

Shared care – Patient information leaflet

What is shared care?

Shared care is a formal agreement between you and two healthcare professionals who manage your treatment. Usually these are your specialist (such as: a consultant, hospital doctor or other healthcare worker who can prescribe medicines) and a healthcare worker at your GP practice (such as: a GP or other healthcare worker who can prescribe medicines).

Shared care lets your specialist transfer some of your treatment with *[insert medicine name here]* to a healthcare worker at your GP practice, when this is suitable and in your best interests. Shared care lets them continue prescribing you a medicine started by your specialist and should be more convenient for you to receive some of your treatment. Your specialist has not discharged you – your treatment is shared between your specialist and the healthcare worker at your GP practice.

Your specialist and the healthcare worker at your GP practice must both agree to shared care. If they do not agree, your specialist will continue to manage your treatment.

How does shared care work?

Before you start treatment with a medicine, your specialist will explain:

- the benefits and risks of treatment, and give you any written information you might need
- the need for monitoring the treatment and how this will be arranged
- their role, your role, and the role of the healthcare worker at your GP practice in managing your treatment.

If you agree, your specialist will begin prescribing your medicine and will arrange monitoring. Monitoring may include blood tests and other health checks, to ensure your condition is responding well to the treatment.

When your specialist thinks you are on a stable dose of medicine, and if you agree, they will ask the healthcare worker at your GP practice about shared care.

Your specialist will continue to prescribe your medicine and monitor your treatment while waiting for the healthcare worker at your GP practice to consider shared care. If the healthcare worker at your GP practice

agrees, they will take over prescribing and monitoring as requested by your specialist and will start issuing prescriptions for you.

Your specialist will still oversee your treatment and review your progress in their clinic, according to your care management plan. If anything changes with your health, your specialist will review your treatment.

What are the benefits of shared care?

You'll continue with the same treatment, without needing to go to see your specialist so often.

Your specialist and the healthcare worker at your GP practice are both involved in your treatment. Both will monitor your progress and the healthcare worker at your GP practice will alert your specialist if they have any concerns.

What is my role in shared care?

Take your medicine as prescribed and read all information your specialist gives you.

Attend all appointments with the healthcare worker at your GP practice and with your specialist, including regular monitoring visits, such as blood tests and health check-ups. These visits help to assess how well the medicine is working for you, and if you're experiencing any unwanted effects.

If you miss appointments your specialist or healthcare worker may stop your treatment, so it's important not to miss them.

If you have a monitoring booklet, take it with you to every appointment.

If you experience any unwanted effects of treatment, tell your specialist or the healthcare worker at your GP practice.

If you're taking any other medicines, supplements or herbal remedies, tell your specialist and healthcare worker at your GP practice, and also tell other healthcare workers, such as your pharmacist or dentist.

Always check with your pharmacist before you buy over-the-counter medicines, including herbal remedies.

Never stop taking your medicine unless your specialist or the healthcare worker at your GP practice advise you to stop. If you notice any new or worsening symptoms, tell your specialist or the healthcare worker at your GP practice.

Keep your specialist and the healthcare worker at your GP practice informed of any changes in your life that could affect your treatment.

Inform your specialist if you change address as they may have to arrange a new shared care agreement with a new GP practice closer to your new address.

What happens if my treatment needs to change?

If your condition changes, or if you need to take a different medicine, your specialist and the healthcare worker at your GP practice will agree the best course of action.

What should I do if I have concerns?

If you have any concerns, or if something about your treatment is not clear, talk to your specialist or the healthcare worker at your GP practice.

You should be given contact details for support with your treatment, including any help you might need during and outside usual contact hours.

Can I leave a shared care arrangement if I change my mind?

Yes, if you change your mind, speak with your healthcare worker at your GP practice or specialist to discuss your concerns.

How is my information used?

Your GP practice and specialist team will only use your personal information for managing your care. They will follow NHS data protection policies and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR). They will store your information securely and will always treat it as confidential. They will not share your information with other parties without your agreement.