

Health Professionals' Consultation

Direct Access Diagnostic Imaging

Background

As part of the Department of Health's 'Modernisation of Health and Care' programme, there is to be a phased roll out of extended patient choice of Any Qualified Provider (AQP).

Priorities

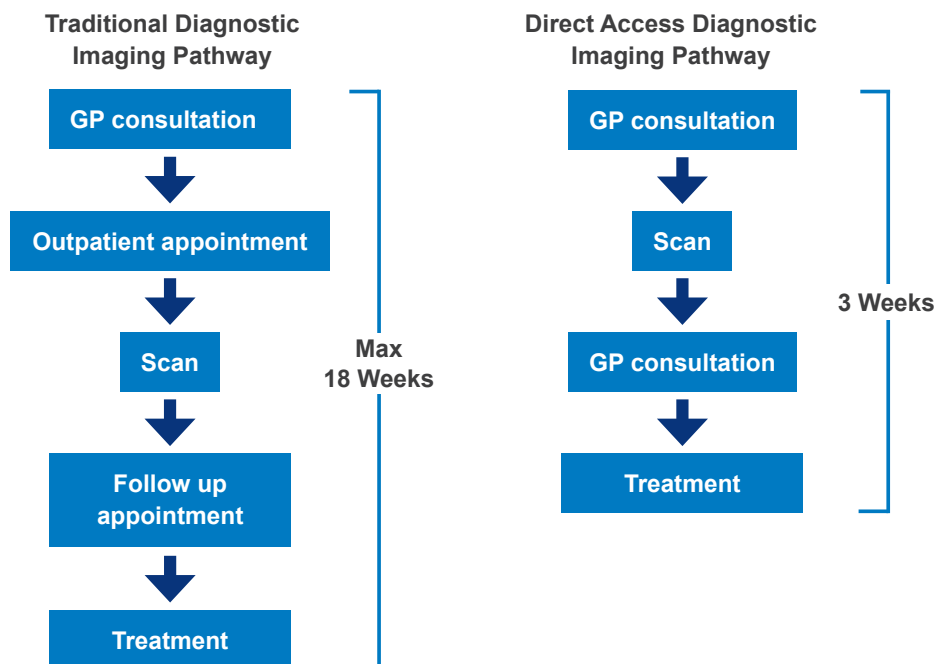
We are carrying out a consultation to identify local views on the top 3 priorities for bringing care closer to home from April 2012 and one of the services to be considered is 'Diagnostic Tests'. We would like you to indicate whether you think it should be a priority to introduce Direct Access to Diagnostic Tests.

What is the Diagnostics Imaging Pathway?

Currently if a patient needs a scan to diagnose a condition, a GP will refer the patient to a hospital consultant and it is the hospital consultant who requests the diagnostic image following an outpatient appointment. Once the patient has had the scan, they return to see the consultant who then plans a treatment programme (where necessary).

What is Direct Access to Diagnostic Imaging?

Direct Access is where GPs refer patients directly for diagnostic imaging. The image and a report are then returned to the GP who is then able to begin treatment or in complex cases, to recommend a specialist consultation. Patients requiring an onward referral to a specialist, present with diagnostic and imaging results already.



The benefits to your patients will be:

- Accelerated patient pathway (3 weeks from initial GP appointment to treatment versus 18 weeks if referred into the acute sector)
- Hospital consultants' time is freed to see patients with the most serious conditions
- Patients can be managed within a primary care setting which is more convenient and cheaper for patients
- Patients receive more 'appropriate' care, depending on other morbidities and patient preferences for treatment through greater knowledge of the patient