

Your Request:

1) Do you have a list of private qualified providers in the region? And are there any treatments (excluding emergency care) that aren't covered by the framework?

Our Response:

1) NHS Cheshire & Merseyside ICB does not hold a list specifically detailing the private qualified providers in the region. Contracted non-NHS providers available to NHS Cheshire & Merseyside ICB patients would be identified when being referred by their GP Practice using the national NHS e-referral system. Further information regarding how to access the national NHS e-referral system can be found on the NHS Digital website via the following link: <https://digital.nhs.uk/services/e-referral-service#using-the-service>

Further information on services available/excluded can be found on NHS England's website via the following link: <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/about-the-nhs/your-choices-in-the-nhs/>.

Treatments included within the national Evidence Based Intervention Programme (<https://www.england.nhs.uk/evidence-based-interventions/>) would be restricted/limited, as they would in any NHS providers. Suspected cancer or urgent referrals would also be excluded.

Your Request:

2) The Right to Choose is limited by catchment area - can patients in Cheshire and Merseyside avail of private services in another area (e.g. London) through Right to Choose if the service isn't available (at all, or within 18 weeks) in this region?

Our Response:

2) If a private provider service outside of the Cheshire & Merseyside region is listed on the national NHS e-referral system to a patient registered with an NHS Cheshire & Merseyside ICB GP Practice then they will be able to access that service. Please note that not all services are commissioned nationally, with some services commissioned as a local service and therefore only available to certain residents registered with a GP Practice in a specific area. When a GP Practice/patient access the national NHS e-referral system this would only list services that are available to them based on their GP registration.

Under NHS Right to Choose, if a provider holds an NHS contract with another commissioner, then a patient can access the specified treatment/specialty in the location specified in the contract. Therefore, NHS Cheshire & Merseyside ICB patients can access services in another area if it is commissioned there.

Your Request:

3) It's also limited by cost (so the private care comes at no additional cost to the NHS), but there are obviously differences in costing between profit-driven private providers and a public health service, so I'm wondering if there is a more definite cost limit, above which private services are no longer eligible under Right to Choose?

Our Response:

3) The prices paid for services would be set either nationally, or locally negotiated through a procurement process for more bespoke services. NHS Cheshire & Merseyside ICB does not hold any information detailing a specific cost limit which a private service would no longer be eligible under NHS Choice Framework. For information, the nationally set prices/tariffs for services are publicly available on NHS England's website via the following link: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/pay-syst/national-tariff/national-tariff-payment-system/#tariff-documents-annexes-and-supporting-documents>

Your Request:

4) Cancer patients on the two-week pathway can choose a different hospital if they'd otherwise not be seen within two weeks. Can you confirm this choice of hospitals includes private hospitals as well as other NHS ones, specifically for urgent cancer care?

Our Response:

4) Patients can choose different NHS hospitals for cancer care. However, cancer care is not included in the commissioning arrangements described above with private providers. Therefore, a patient's choice would be limited to NHS providers of cancer care through the national NHS e-referral system.

Your Request:

5) From conversations with doctors, and with patients struggling with waiting lists for things like ADHD assessments, it seems Right to Choose is not widely publicised by the NHS and not always presented as an option by GPs, despite the NHS website stating, "You should always be offered a choice at the point of referral and an opportunity to discuss the options with the person referring you". Can you offer any insight into why this is the case and why these conversations about the option of private care paid for by the NHS isn't always discussed at the point of referral?

Our Response:

5) NHS Cheshire & Merseyside ICB does not hold any information or documents in response to this question. However, patient choice should be offered in line with the NHS Choice Framework. If a patient feels they have not been offered a choice at the point of referral they can speak to their GP Practice

or make a complaint to NHS Cheshire & Merseyside ICB via the following link:
<https://www.cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk/contact/complaints/>