

FAQS about GP to Consultant referrals and Paper Switch Off (PSO)

What is Paper Switch off (PSO)?

As part of NHS national policy, from the latest 1/10/2018, all GP to Consultant referrals to secondary care in the acute hospital trust must be via e-RS (excluding referrals where patients need to be seen within 48 hours). After this date, acute trusts will only be paid for activity if there is a UBRN attached to a referral. This policy applies to all acute trusts including Great Western Hospital and Royal Berkshire Hospital. The Paper Switch off does not apply to Community & Mental Health providers, however the NHS Standard Contract for 2019/20 mandates that all Mental Health providers must make their services **available** on e-RS.

Are there any services or types of referral which are excluded?

There are a few service/category exemptions which will be agreed locally although it is intended in the fullness of time these exemptions will be minimised. Further details are listed below. Please see Appendix A on this document for the service contact details.

Oxford University Hospitals:

The current exemptions from PSO at OUHFT are:

- Emergency Clinics where patients need to be seen within 24-48 hours.
- All non-consultant led services i.e. nurse led clinics
- Fracture Clinics
- Patients with no NHS number
- Patients with an NHS number who do not wish their details added to the spine
- Obstetrics including Obstetric medicine
- Referrals from **dentists** to Maxillo-facial service*
- Referrals from **optometrists** to ophthalmology*
- Referrals from **prisons***
- Referrals for services with a negligible number of referrals

OUHFT Specialities exempt due to complexities in the referral pathway:

Service	Referral method e.g. email
Obstetrics	Referrals to the Service are usually arranged directly by Community midwives via EPR. or sent using the Obstetric Secondary Care referral template (emails included on form)
Gynaecology Pre Pregnancy Conditions New	silver.star@nhs.net

OUHFT Treatment Functions exempt because the vast majority of patients need to be seen within 48 hours of receipt of the referral:

Service	Referral method e.g. email
Diabetic Foot Clinic and	There are 3 potential routes summarised in the proforma which are

other podiatry clinics	as follows: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Community Podiatry (use e-RS unless urgent to be seen within one week email Podiatry.Oxfordshire@nhs.net) 2. Multidisciplinary Diabetic Foot Service (email proforma to diabeticfootclinic@ouh.nhs.net) 3. MATT (Podiatry Biomechanics) (use e-RS)
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OUHFT Specialties or Treatment Functions exempt because they have a negligible volume of GP referrals received per annum:

Service	Referral method e.g. email
Thoracic Surgery	Ouh-tr.thoracicsurgery@nhs.net
Cardiac Surgery	ouh-tr.cardiacsurgerysecs@nhs.net
Medical & Clinical Oncology (with small volumes of referrals) - usually patients already know to have cancer– as broken down into the following subspecialties (this is not the 2WW pathway which use proformas and 2ww referral pathways):	
Medical and Clinical Oncology: Uro-oncology	orh-tr.oncology2@nhs.net
Medical and Clinical Oncology: Lung	orh-tr.oncology2@nhs.net
Medical and Clinical Oncology: Lymphoma	orh-tr.oncology1@nhs.net
Medical and Clinical Oncology: Paediatrics & Late Effects	orh-tr.oncology2@nhs.net
Medical and Clinical Oncology: Breast	orh-tr.oncology3@nhs.net
Medical and Clinical Oncology: Thyroid	orh-tr.oncology3@nhs.net
Medical and Clinical Oncology: Sarcoma	orh-tr.oncology3@nhs.net
Medical and Clinical Oncology: Colorectal	orh-tr.oncology3@nhs.net
Medical and Clinical Oncology: Hepatobiliary	orh-tr.oncology1@nhs.net
Medical and Clinical Oncology: Brain/ CNS	orh-tr.oncology1@nhs.net
Medical and Clinical Oncology: Gynae	orh-tr.oncology3@nhs.net
Medical and Clinical Oncology: Upper GI	orh-tr.oncology2@nhs.net
Medical and Clinical Oncology: Head and Neck	orh-tr.oncology2@nhs.net
Medical and Clinical Oncology: Cancer of Unknown Primary	orh-tr.oncology2@nhs.net
Medical and Clinical Oncology: Skin	orh-tr.oncology3@nhs.net

