



Paper switch off
for consultant led
first appointments

Paper Switch off Quick Reference Guide for Primary Care



Working in partnership:

North Bristol NHS Trust

University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust

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Why switching off paper?

From 4th June 2018 North Bristol NHS Trust and University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust will no longer accept paper referrals from GP practices into consultant led first outpatient services.

All referrals will be required to be sent electronically via the NHS e-Referral Service (previously known as Choose and Book). The NHS e-Referral Service provides an electronic route of referral and combines electronic booking with a choice of place, date and time for first outpatient appointments.

The e-RS Paper Switch-off Programme is [a national programme](#)

with the support of NHS England, NHS Improvement and NHS Digital and is a key element in making progress towards a paperless NHS.

To support GP in this project, the new primary care contract, which took effect from 1 April 2018, includes a further investment nationally of £10 million in practices, to support full implementation of e-RS.

Our BNSSG CCG can support any practice which needs help with implementation. Please contact:

<https://bnssgccg.nhs.uk/contact-us/>

Benefits for primary care

- Referrers have a full directory of all the secondary care services available under Free Choice via the Directory of Services as well as those services locally commissioned by their CCGs.
- Where they are unable to complete the booking themselves at the time of the appointment, Referrers and practice staff can direct the patient to use the NHS e-Referral Service Appointments Line or the internet.
- Referrers can identify services with shortest waiting times through service selection.
- Referrers can access service specific guidance to help them to shortlist the most appropriate services and to highlight any helpful preliminary investigations.

e-Referrals benefits



- better referral tracking
- reduction in missed appointments

e-Referrals benefits



Clear referral audit trail for both primary and secondary care

e-Referrals benefits



The NHS can save up to £500 million nationally with full implementation

e-Referrals benefits



Patients have choice and control over their care.



Primary care switchboard
number

0117 4143999

e-Referrals email

Nbn-tr.nbtreferrals@nhs.net

Outpatient's number

0300 555 0103



e-Referrals contact details

ERSQueries@UH Bristol.nhs.uk



Which referrals are excluded from e-RS?

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/nhs-e-rs-guidance-on-digital-referrals-faqs.pdf>

- referrals for follow-up appointments

- referrals to same-day services or services which are accessed through self-referrals
- referrals from prison GPs into first outpatient appointments
- referrals made by Out of Hour GPs or GPs based at Urgent Care Centres
- referrals received for Scottish or Welsh registered patients into English Providers
- referrals for Defence Medical Services patients based outside England (such as military personnel and dependents, associated civilians and others)

Continue referring as you have done up to now in these cases.

What happens if the GP can't find a suitable appointment slot to book into at a provider?

Providers are responsible for making their appointments available through e-RS so that sufficient appointment slots are made accessible for booking.

Where a referral is made through e-RS and no appointment slot is available for the chosen service(s), the referral can still be deferred to the provider who has a responsibility to contact the patient directly to arrange an appointment.

