**Frequently asked questions (FAQs)**

**Changes to referrals for consultant-led care**

**Why is this happening?**

Responsibility for the NHS in Wales is devolved to the Welsh Assembly Government. This means that it is separate from the NHS in England. The existing protocol between England and Wales sets out an agreement for the care of patients living along the border who live in one country but are registered with a GP practice in the other. Due to changes to the law brought about by the NHS Act 2006 (as amended by the Health and Social Care Act 2012), if you live in England and are registered with GP practices in Wales we need to make sure you can be offered care and services provided in England.

**What does this change mean for me, as a patient?**

If you live in England and you are registered with a GP surgery based in Wales and you need to be referred for treatment either in a hospital or clinic, you will be referred to a Referral Assessment Service, which will offer you a choice of healthcare providers in England.

**Will this mean I can’t go to a hospital in Wales?**

If you wish to receive your care in a hospital or clinic in Wales you can do so. However, you will not then be covered by the NHS Constitution and may lose some of your entitlements that the Constitution guarantees such as a choice of providers or waiting times which apply in England.

**What will happen if I need to be seen in hospital or by a specialist?**

If you are happy to receive your treatment and care in a hospital, or at a clinic, in England then your GP will arrange for your details to be sent to the Referral Assessment Service. A member of the Referral Assessment Service will contact you to arrange your appointment at the hospital or clinic of your choice. If you prefer, you can still choose to receive your treatment and care in a hospital or clinic in Wales. If you are cared for in Wales you will receive high quality NHS care to the same standards and policies that apply in the Welsh NHS.

**What happens if I have already been referred to a service in Wales, or am currently on a waiting list for treatment?**

If you have already been referred for treatment, there is no obligation to change your current treatment options. If you wish to change your existing treatment plans, please contact your GP practice to discuss your options.

Please note that changing your choice of provider may not necessarily mean that you are seen within a shorter waiting time.

**Other health & care services**

**What if I need to access care other than consultant-led services or hospital based treatments?**

These changes only apply to consultant-led care which is usually delivered in a hospital or clinic. All the other services you receive from your GP practice should remain unchanged. This includes, but is not limited to, screening tests, palliative or hospice care, non-emergency patient transportation, and most mental health services.

**Will I have to pay for prescriptions?**

If you are registered with a GP in Wales, you will still be entitled to receive free NHS prescriptions.

**What happens if I need out of hours care?**

Out of hours care is provided as per the arrangements for your GP practice. The service is not affected by this change. If you have any questions about out of hours care, please contact your GP practice directly.

**Who do I call if I need urgent help, is it NHS 111 or NHS Direct in Wales?**

If you live in England you will be able to use NHS 111 to get urgent help if you need it. NHS 111 currently only holds information about services in England. If you need information about services in Wales, they can transfer you to NHS Direct, (who currently provide information to people who live in Wales).

**What happens if I need an ambulance?**

This change will not make any difference to emergency ambulance services. You will still get an ambulance no matter where you live if you need one by calling 999.