Private GPs are exempt as they don't have N3 access which is needed for e-RS:

Service	Referral method e.g. email
All Services within OUHFT	Via nhs.net email accounts (see Appendix A)

Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust

The only Service that is currently supporting PSO at Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust (OHFT) is:

- Oxfordshire CAMHS Countywide SPA (Single Point of Access) – Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust - RNU

The following scenarios require paper referral for all Consultant-led Services and are exempt from Paper Switch Off:

- Patients with no NHS number
- Patients with an NHS number who do not wish their details to be added to the spine

For the above 2 scenarios, please use the usual referral proforma and email it directly to the Service (see Appendix A).

The Paper Switch Off is nothing to do with me.

The national contract for GPs from 1/4/2018 now mandates GP to use e-RS. Furthermore the acute trust is empowered in their national contract to send any non-compliant referrals back to the GP to refer appropriately via e-RS.

This will lead to more unpaid activity by practices.

All practices in Oxfordshire use e-RS for their GP to consultant referrals so this will just be extending the numbers which they currently send via e-RS. This will not lead to a change in the admin processes you already adopt. In recognition of the possible extra work getting admin systems up to speed, the GPC negotiated a payment to practices of approximately £0.17 per patient.

If the OUHFT or OHFT return a referral that was originally emailed, how will they communicate this?

The referral will be returned via the practice generic email address. Admin teams in the practice who already look at these emails on a daily basis will need to make sure that this referral is then put on e-RS. The provider Trusts will only chase up practices if an original 2ww or Urgent referral has not been subsequently referred on e-RS. Non- 2ww referrals will be left to the practice to manage without further reminders

I like to refer to an individual consultant and you cannot do this on e-RS.

It is possible to refer to individual consultants using e-RS. You have to select the name of the consultant and hospital and see if clinics appear attached to their name. If there are no attached clinics then there is no direct referral link for that consultant into that service. Quite often in the past GPs have not realised that consultants are not part of a referral pathway and still refer regardless - leading to delay in patients being seen. To help speed patients being seen a generic referral will aid allocation of an appointment slot. OUHFT and the consultants in general would rather referrals are made by e-RS.

What happens in the event of an outage for e-RS?

In the event of an e-RS outage, the first step is to wait for 3-4 hours to see if the system comes back up. If the system is out > 24 hours, an alternative route can be used for Urgent & 2 Week Wait referrals. If the system is out > 72 hours, then routine referrals can be sent directly to the services (*email contact details in appendix A for OUHFT and appendix B for OHFT*). OCCG will communicate with GP's if referrals should be sent outside of e-RS. **If any referrals have been sent direct to departments within the OUHFT and/or OHFT, please do not put these referrals on to the e-Referral system as this will create duplicate referrals.**

- 2 Week Wait Referrals – will be sent to pcc2wwoxford@nhs.net – GP’s should request a read receipt to ensure they have confirmation that the referral has been received and read. If no response is received, please contact the 2WW Bureau on 01865 231404.
- Urgent & Routine – should be sent to the service generic email addresses. GP’s should request a read receipt to ensure they have confirmation that the referral has been received and read.

If a GP has a query about the status of the e-RS system (e.g. if the service is offline etc.), they can direct this to the OCCG Localities Team:

- Fergus Campbell – 01865 336828 – fergus.campbell@oxfordshireccg.nhs.uk
- Julie-Anne Howe – 01865 336717 – julie-anne.howe@oxfordshireccg.nhs.uk

The localities team **will not** be able to answer general queries or assist with technical difficulties regarding the e-RS system. Please use the contact details above for further assistance.

Who do we contact if there is a problem with e-RS (e.g. this could be services not found on e-RS when they should be there or other issues)?