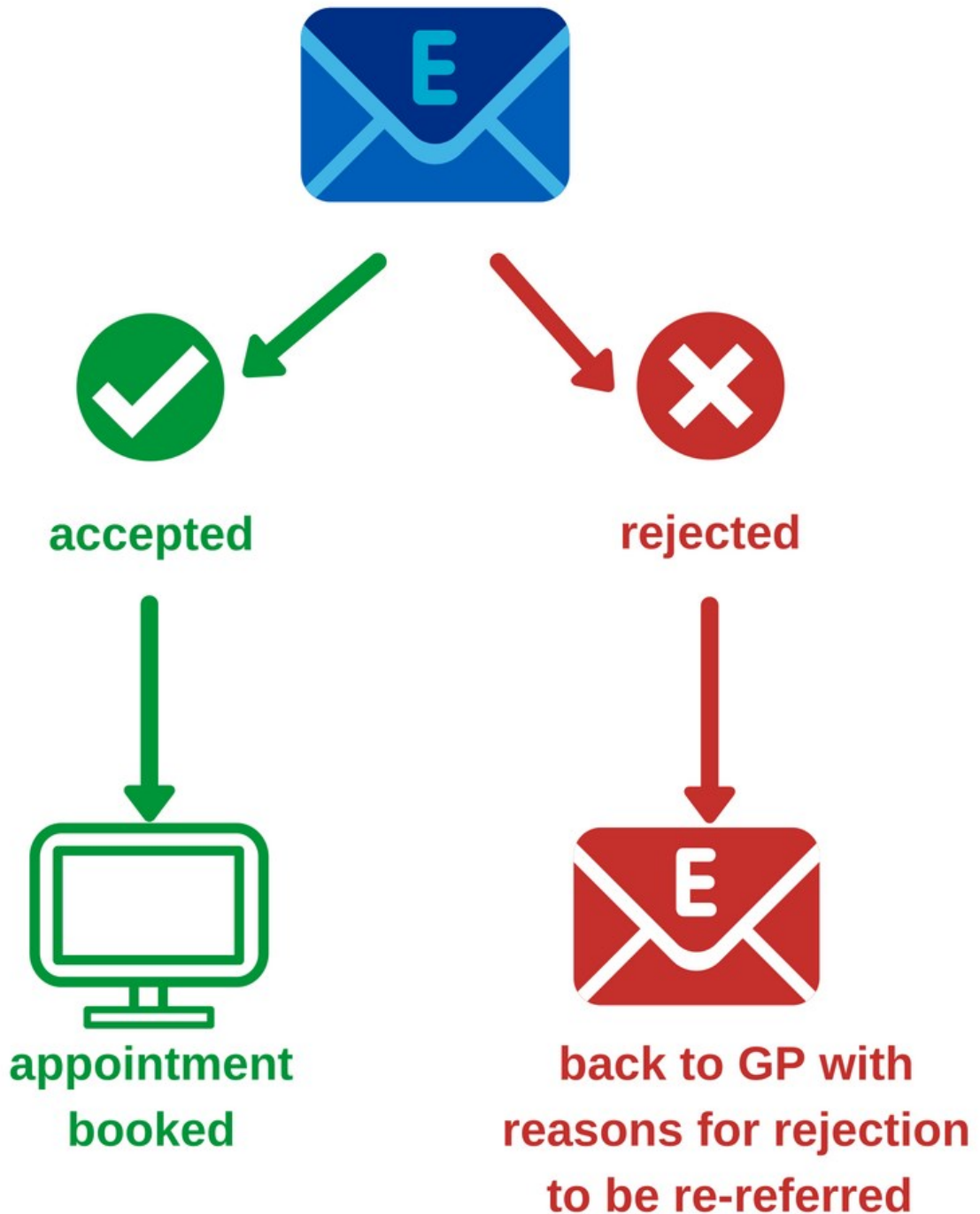
Each time a referral is deferred it will appear on the service providers 'Appointment Slot Issues' ('ASI') worklist. Providers must ensure that their ASI worklist is actively managed so that appointments are booked for patients in a timely way.

Finding no appointment slots available for a chosen service(s) may influence a GP/patient's choice of provider and they may instead choose a provider with booking slots available. However, where the GP/patient choose a provider and service with no appointment slots, the referral must still be sent through e-RS and not by any other means.

