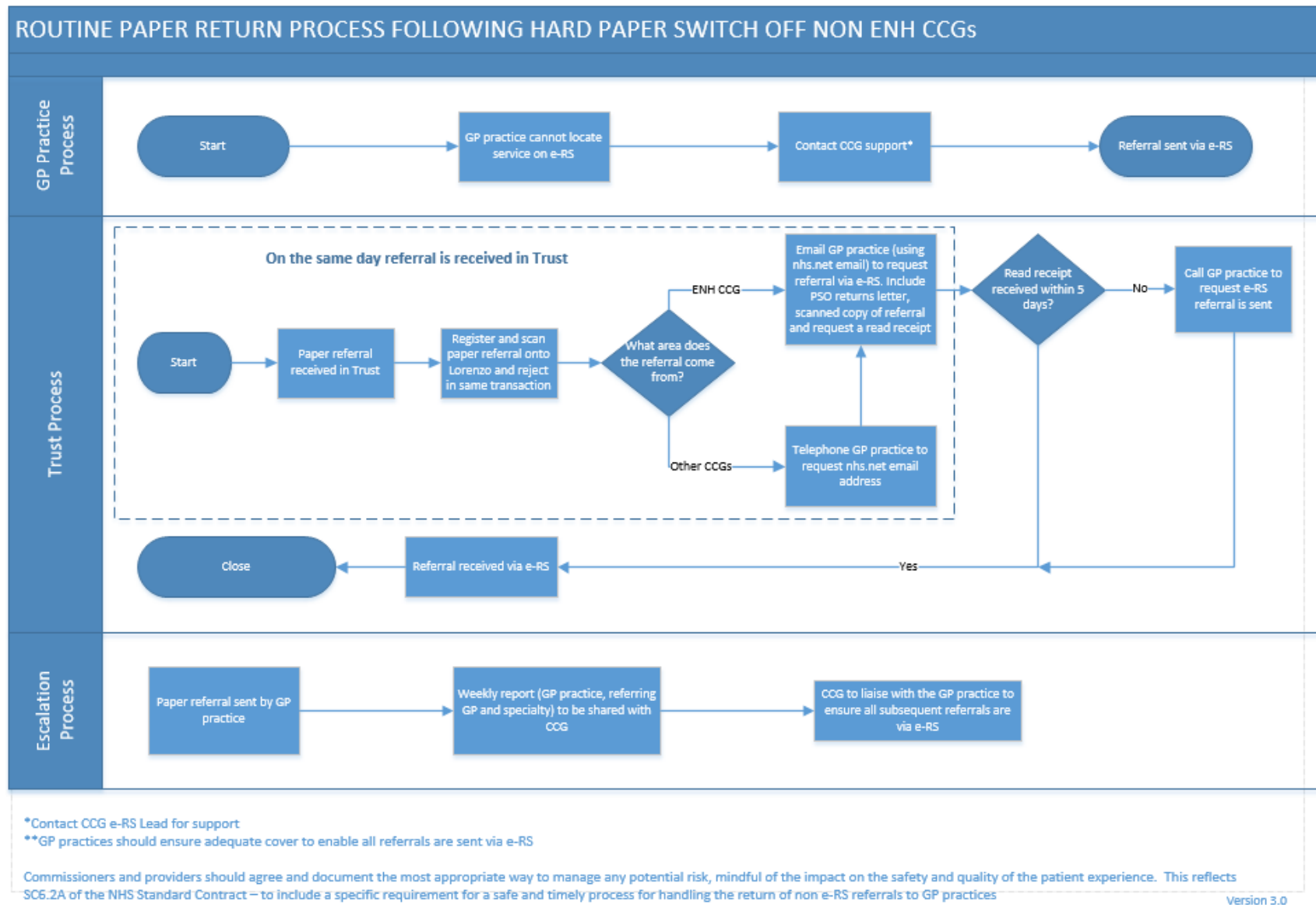
Non-acceptance of a Referral by the Trust will be communicated to the Service User's GP so that the GP can take appropriate action. The CCG and the Trust will jointly monitor paper referrals to ensure that issues are identified, and the necessary remedial action taken. For example, if a GP practice experiences a temporary technical issue which makes it necessary to manage their referrals outside e-RS, the CCG will take action with the practice to address and resolve the issue as quickly as possible, supported by the Trust as appropriate.

Each CCG is responsible for ensuring that GPs within its area are made aware of this process.

System Outages and Business Contingency

In the event of an interruption to GP Practices being able to access e-Referrals, either following a national or local outage, GP Practices will be alerted to the outage via their agreed local process. Business contingency plans should be adhered to, ensuring delays to referrals are minimised, until the interruption has ended, and business as usual processes have returned to normal. It is recommended that GP Practices clearly identify where a paper referral has been sent due to an outage, so the provider can process accordingly and do not return to the GP Practice for sending via e-Referrals.

Appendix 1: Paper returns process – routine



Appendix 2: Paper returns process - 2WW