If you have a **technical query** relating to **OUHFT** clinics or services you can contact the e-RS team at **OUHFT**:

- cabadvice@ouh.nhs.uk

If you have a **technical query** relating to **OHFT** clinics or services you can contact the e-RS team at **OHFT**:

- EHRProjectOffice@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk

If the query relates to **capacity** or **Directory of Service** issues, then contact the service directly. Contact details can be found by finding the service under a search, then clicking on the service for the details.

Service Results

Group By:

Miles	Service Name	Restricted	Directly Bookable	Referrer Alert	Menu	Named Clinician	Service Location	Priorities Supported	Service Type
2	Musculoskeletal medicine(Oisport) - Paeds - Rheumatology (NOC) - Oxford University Hospitals - RTH	Yes	Yes	0	Secondary Care	-	NUFFIELD ORTHOPAEDIC CENTRE	Partial	First outpatient
2	OUH Ankylosing Spondylitis-Rheumatology(NOC)-Oxford University Hospitals-RTH	Yes	Yes	0	Secondary Care	-	NUFFIELD ORTHOPAEDIC CENTRE	Partial	First outpatient
2	OUH Fracture Prevention Service - Rheumatology (NOC) - Oxford University Hospitals RTH	Yes	Yes	0	Secondary Care	-	NUFFIELD ORTHOPAEDIC CENTRE	Partial	First outpatient
2	OUH General Rheumatology Adult (NOC) - Oxford University Hospitals - RTH	No	Yes	0	Secondary Care	-	NUFFIELD ORTHOPAEDIC CENTRE	Partial	First outpatient
2	OUH Metabolic Bone Adult - Rheumatology (NOC) - Oxford University Hospitals - RTH	No	Yes	0	Secondary Care	-	NUFFIELD ORTHOPAEDIC CENTRE	Partial	First outpatient
2	OUH Musculoskeletal Medicine(Oisport) - Adult - Rheumatology (NOC)-Oxford University Hospitals - RTH	Yes	Yes	0	Secondary Care	-	NUFFIELD ORTHOPAEDIC CENTRE	Partial	First outpatient
2	OUH Orth-Rheum-Foot-Ankle Combined-(NOC)-Oxford University Hospitals-RTH	Yes	Yes	0	Secondary Care	-	NUFFIELD ORTHOPAEDIC CENTRE	Partial	First outpatient
2	OUH Rheumatology Complex MSK-(NOC)-Oxford University Hospitals-RTH	Yes	Yes	0	Secondary Care	-	NUFFIELD ORTHOPAEDIC CENTRE	Partial	First outpatient
2	OUH Rheumatology Referral Triage - (RAS)-Oxford University Hospitals-RTH	No	N/A	0	Secondary Care	-	NUFFIELD ORTHOPAEDIC CENTRE	Partial	Triage Service
2	OUH Rheum-Foot-Ankle Combined-(NOC)-Oxford University Hospitals-RTH	Yes	Yes	0	Secondary Care	-	NUFFIELD ORTHOPAEDIC CENTRE	Partial	First outpatient
2	OUH Rheum-Hand-Shoulder-Elbow Combined-(NOC)-Oxford University Hospitals-RTH	Yes	Yes	0	Secondary Care	-	NUFFIELD ORTHOPAEDIC CENTRE	Partial	First outpatient
2	OUH Rheum-Hip-Knee Combined-(NOC)-Oxford University Hospitals-RTH	Yes	Yes	0	Secondary Care	-	NUFFIELD ORTHOPAEDIC CENTRE	Partial	First outpatient
2	OUH Skeletal Dysplasia Adult - Rheumatology (NOC) - Oxford University Hospitals - RTH	No	Yes	0	Secondary Care	-	NUFFIELD ORTHOPAEDIC CENTRE	Partial	First outpatient
2	OUH Transition 16-21 - Rheumatology (NOC) - Oxford University Hospitals - RTH	Yes	Yes	0	Secondary Care	-	NUFFIELD ORTHOPAEDIC CENTRE	Partial	First outpatient
2	OUH XLH-Rheumatology-(NOC)-Oxford University Hospitals-RTH	Yes	Yes	0	Secondary Care	-	NUFFIELD ORTHOPAEDIC CENTRE	Partial	First outpatient
2	OUH Young Adults 21-30 - Rheumatology (NOC) - Oxford University Hospitals - RTH	Yes	Yes	0	Secondary Care	-	NUFFIELD ORTHOPAEDIC CENTRE	Partial	First outpatient
2	Paediatric dysplasia/Marfan syndrome - Rheumatology (NOC) - Oxford University Hospitals - RTH	No	Yes	0	Secondary Care	-	NUFFIELD ORTHOPAEDIC CENTRE	Routine	First outpatient
2	Paediatric Rheumatology (NOC) - Oxford University Hospitals - RTH	No	Yes	0	Secondary Care	-	NUFFIELD ORTHOPAEDIC CENTRE	Partial	First outpatient
2	Paediatric Rheumatology Pain Mgt (NOC) - Oxford University Hospitals-RTH	Yes	Yes	0	Secondary Care	-	NUFFIELD ORTHOPAEDIC CENTRE	Partial	First outpatient

