



Northumbria Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust

Welcome to outpatients

Issued by Northumbria Healthcare



Welcome to outpatients

Welcome to Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust. You will shortly be coming for your outpatient appointment. This leaflet aims to give you all the information you need about outpatients.

We aim to see all of our patients within 18 weeks from referral so it is important that you attend your appointment. If you **do not attend (DNA)** twice or if you change your appointment twice we will refer you back to your GP as we will assume you do not need that appointment.

We hope the information in this leaflet answers some of your questions and helps to put you at ease.

We have a contact centre for booking outpatient appointments.

Opening hours: Monday to Friday 8am - 6.30pm.
If you have any queries, or special requirements, either

- Call the contact centre on 0344 811 8118 where the staff will be happy to discuss your appointment details with you. They will also be able to assist you to change your appointment if necessary.

Or

- Ask a member of staff when you arrive at the department. Further information can be found on our website www.northumbria.nhs.uk

Before you arrive

Your appointment letter and/or card will give details of when to attend and the name of the consultant, doctor or specialist nurse or other health professional you will see.

You must let us know if:

- You are unable to keep this appointment, please inform us as soon as possible and an alternative appointment will be made. Your original appointment can then be offered to another patient
- You have any additional needs because of a disability
- You require a language interpreter, sign language or sight guide to help you during your outpatient visit

**Please call the contact centre
0344 811 8118**

Where to find us

Our outpatient clinics are held at a number of different sites, please check the details in your appointment letter.

How to get to the hospital

The addresses for all hospitals within Northumbria Healthcare are listed at the end of this booklet. Maps are available on our website www.northumbria.nhs.uk

Please make your own transport arrangements if you can. Information about public transport services is available from Traveline on 0871 200 22 33.

Patient transport

Transport to and from hospital can be arranged if required on medical grounds. If this service is required and you live in:

- Northumberland or Newcastle upon Tyne, contact North East Ambulance Service on 0191 215 1515
- North Tyneside, South Tyneside and Gateshead contact ERS Medical on 0191 301 7687
- Sunderland contact ERS Medical on 0191 301 7687 or contact your GP surgery

Patient transport is available Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays) for attendances between 9am and 5pm.

Please remember - if you change your appointment you also need to change your patient transport booking.

Parking

Car parking is available at all hospitals and our charges are one of the lowest in the NHS. You can check our website, www.northumbria.nhs.uk under 'our locations' to view our rates.

Please make sure you leave plenty of time to find a space.

Disabled and concessionary parking

Each hospital site has a number of designated free parking bays reserved for registered disabled drivers displaying a valid blue badge permit.

What to bring with you

For your first appointment, you should bring:

- Your appointment letter/card

- Name and address of your family doctor
- A urine sample in a small, clean container (this is not a requirement for all clinics – please check your appointment letter)
- Any medicine including tablets, creams or drops you are taking and the most up to date list of your prescription medicines. This also includes any over the counter medicines you may use
- If you wear spectacles or have any walking/hearing aids, please bring them to each appointment
- Cash in case you would like to buy a drink or make a telephone call
- Before you attend you might find it helpful to write down two or three important questions that you would like to ask during your appointment. There are some suggestions at the back of the booklet.
- Feel free to bring a friend or relative with you to the department, they are welcome to join you for your consultation if you wish. If you are a young person aged 14-25 you can choose to bring a friend or relative with you to the department or not, it's up to you.

What not to bring with you

You are strongly advised not to bring in large amounts of cash or any valuables including jewellery (except wedding rings).

We cannot accept responsibility for the loss of any item.

When you arrive

All of our staff will be wearing an identification badge when you meet them. Please take your appointment letter and/or card to the reception desk in the outpatient department. Your letter will tell you if you are to report to somewhere different.

On each visit you will be asked:

- Your full name
- Date of birth

- Address and postcode
- Marital status
- Ethnic group
- Religion
- Your family doctor's name and surgery address
- Whether you would like to receive a copy of any letters that may be written as a record of the visit.

This confidential information is an essential part of your hospital records. You may be often asked the same questions during your visit, this is part of the checking process to ensure that we have the correct patient. This may also occur as you meet different staff or go to other departments. If your address or telephone number changes between appointments, please call the contact centre on 0344 811 8118. This will help us keep our records up to date.

