

building a caring future

HOSPITAL | COMMUNITY | HOME

Welcome to Outpatients

Issued by Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

Welcome to outpatients

Welcome to Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust. You will shortly be coming for your outpatient appointment. This booklet will give you all the information you need about outpatients.

We aim to treat all our patients within 18 weeks from referral so it is important that you attend for your appointment. If you **Do Not Attend (DNA)** twice or if you change your appointment twice we will refer you back to your GP as we will assume you do not need that appointment.

We hope the information in this leaflet answers some of your questions and helps to put you at ease.

Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust has a Contact Centre for booking outpatient appointments.

Opening hours: Monday to Friday 8.00am - 6.30pm.

If you have any queries, or special needs, either

- Telephone the Contact Centre on 03 44 811 8118 where the staff will be pleased to discuss your appointment details with you. They will also be able to assist you to change your appointment if necessary.

or

- ask a member of staff when you arrive in the department.

Further information about Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust can be found at our website at

www.northumbria-healthcare.nhs.uk

Before you arrive

Your appointment letter and/or card will give details of when to attend and the name of the consultant, doctor or specialist nurse you will see.

You must let us know if:

- You are unable to keep this appointment, please inform us as soon as possible and an alternative appointment will be made. Your original appointment can then be offered to another patient
- You have any additional needs because of a disability
- You require a language interpreter, sign language or sight guide to help you during your outpatient visit.

**Please call the Contact Centre
03 44 811 8118**

Where to find us

Our outpatient clinics are held in a number of different places, please check the details in your appointment letter.

How to get to the hospital

The addresses for all the hospitals within Northumbria NHS Healthcare Foundation Trust are listed at the end of this booklet.

**Information about public transport services is available from
Traveline on 0871 200 22 33.**

Maps are available on our website: www.Northumbria.nhs.uk.

Each hospital has car parking for which a charge is made using coin-operated machines. A limited number of free parking places are available for disabled drivers.

Your driver may drop you off at the main entrance. The car should be moved as soon as possible to make way for other vehicles.

If you require transport on medical grounds, please contact your GP surgery. You should do this at least seven days before your admission so this can be arranged.

Where to go on arrival

Some of our hospitals have more than one outpatient department on site. Please follow the signs around the hospital to the appropriate area. If you are unsure, ask our 'Meet and Greet' volunteers, or a member of staff. They will be pleased to direct you.

Help with travelling expenses

The Trust follows the Department of Health guidelines for reimbursement of patient travel expenses for people who receive certain benefits. You may be entitled to reclaim the cost of your travel to and from the hospital as well as car parking charges.

Parents or escorts accompanying a young person may be entitled to help with costs if they receive one of the relevant benefits.

If you are entitled to receive re-imbusement of your travel costs you can reclaim them from the hospital Cashier's office. Hospital staff will direct you to the Cashier's office. You will need to produce the following documents:

- Proof of entitlement, from the relevant awarding body
- Your appointment card or letter
- Your tickets for the journey to hospital or
- Proof of payment (ticket or receipt) if you are claiming for car parking charges.

Only costs that are "necessarily incurred" can be paid:

- Expenses incurred in visiting someone in hospital cannot be paid.

- The travel expenses of any escort (including your husband, wife or partner) can only be paid if you have a letter from your GP stating that you need to have an escort for medical reasons
- Taxi fares are only paid if your GP has given you a letter stating that for medical reasons you are unable to travel by public transport.

What to bring with you

For your first appointment, you should bring:

- Your appointment letter/card
- Name and address of your family doctor
- A urine sample in a small, clean container (this is not a requirement for all clinics – please check your appointment letter)
- Any medicine including tablets, creams or drops you are taking and the most up to date list of your prescription medicines. This also includes any over the counter medicines you may use
- If you wear spectacles or have any walking/hearing aids, please bring them to each appointment
- Cash in case you would like to buy a drink or make a telephone call.
- Paper and a pen – you might find it helpful to write down a list of questions that you would like to ask the consultant, doctor, or other health professional
- You are welcome to bring someone with you to the clinic.

We strongly advise you not to bring valuables of any kind. The hospital cannot accept responsibility for loss of any item.