If your query relates to other e-RS issues, or with services belonging to another provider, you can contact OCCG:

ERS Frequently Asked Questions. V4. Updated October 2020. Authors: Dr Chapman (Clinical Lead) and L. Oliver (Patient Safety Manager) Email occg.ers@nhs.net

- occg.ers@nhs.net

OCCG will aim to respond to your query within 72 hours at the latest.

What if a patient is not fully registered at the practice - we cannot use e-RS?

This is not true. It is possible to refer a patient but you need either their NHS number or name and address to pick them up from the patient spine. The way for doing this is seen in the training documentation in the professional resources e-RS on the OCCG web site. If the patient has no allocated NHS number or has refused connection to the spine, in these cases you will need to send a non-e-RS referral.

Are there any training documents?

Yes follow the following link to the [ClinOx website](#). The actual way to use e-RS remains unchanged.

What if private GP's ask me to put their referrals on e-RS?

Private GP's are not included in the Paper Switch Off – you do not need to put referrals from private GP's onto e-RS. The private GP should send a paper referral or use their usual route of referral. This is expressed in the guidance from BMA: "*The interface between NHS and private treatment: a practical guide for doctors in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.*" *Guidance from the BMA Medical Ethics Department May 2009.* Private GPs are entitled to make referrals to NHS facilities, if that is the patient's wish, and the referral should be treated in the same way as if the referral came from within the NHS.

What if a private consultant asks me to put a referral to the NHS on e-RS?

This is a consultant to consultant referral and so does not require a GP to be involved in the process and so is wholly owned by the private consultant. This is expressed in the guidance from BMA: "*The interface between NHS and private treatment: a practical guide for doctors in England, Wales and Northern Ireland Guidance from the BMA Medical Ethics Department May 2009.*" Patients do not need to have a further assessment (see link below for detail) within the NHS before receiving their treatment, nor do they need to be referred back to their general practitioner (GP). This is also reflected in the [OCCG Commissioning Policies](#).

Specifically, if a patient has seen a private consultant, for a service ordinarily fronted by Healthshare in the MATT, and not been through the Healthshare MATT pathway; then the private consultant will need to refer the patient to the Healthshare MATT service so that the patient is not getting through to a service which NHS patients would not be able to access directly. Healthshare can pass on the referrals appropriately.

Can I modify/edit/add information to an existing e-RS referral without having to start again?

Yes, this can be done within EMIS - see teaching file on OCCG website under e-RS.

Who bears the cost of a referral not made on e-RS?

The cost of a referral is the responsibility of the provider that has accepted a referral outside of e-RS. There are no circumstances where a GP practice is liable for the cost of a provider accepting a referral outside of e-RS.

Who needs to look at worklists on e-RS?

This is an admin task and needs a process to be set up in practices if not already being done. The worklist Referrer Action Needed is one of the most important as returned /rejected referrals often with advice will be sent here and the referring GP may need to act on the advice.