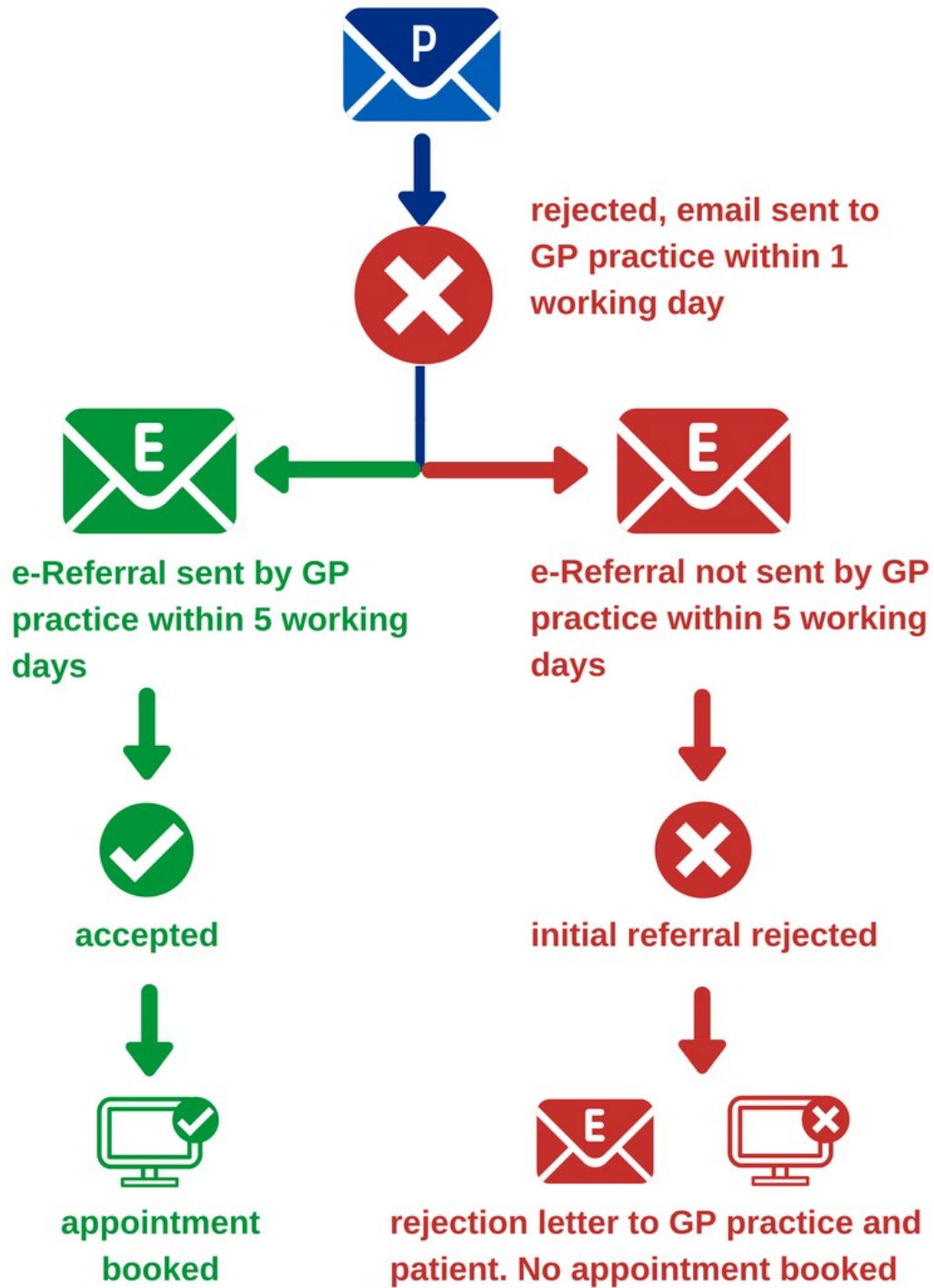
Processes from 4th June

A referral via e-RS is not accepted until it has been triaged and deemed acceptable by a consultant. Patients will receive a letter of appointment once their referral has been triaged and accepted.

electronic referral sent through e-RS



Paper referral sent to NBT or UHBristol



What happens if the e-RS service is down?

It is important that GP practices register for e-RS alerts for when the system is down. To register, click on:

<http://nww.hscic.gov.uk/servicemanagement/status/>

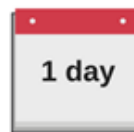
Then click on our area on the map and, on the page that opens, click on the icon that says “Subscribe for updates with RSS”. At least one person from each practice should register for these alerts to ensure all staff are kept up to date with any access issues for the e-Referrals system.

Only if e-RS is down for more than one day will the provider Trusts provide an alternative method for GPs to refer into. This is in line with BMA guidance.

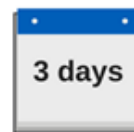


Only if e-RS is down for more than 24 hours will the provider Trusts facilitate an alternative method for primary care to refer into. This is in line with BMA guidance.

acceptable holding time in primary care before re-attempting referral if system fails



Urgent referrals and 2WW



routine referrals

e-RS and accessibility

The **Accessible Information Standard** requires all providers of NHS care and/or adult social care to identify, record, flag, share and meet the information and communication needs of patients, service users, carers and parents with a disability or sensory loss.

For more information about how the current e-RS referral service meets the Accessible Information Standard and for guidance on responsibilities on referrers and providers please go to:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/accessibleinfo/resources/e-referral-service/>