

Kinneil Medical Practice
Information and Practice Policy
For Patients Considering Private Treatment
Effective from 1st July 2024

Who is this leaflet for?

This leaflet is for patients who are considering seeing a doctor, surgeon, GP, specialist nurse or allied health professional at a private clinic or hospital. This leaflet will refer to these clinicians as 'private healthcare providers'.

Why might patients consider private treatment?

Patients may consider private treatment due to longer NHS waiting lists for investigations, appointments or operations. Other patients may prefer the convenience of choosing who to see at a time that suits. Occasionally, patients may wish to pay for a treatment that is not available or recommended on the NHS.

Some patients will self-fund this treatment, while others may have private health insurance which will cover some or all the cost. Private health insurance policies often have a policy excess, may have claim limits, or may only cover certain conditions. If in doubt, check with your insurance provider.

We are not able to recommend specific private healthcare providers and we would recommend that you do some research when choosing who to see. Many private healthcare providers will also work for the NHS and all UK providers should be regulated in the same way as an equivalent NHS professional.

Kinneil Medical Practice is contracted to provide healthcare services on behalf of NHS Forth Valley, in line with our General Medical Services contract. We are not obliged to follow requests or recommendations from private healthcare providers.

How do I arrange a private appointment?

You should contact your chosen private healthcare provider directly for an appointment. If you have private healthcare, check with the insurance company about who you can see and if any charges are involved.

The private healthcare provider may request a referral letter. There is no charge for a referral letter. A referral letter will include relevant medical details about you and can be sent electronically to the main private hospitals in Stirling, Glasgow, and Edinburgh. Other private providers can be sent a letter, or you can collect a letter to take to them or send onward. We can only send sensitive information electronically to secure NHS or government email addresses.

Occasionally, private healthcare providers may request additional information, proformas, or reports to be completed in addition to a referral letter. There may be a charge for this additional work.

What happens if I need a test or procedure?

If the private healthcare provider thinks that you need tests (including blood tests), scans, or a procedure, they are responsible for:

- Organising the test / scan / procedure. The cost and arrangements should also be discussed with you
- Organising any medication which may be required before or after the procedure
- Giving you the results and explaining what they mean

This is the same as when seen at an NHS clinic. Results of tests and investigations are returned to the person that requested them. Please do not contact the practice to find out your results; contact your private healthcare provider.

GP practices should not be asked to perform blood tests or other investigations on behalf of a private healthcare provider. A private healthcare provider can refer to other private healthcare providers or NHS services directly, if required, without the involvement of a GP.

When the private healthcare provider carries out their own tests or procedures, it will:

- Avoid delays
- Ensure the results are returned to the correct person
- Avoid delays in the private healthcare provider reviewing and interpreting the result, and arranging any follow up which may be required

Occasionally patients might see a private healthcare provider online or remotely and require tests. The private healthcare provider is responsible for arranging test, which can be facilitated at other local private healthcare providers.

What if my NHS clinician has referred me for a scan, but I would like to get it done privately?

Please discuss this directly with your NHS clinician.

What happens if I need medication?

Your private healthcare provider might suggest new medication for you, or an adjustment to something you are already taking.

If a medication needs to be started immediately, the private healthcare provider is responsible for giving you an initial supply or a prescription for the medication.

If new medications are started or there are changes to your current medications, the private healthcare provider must write to the practice. It can sometimes take several weeks for letters to be received. Any prescription requests will be reviewed by one of the GPs or pharmacists.

In some circumstances we may not be able to prescribe medications recommended by a private healthcare provider.

We may not prescribe medications which are not included in the NHS Forth Valley Formulary; medications that require frequent monitoring or a 'shared care agreement' (e.g. disease modifying drugs, some psychiatric medication, medication for ADHD, some hormones etc); medications required for a procedure; medications used out with their licensing agreement; or medications for specialist or hospital use only. In these circumstances, you will need to arrange prescriptions from your private healthcare provider.

What happens if I need to transfer my care back to the NHS?

If your private healthcare provider wishes to refer you back to NHS care for further investigation or follow up, regulations allow you to be put into the NHS system at the point you finished with the private healthcare provider (i.e. you do not go to the 'back of the queue'). To facilitate this, and to provide the relevant clinical information, any transfer of care to the NHS must be done by the private healthcare provider and not by the practice.

The private healthcare provider should arrange for you to be seen in an appropriate clinic and should pass on the results of tests and investigations. The NHS team may not agree with the diagnosis and treatment may differ.

What if I need a Fit Note?

If you need a fit note (previously referred to as a sick note or 'a line') because you are not fit for work, this should be provided by the private healthcare provider. The fit note should cover the period that they expect you to be unfit for work, or until your next appointment with the private healthcare provider. You should only see your GP for a Fit Note if your inability to work is prolonged unexpectedly.

What if I need follow up?

The private healthcare provider will discuss whether you need ongoing follow up with them, can be transferred to an NHS clinic, or discharge to your GP. If your private healthcare provider is due to see you again, but you have not received an appointment, please contact them directly.

What about travelling abroad for private treatment?

We would strongly advise against travelling abroad for private treatment. Overseas providers may not be regulated in the way that they are in the UK. Clinical standards may not be as strict. Some online clinics may appear to be in the UK but can be based overseas. If you do go overseas for treatment, there will be no obligation on the GP practice or NHS Forth Valley to provide routine pre- or post-operative care. All care required should be provided within the package of care sold by the overseas provider.

The NHS in Scotland will always provide emergency care where necessary, should something go wrong.

What if I have questions or a complaint about my private treatment?

Contact your private healthcare provider directly if you have questions or wish to make a complaint about care or treatment you have received.