Any rejected referral should have a reason why and also the name and contact details of the rejecting clinician so they can be contacted.

Some pathways are complicated and need triage by OUHFT and/or OHFT – how will this operate now as we used to email the referrals?

The functionality of e-RS has now improved and there are ways of referral through complicated clinical pathways using Referral and Assessment Services (RAS). These will allow the provider to sort out the appropriate pathway.

How does a RAS work from a GP perspective?

You send the referral using e-RS as usual but the clinic is a RAS and there is a tab in the select column saying SEND FOR TRIAGE, which you click. No appointment is generated there and then so it is important that this process is done by the practice NOT the patient.

You need to attach letters and information as is necessary for the triage to be completed in a timely fashion. The provider will then sort out the onward referral with the patient.

Occasionally the referral will be rejected with reasons so it is important that the practice has set up admin staff to look at the worklist **Referrer Action Needed** on e-RS. There are teaching documents on RAS and worklist management on the e-RS page of the OCCG website.

Which clinics are a RAS?

See the current list on **Appendices C & D – *please note these are subject to change***

Appendix A – OUH Service Email Addresses

Bone Infection and Limb Reconstruction	boneinfection.noc@nhs.net
Breast	orh-tr.breastsurgeryelective@nhs.net
Children's Hospital	Ouh-tr.CHOXEAT@nhs.net
Clinical Genetics	orh-tr.churchill-clinicalgenetics@nhs.net
Clinical Immunology	ouh.immunologyreferrals@nhs.net
Dermatology	ouh.dermatologyreferrals@nhs.net
Diabetes	Orh-tr.ocdem-secretaries@nhs.net
Endocrine	Orh-tr.ocdem-secretaries@nhs.net
Endocrinology	Orh-tr.ocdem-secretaries@nhs.net
Foot and Ankle	footandankle.noc@nhs.net
Gastrointestinal	
Lower Gastrointestinal Tract	Electiveaccess.generalchurchill@nhs.net
Upper Gastrointestinal Tract	Electiveaccess.generalchurchill@nhs.net
Hepatobiliary	Electiveaccess.generalchurchill@nhs.net
General Surgery	ouh-tr.electiveaccess.generalthorton@nhs.net
General Surgery Hernia	ouh-tr.electiveaccess.generalthorton@nhs.net
Haematology	orh-tr.clinicalhaematology@nhs.net
Haemophilia	ouh-tr.ohtc@nhs.net
Hand	hand.noc@nhs.net
Hip and Knee	hipandknee.noc@nhs.net
Infectious Diseases	orh-tr.infectiousdiseaseschurchill@nhs.net
Neurophysiology	neurophysiology.ouh@nhs.net
Neurosciences	neuroscience.electiveaccess@nhs.net
OCDEM	Orh-tr.ocdem-secretaries@nhs.net
Ophthalmology	oxon.eyes@nhs.net
Palliative Care Services	Sobell.advice@nhs.net
Renal Treatment	Orh-tr.posttransplantnurse@nhs.net
Renal Treatment	orh-tr.ouhtransplantadmin@nhs.net
Renal Treatment	orh-tr.ouhrenaladmin@nhs.net
Respiratory	orh-tr.chrespiratorymedicine@nhs.net
Rheumatology	Rheumatology.noc.@ouh.nhs.uk
Sarcoma for triage	sarcoma.referrals@nhs.net
Sarcoma MDT	oxford.sarcomamdts@nhs.net
Shoulder	shoulder.noc@nhs.net
Sleep Service	orh-tr.chsleepandventilation@nhs.net
Spinal Service	spine.noc@nhs.net
Thrombosis	ouh-tr.ohtc@nhs.net
2 Week Wait (All specialties)	PCC2WWoxford@nhs.net or GP Query line 01865 572696 or 2WW Bureau 01865 231404

