

RAS: Cross Border Patients

A document created to support practices when dealing with cross border patients.

Due to changes to the law brought about by the NHS Act 2006 (as amended by the Health and Social Care Act 2012), if you live in England and are registered with a GP practice in Wales, along the border, then the choice of secondary healthcare and services provided in England needs to be offered to you.

RAS is used as a referral system in helping to enable English residents (registered with a Welsh GP practice) to access choice of secondary care provider in England.

The RAS acts as a single point of contact for Welsh border GP practices to refer English cross border patients to England for consultant-led secondary care.

The RAS offers English residents the choice of secondary care in England in line with NHS Constitutional rights or to be referred back to NHS Wales, to be treated under Welsh standards and policies if the patient wishes.

There are currently 10 GP practices signed up to the project along the border.

Why is this happening?

Responsibility for the NHS in Wales is devolved to the Welsh Government. This means that it is separate from the NHS in England.

The existing cross border protocol between England and Wales sets out an agreement for the care of patients living along the border who reside in one country, but are registered with a GP practice in the other country.

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What does this change mean for me, as a patient?

If you live in England and you are registered with a GP practice based in Wales, which is part of the referral scheme, and you need to be referred for treatment either in a hospital or clinic, you will be referred to the RAS, which will offer you a choice of healthcare providers in England.

If you live in Wales and are registered with either a Welsh or English GP you will experience no change to your current GP arrangements.

What happens if my GP practice isn't part of the new scheme?

If you live in England and you are registered with a GP practice based in Wales that is not part of the new referral scheme then you will default to being treated in Wales to Welsh standards.

However, if you wish to be treated to English standards by an English provider then you will need to speak to your GP or contact your [Clinical Commissioning Group](#) to arrange for this to happen. You will not experience any delay in treatment by choosing this option. However, it is possible that you may have to change your GP.

Will this mean I can't go to a hospital in Wales?

If you live in England and you are registered with a GP practice based in Wales and you wish to receive your care in a hospital or clinic in Wales then you can do so and you will receive high quality treatment under Welsh NHS standards and policies.

However, you will not then be covered by the NHS Constitution and may lose some of your entitlements that the Constitution guarantees, such as a choice of providers or waiting time standards which apply in England.

What will happen if I need to be seen in hospital or by a specialist?

If you are happy to receive your treatment and care in a hospital or at a clinic in England then your GP will arrange for your details to be sent to the RAS.

A member of the RAS will contact you to arrange your appointment at the hospital or clinic of your choice. If you prefer, you can still choose to receive your treatment and care in a hospital or clinic in Wales.

If you are cared for in Wales you will receive high quality NHS care to the same standards and policies that apply in the Welsh NHS.

What happens if I have already been referred to a service in Wales, or am currently on a waiting list for treatment?

If you have already been referred for treatment, there is no obligation to change your current treatment options. If you wish to change your existing treatment plans, please contact your GP practice to discuss your options.

Please note that changing your choice of provider may not necessarily mean that you are seen within a shorter waiting time.

Can I have treatment in Wales when I have a GP in England?

If you live in England and have a GP in England you will normally receive your treatment from the NHS in England, and your Clinical Commissioning Group is responsible for your care.

Generally, you will receive your care from an English hospital. If you as a patient feel that there is a strong medical reason why your treatment should be provided in Wales, you should approach your GP and the Clinical Commissioning Group, explaining the reasons.

Can the NHS move my treatment from a Welsh hospital to an English hospital without my agreement?

Your doctor would discuss any change to your treatment, but it is highly unlikely that the location of an ongoing course of treatment would be moved. However, a new treatment could be commenced in a different location.