

What if the answer is still no?

Some PCTs or LHBs may refuse to fund the referral altogether. If you still cannot get the initial referral from your GP or specialist, or if you have the referral but the funding is refused, you may like to make a formal complaint.

If you live in England and want to take your case further, contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). If you live in Wales, your local Community Health Council can point you in the right direction; in Scotland, the Scottish Health Council can help you and in Northern Ireland, the local Health Council can guide you.

You can reach all of these bodies through the Department of Health website or NHS Direct. PALS will advise you on how to assert your rights with your GP practice, or with the NHS authority which has made the decision.

Contact your local press and politician

There are MPs, MSPs (Scotland) and AMs (Wales) of all political parties who support the provision of homeopathy within the NHS and who support the notion of patient choice. You may like to contact them for help. The BHA can let you know if your MP is likely to be sympathetic. Your local newspaper is also often a good tool to use in applying pressure to local decision-makers.

Useful contacts:

Department of Health Tel: 020 7210 4850
www.dh.gov.uk

NHS Direct Tel: 0845 46 47
www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

NHS Choices www.nhs.uk

Patient choice, patient voice – join the BHA

Join the growing number of people who are determined to keep homeopathy in the NHS by becoming a Friend of the British Homeopathic Association. To find out more visit our website at www.britishhomeopathic.org

The BHA works closely with doctors and other healthcare professionals who incorporate homeopathy into their everyday practice. We fund education and research and we lobby for patient access to NHS homeopathy.

As a Friend you will receive our popular quarterly magazine, *Health and Homeopathy*, as well as invitations to Friends' events and information about campaigns.

For a free information pack, including a register of members of the Faculty of Homeopathy, contact the British Homeopathic Association on 0870 444 3950.



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Homeopathy on the NHS



your guide to
getting treatment

How to get homeopathic treatment on the NHS

Homeopathy has been a popular part of the NHS since it began in 1948. Around 250,000 NHS patients benefit from homeopathic treatment every year. Homeopathy is practised in five NHS homeopathic hospitals, in Bristol, Glasgow, Liverpool, London and Tunbridge Wells. There are also a number of NHS homeopathic clinics around the country and more than 400 GPs use homeopathy in their NHS practice.

In common with other specialist services, the majority of patients will have no difficulty in obtaining homeopathic treatment on the NHS, but for some access to treatment can be more problematic.

This leaflet explains how to go about asking for a referral and what to do if you encounter difficulty in getting the treatment you want.

“It works. It’s safe. Patients want it.”

Dr Peter Fisher, Clinical Director, Royal London Homeopathic Hospital

What is my first step?

The British Homeopathic Association (BHA) publishes a list of homeopathic doctors and if there is a homeopathic GP in your area, you may be able to register with him/her.

Otherwise, you will need a referral from your current doctor or specialist to one of the NHS homeopathic hospitals or clinics, or to a homeopathic GP who takes NHS referrals.

Your GP is your first port of call. Make an appointment to see your doctor and ask for a referral. Your doctor will either use the ‘choose and book’ system or will apply to the Primary Care Trust on your behalf (it is a good idea to investigate a surgery’s position on homeopathic referrals before registering with a new practice).

Your GP must take your request seriously

Your GP is obliged to refer you for other NHS services, under his/her terms of service, if you request it. Referral to NHS doctors at one of the homeopathic hospitals or NHS homeopathic clinics fulfils this contractual responsibility.

Your GP will want to be satisfied that the treatment you request will meet your needs and may want to know if it has some evidence based in research.

If your GP decides that homeopathic treatment is not appropriate they should be able to discuss their decision with you.

If you do not feel that your GP has given you a satisfactory explanation there are other steps you can take:

- Contact the BHA. We can help you make a good case to your GP to help him/her reconsider their decision
- Request a second opinion, usually from one of the other doctors at your practice
- Register with another GP in your local area

What if my GP makes a referral but there’s no local funding for the treatment?

In most parts of the UK your referral to a homeopathic hospital will be funded by your Primary Care Trust in England or Local Health Board in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. However, some GPs may not be aware of the funding arrangements for NHS homeopathy, in which case the homeopathic hospital where the referral is being requested can usually advise.

Some Primary Care Trusts (PCTs – England) and Local Health Boards (LHBs – Scotland, Wales, NI) restrict access to homeopathic treatment and will only fund GPs to make referrals in exceptional cases or for an agreed list of conditions.

When this happens, your referral will go to a panel of doctors and managers who will decide whether your treatment can be funded; the PCT/LHB must ensure that your request is considered on its individual merits.

However, it might not always be possible to argue a case for homeopathic treatment for some conditions.