Appendix B – OHFT Service Email Addresses

Oxfordshire CAMHS (Single Point of Access)	oxoncamhsspa@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk
North Oxfordshire Learning Disabilities	oxfordhealth.nldtadmin@nhs.net
Oxford City and NE AMHT (Single Point of Access)	cityneoxonamht@nhs.net
Oxford South AMHT	oxfordhealth.southoxonamht@nhs.net

Appendix C – RAS Clinics - *please note these are subject to change*

Service Number	Service Name	PAS Specialty	e-Referral Speciality
7940814	Chronic Heart Failure Referral Assessment Service-Oxford University Hospitals-RTH	Cardiology	Cardiology
7940813	Inherited Cardiac Cardiomyopathy Referral Assessment Service-Oxford University Hospitals-RTH	Cardiology	Cardiology
7935304	Clinical Genetics Referral Assessment Service-Oxford University Hospitals-RTH	Clinical Genetics	Genetics
7939894	Bone Infection Unit Referral Assessment Service-Orthopaedics-(NOC)-Oxford University Hospitals-RTH	General Medicine	Infectious Diseases
7940455	Neurology Rapid Access Clinic Referral Assessment Service-Oxford University Hospitals-RTH	Neurology	Neurology
7939899	Neuromuscular Referral Assessment Service-Oxford University Hospitals-RTH	Neurology	Neurology
7939907	Peripheral Neuropathy Referral Assessment Service-Oxford University Hospitals-RTH	Neurology	Neurology
7939837	OUH Knee Referral Triage - (RAS)-Oxford University Hospitals-RTH	Orthopaedics	Orthopaedics
7940098	OUH Hip-Referral triage - (RAS)-Oxford University Hospitals-RTH	Orthopaedics	Orthopaedics
7940454	Paediatric Medicine Rapid Access Clinic Referral Assessment Service-Oxford University Hospitals-RTH	Paediatric Medicine	Children's & Adolescent Services
7940532	Oxford Community Paediatrics Referral Assessment Service-Oxford University Hospitals-RTH	Paediatric Neuro-Disability	Children's & Adolescent Services
7940539	Witney Community Paediatrics Referral Assessment Service-Oxford University Hospitals-RTH	Paediatric Neuro-Disability	Children's & Adolescent Services
7940542	Banbury Community Paediatrics Referral Assessment Service-Oxford University Hospitals-RTH	Paediatric Neuro-Disability	Children's & Adolescent Services
7939418	Palliative Medicine Referral Assessment Service-Oxford University Hospitals-RTH	Palliative Medicine	Palliative Medicine
7940744	Oxford Craniofacial Unit Referral Assessment Service-Oxford University Hospitals-RTH	Plastic Surgery	Children's & Adolescent Services
7940745	Oxford Craniofacial Unit-Referral Assessment Service-Oxford University Hospitals-RTH	Plastic Surgery	Surgery - Plastic
7940766	OUH Rheumatology Referral triage - (RAS)-Oxford University Hospitals-RTH	Rheumatology	Rheumatology
7940767	Spinal Services Referral Assessment Service-Oxford University Hospitals-RTH	Spinal Surgery Services	Orthopaedics
7940885	TIA Referral Assessment Service-Oxford University Hospitals-RTH	Transient Ischaemic Attack	General Medicine
7940892	TIA-Referral Assessment Service-Oxford University Hospitals-RTH	Transient Ischaemic Attack	Neurology
7940511	Bariatric Surgery Referral Assessment Service-Oxford University Hospitals-RTH	Upper Gastrointestinal	GI and Liver (Medicine and

		Surgery	Surgery)
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Appendix D – OHFT RAS Clinics

7956761	Oxfordshire CAMHS Countywide SPA (Single Point of Access) – Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust - RNU	Mental Health Child & Adolescent
7956783	North Oxfordshire Learning Disabilities (RAS) – Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust - RNU	Learning Disabilities
7959330	Oxford City & NE AMHT SPA (Single Point of Access) – Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust - RNU	Mental Health-Adults of All Ages
7966877	Oxford South AMHT (RAS) – Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust - RNU	Mental Health-Adults of All Ages