Mobile phones

You and your visitors should not use mobile phones in clinical areas such as wards and departments. They can interfere with vital hospital equipment. You may use mobile phones on corridors, except outside critical-care departments, or in the hospital grounds. We ask you to respect other people around you. Please make sure that your phone is switched off before you go in for your appointment.

When you arrive

All of our staff will be wearing an identification badge when you meet them. Please take your appointment letter and/or card to the reception desk in the outpatient department. Your letter will tell you if you are to report to somewhere different.

On each visit you will be asked:

- Your full name
- Date of birth
- Address and postcode
- Marital status
- Ethnic group
- Religion
- Your family doctor's name and surgery address
- Whether you would like to receive a copy of any letters that may be written about you.

This confidential information is an essential part of your hospital records. You may be often asked the same questions during your visit. This is part of the checking process to ensure that we have the correct patient. This may also occur as you meet different staff or go to other departments. **If your address or telephone number changes between appointments, please call the Contact Centre on 03 44 811 8118.** This will help us keep our records up to date.

Sharing letters with patients

You can receive a copy of letters written about you by health professionals (with certain limitations).

At each visit you will be asked whether or not you would like to receive copies of letters. If you say no, and later decide that you do want to receive a copy, let the appointment reception staff know as soon as possible. You should also let the Contact Centre or reception staff know if you decide you do not wish to receive copies of any letters.

Appointment times

Every effort will be made to ensure you are seen on time. Patients are seen by appointment time rather than order of arrival.

The exceptions to this are ambulance patients. The ambulance service collects patients within time bands. This can affect the time they arrive and depart from the outpatient department.

Occasionally, the doctor you are to see may be held up or be attending to an emergency.

We do our best to keep you informed if the clinic is running late. If you are anxious about the length of time you have waited, please ask a nurse or receptionist. They will explain what is happening.

Seeing the doctor/nurse

A consultant will usually see you, although on occasions it may be one of their associates. Whichever health professional you see, has access to your medical records and will be fully aware of your history. They will also check your details to ensure they are talking to the correct patient.

Tests and investigations

When you see the doctor/nurse it is possible they will want to carry out some tests or investigations. Your appointment may take longer than you expected but can save you making a further visit.

Consent

Tests and investigations will only be done with your full consent. The doctor/nurse will explain the test or investigation to you and ask whether you give your consent. Please do not hesitate to ask if you want more information or explanation before giving your consent.

New medicines

If your doctor wants you to start a new medicine, they may:

- ask you to take a form to your family doctor. This is not a prescription. It is for non-urgent changes to your medicines. There is no need to make an urgent appointment
- prescribe medication on a hospital prescription form. This can only be dispensed by the hospital pharmacy. Please note the hospital pharmacy only issues medication for hospital prescriptions
- occasionally you may be given a prescription that has to be dispensed by a pharmacy outside the hospital. The staff will tell you if this is so.

For any prescription you are given, standard NHS charges apply.

Further tests or treatment

Some tests need special preparation, so you may be asked to attend this or another hospital for them.

Following your consultation if your doctor offers you treatment, it may be possible for you to agree a convenient date before you leave the department. Please give this some thought before you attend. You may have family commitments which could affect arranging a date.

If you have agreed to an operation you will be asked to complete a pre-anaesthetic screening form. Your height, weight, pulse and blood pressure will be recorded on this form and there are questions for you to answer.

Please note this is not your pre-operative assessment.

You will be either contacted by phone or letter. If you are requested to attend a further appointment it is very important that you do attend. If you do not attend your operation will be cancelled.

Teaching

The Trust provides training for nursing, medical and other health care staff. You have the right to choose whether or not to take part. If you refuse your care will not be affected in any way.

Your safety

The Trust is committed to providing high quality care for all those who use its services. A robust approach is taken to risk management to protect the safety and well-being of patients, staff and members of the public. This includes zero tolerance of violence and aggression toward staff.

Aggressive patients, relatives or visitors will be asked to leave the premises.

Fire precautions

The fire alarm system is tested once a week. You may hear a loud ringing, or siren. The staff will let you know if it is not a test.

Smoke Free Environment

Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust is a smoke free environment. Smoking is not permitted at all within the hospital grounds. Anyone wishing to smoke must leave the hospital site.

Local Stop Smoking Services are available on:

01670 813135 for Northumberland patients and

033 125 92 90 for North Tyneside and Newcastle patients.

