

Patient 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 accrediting healthcare providers in a wide range of services in order to bring more care into the community.

Priorities

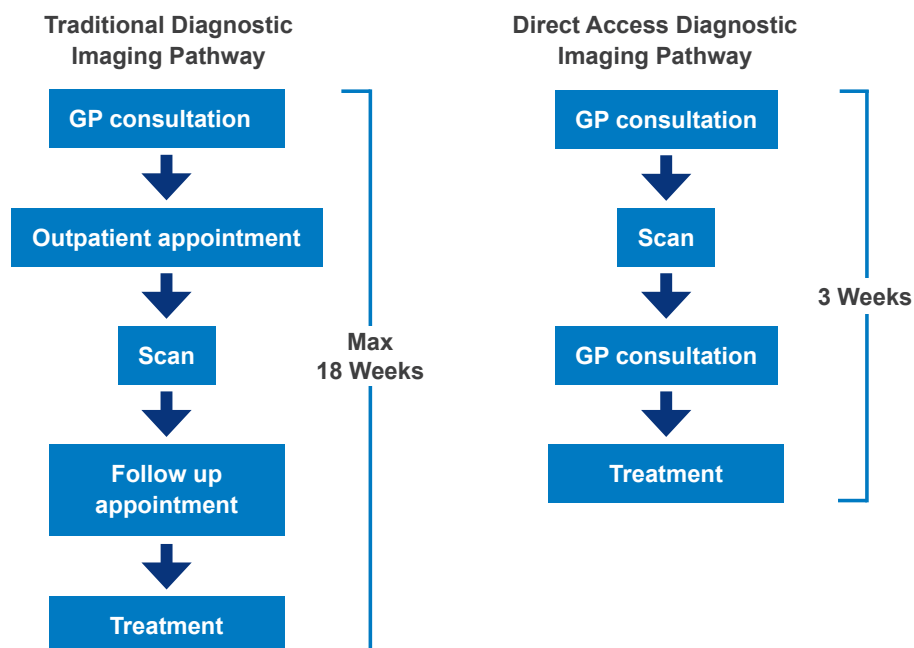
We are carrying out a consultation to identify local views on the top 3 priorities for bringing care closer to home from April 2012 and one of the services to be considered is 'Diagnostic Tests'. We would like you to indicate whether you think it should be a priority to introduce Direct Access to Diagnostic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

What is the Diagnostics Imaging Pathway?

Currently if you need a scan (diagnostic image) to diagnose a condition, your GP will refer you to a hospital consultant who requests the diagnostic image following an outpatient appointment. Once you have had the scan, you return to see the hospital consultant who then plans a treatment programme (where necessary).

What is Direct Access to Diagnostic Imaging?

Direct Access is where your GP can refer you directly for diagnostic imaging. The image and a report are then returned to your GP who is then able to begin treatment or in complex cases, to recommend a specialist consultation. If you do need to see a specialist, you will already have your diagnostic and imaging results for the specialist to look at and so treatment, where necessary, can begin sooner.



The benefits of this new pathway are:

- Faster time to treatment (3 weeks from initial GP appointment to treatment versus 18 weeks if referred immediately into the acute sector)
- Hospital consultants' time is freed to see patients with the most serious conditions
- You can be managed within a primary care setting which is more convenient and cheaper as more patients will not need to go to hospital at all
- More patients will benefit from receive more 'appropriate' care, GPs understand your medical history and your preferences for treatment