

Will the hospital I choose be culturally appropriate (language, food)?

The **NHS choices** website will allow you to search for information about what services are available at each hospital and help you make a decision on what is important to you.

Can I go to any hospital in the country?

You can go to any NHS funded hospital or clinic that offers treatment which is appropriate for your condition.

Is it true that I can choose to go to a 'private' hospital?

Yes, if the hospital is funded by the NHS. We have 180 independent hospitals who are now NHS suppliers. You can choose to be referred to any of them where clinically appropriate

I am a registered carer. Can I have a say in where the person I care for is treated?

Patients can choose an appointment date and time that fits in around their carer's arrangements.

How can I find out which hospital might be best for me?

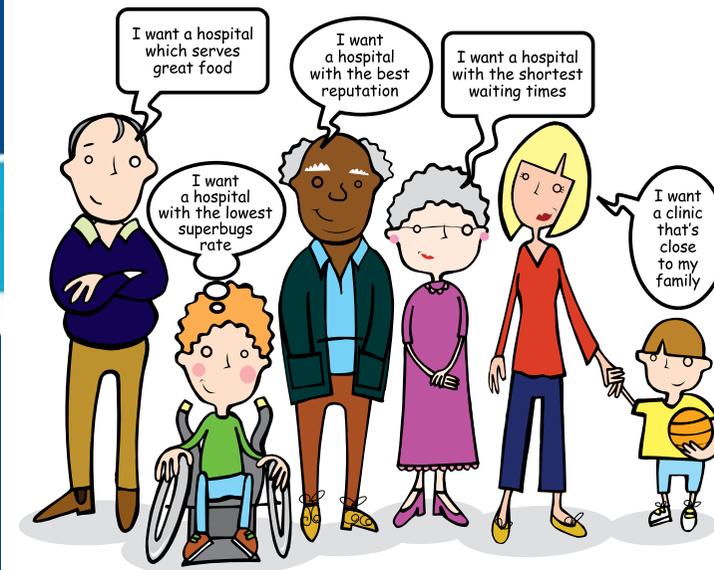
- Visit the **NHS choices** website - www.nhs.uk to compare hospitals in London and across the country.
- Ask your doctor or a member of staff at your GP surgery for advice and guidance about which hospital might be best for you based on your individual circumstances.
- Contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on **0207 530 6315**.

For more copies of this leaflet, or if you would like this leaflet in Braille, audio tape, disk, large print or in other languages, please contact Communications at Camden PCT on 0207 530 3277.

**Choice of hospital may not be appropriate for all services. You may not be given a choice when referred to mental health and maternity services or where speed of access is important for diagnosis and treatment, such as suspected stroke or cancer.*

**It's
your
choice**

Whatever your reason...



...it's your right to choose.

You now have the right to choose to go to any hospital in England* if you are referred for treatment by your GP.

This leaflet provides information on **Free Choice** and will help you decide which hospital is best for your needs.

Free Choice

If you are referred to a specialist by your GP, you can now choose to be treated at any NHS funded hospital in England, including many private and independent sector hospitals.*

Where you choose to go will depend on what is important for you. This might be how near it is to your home or place of work, the length of time you will wait for an appointment, if it has a good reputation for hygiene or if it has expertise for treating your condition.

The questions below will help you understand how this works:

Does free choice cover all NHS services?

Free Choice currently refers to your first outpatients' appointments (the appointment where you first see your specialist at the hospital after your GP has referred you) and related treatment, such as an operation.

It does not cover things like suspected cancer or chest pains where you may need to be seen more quickly.

In the future it is hoped that patients will be offered choices in primary care, maternity care, long term conditions (such as diabetes), and choices in care at the end of your life.

Will I be transported there and back?

If you are currently eligible for free transport, either under the Hospital Travel Costs Scheme (HTCS for patients on NHS low income scheme in receipt of certain benefits) or through Patient Transport Services (PTS for patients requiring transport on the basis of a medical assessment), you will continue to be eligible for free transport to any listed provider.

If I pay for the transport myself, can I claim it back?

If you are eligible for HTCS, then you should be able to claim this amount back.

What happens if I can't get into my hospital of choice?

If the hospital of your choice does not have any appointments available, you can choose to wait longer than the Government target of 18 weeks from referral to treatment until an appointment is available. Your GP may however suggest alternative hospitals.

I have private healthcare. How does free choice help me?

Your private healthcare may not cover you for complex or existing conditions.

Can I go to the hospital that will see me first, regardless of location or status?

Yes, this is your choice.

Some people may choose to attend a hospital because of the waiting times, others however may choose a hospital based on location or reputation.

Do I have to book and make appointments through my GP or with the hospital?

If your GP uses Choose and Book, you will have the option of booking your appointment either in the GP surgery, on the internet or via an Appointments Line (0845 608 8888).

If the hospital booking system is not linked to the Choose and Book system you may be asked to arrange your appointment directly with the hospital.

My GP has strong views on where I should be treated but I'm not so sure. Is it my choice?

Yes the choice is yours.

Your GP can advise you but the decision about where you go is yours.