0800 169 0169 is the national NHS Smoking Helpline number

As you leave

If the doctor or nurse wants to see you again, the next appointment may be made before you leave the hospital. Most appointments will be sent out to you by mail. You may be asked to report to the reception desk at the end of the consultation.

Our commitment to patients

We continually try to improve our services and will ensure that we:

- Treat you as an individual
- Consider your needs and rights
- Maintain confidentiality
- Ensure maximum privacy
- Ensure that you have access to information when you need it, so that you can make an informed choice about your treatment options
- Discuss your symptoms and stages of treatment with you
- Provide information about our services
- Ensure that your visit goes smoothly, especially when it is necessary for you to visit a range of departments.

Access to health records (Data Protection Act 1998)

You have the right to see your own health records (with certain limitations). If during or at the end of your treatment you wish to know what has been recorded about you, you can make a verbal request to see your records to the consultant or doctor in charge of your treatment.

Alternatively, you can write to the Medical Records Manager at the hospital – a charge will be made for this service.

Patient health Information

Confidentiality

In some circumstances, we have a legal responsibility to disclose your personal health information to other organisations. If you do not wish particular information to be shared with other members of the healthcare team, you must tell a member of staff. Your wishes will be respected.

You can choose to limit use or disclosure of your information. If you wish to discuss your rights, please talk it over with a doctor or nurse when attending your clinic appointment.

All of our staff have a duty to respect the confidentiality of your information. They will not divulge anything they learn about you to anyone who is not immediately concerned with your care. Health professionals involved in your care need to share clinical information about you. This is done in professional confidence among individuals who are subject to our strict duty of confidentiality.

We will give information about your condition to close relatives or carers with your permission. Please let a member of staff know if there is information you would not wish us to share with them. Again, we will respect your wishes.

Comments, compliments, concerns and complaints

If you have any comments, compliments or concerns about the care you receive, please speak first to the nurse in charge of the outpatient department.

If you would prefer to talk to someone who is not involved in your care or are unsure who to talk to, you can contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). PALS provides confidential, information, advice and support to patients their families and carers. They will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and help to sort out problems quickly on your behalf. You can contact PALS on Freephone 0800 032 0202 or email northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk.

If you feel you need to make a formal complaint about your treatment please contact the Complaints Co-ordinator for the Trust:

Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

Complaints Co-ordinator or Chief Executive

Patient Services Department

Northumbria House

Unit 7/8 Silver Fox Way

Cobalt Business Park

Newcastle upon Tyne

NE27 0QJ

Tel: 0191 203 1340

Email: patient.services@northumbria-healthcare.nhs.uk

Feedback

We are continually trying to improve the information that we give to patients. Please let us know if we could have given you any other information which would have helped you before or when you arrived for your outpatient visit.

Email your comments to:

operationaccess@northumbria-healthcare.nhs.uk

or telephone the Trust Contact Centre on 03 44 811 8118.

Hospital contact details

For all of our hospitals (except Rothbury)

Telephone: 03 44 811 8111

Alnwick Infirmary
South Road
Alnwick
NE66 2NS

Berwick Infirmary
Infirmary Square
Berwick-upon-Tweed
TD15 1LT

Blyth Community Hospital
Thornton Street
Blyth
NE24 1DX

Hexham General Hospital
Corbridge Road
Hexham
NE46 1QJ

Wansbeck General Hospital
Woodhorn Lane
Ashington
NE63 9JJ

North Tyneside General Hospital
Rake Lane
North Shields
NE29 8NH

Morpeth NHS Centre
Dark Lane
Morpeth
NE61 1JX

Rothbury Community Hospital
Whitton Bank Road
Rothbury
Morpeth
NE65 7RW
Tel: 01669 620555

Sir GB Hunter Memorial Hospital
The Green
Wallsend
NE28 7PB

Alternative Formats

If you would like a copy of this information in large print, another language, audio tape or other format please call the Contact Centre on **03 44 811 8118**

Other sources of information

NHS 111

NHS Choices

www.nhs.uk/pages/homepage.aspx

NICE (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence)

www.nice.org.uk

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Freephone: **0800 032 0202**

Text: **01670 511098**

Email: northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk

Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

General Enquiries **03 44 811 8111**

www.northumbria.nhs.uk

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