Personal equipment

Your privacy and dignity are very important to us. We ask all patients, relatives and visitors not to take any photographs or film on hospital premises.

Mobile phones should not be used in clinical areas, however they are allowed in the following areas:

- Hospital reception and entrance areas
- Waiting areas
- Non-clinical communal areas – including restaurants, day rooms and café areas
- Public corridors

We accept no liability for loss or damage to patient owned equipment.

Appointment times

Every effort will be made to ensure you are seen on time. Patients are seen by appointment time rather than order of arrival. The exceptions to this are ambulance patients. The ambulance service collects patients within time bands. This can affect the time they arrive and depart from the outpatient department.

Our outpatient clinics are very busy, we try to ensure you are seen by the doctor at your allocated appointment time. Occasionally the clinic may run over and we will do our best to keep you informed of any delays.

Seeing the doctor/nurse

A consultant will usually see you, although on occasions it may be one of their associates. Whichever health professional you see, has access to your medical records and will be fully aware of your history. They will also check your details to ensure they are talking to the correct patient.

New medicines

If your doctor wants you to start a new medicine, they may:

- Ask you to take a form to your family doctor. This is not a prescription. It is for non-urgent changes to your medicines. There is no need to make an urgent appointment
- Prescribe medication on a hospital prescription form. This can only be dispensed by the hospital pharmacy. Please note the hospital pharmacy only issues medication for hospital prescriptions
- Occasionally you may be given a prescription that has to be dispensed by a pharmacy outside the hospital. The staff will tell you if this is applicable

For any prescription you are given, standard NHS charges apply.

Tests and investigations

When you see the doctor/nurse it is possible they will want to carry out some tests or investigations. Your appointment may take longer than you expected but can save you making a further visit.

Further tests or treatment

Some tests need special preparation, so you may be asked to attend another hospital for them.

Following your consultation if your doctor offers you treatment, it may be possible for you to agree a convenient date before you leave the department. Please give this some thought before you arrange a date, you may have family commitments which could affect this.

If you have agreed to an operation you will be asked to complete a pre-anaesthetic screening form. Your height, weight, pulse and blood pressure will be recorded on this form and there are questions for you to answer.

Please note this is not your pre-operative assessment.

You will be either contacted by phone or letter. If you are requested to attend a further appointment it is very important that you do attend. If you do not attend your operation will be cancelled.

Sharing letters with patients

You can receive a copy of letters written about you by health professionals (with certain limitations).

At each visit you will be asked whether or not you would like to receive copies of letters. If you say no, and later decide that you do want to receive a copy, let the reception staff know as soon as

possible. You should also let the contact centre or reception staff know if you decide you do not wish to receive copies of any letters.

Access to health records (Data Protection Act 1998)

You have the right to see your own health records (with certain limitations). If during or at the end of your treatment you wish to know what has been recorded about you, you can make a verbal request to see your records to the consultant or doctor in charge of your treatment.

Alternatively, you can write to the medical records manager at the hospital – a charge will be made for this service.

Consent

Tests and investigations will only be carried out with your full consent. The doctor/nurse will explain the test or investigation to you and ask whether you give your consent. Please do not hesitate to ask if you want more information or explanation before doing this.

Confidentiality

Our staff have a duty to respect the confidentiality of your information, this includes young people aged 14+. Health professionals involved in your care need to share clinical information about you, they will not divulge anything they learn about you to anyone who is not immediately concerned with your care. When other agencies are involved in your care, we may need to share details about you to enable us to work together for your benefit. Information will only be shared with other agencies if they have a genuine need for it and, where possible, we will ask your consent for this.

In some circumstances, we may have a legal responsibility to disclose your personal health information to other organisations.

If you do not wish particular information to be shared, please speak to one of the health or social professionals involved in your care.

You can choose to limit use or disclosure of your information. If you wish to discuss your rights, please speak to a doctor or nurse when attending your clinic appointment.

We will only give information about your condition to close relatives or carers with your permission. Please let a member of staff know if there is information you would not want us to share with them. We will respect your wishes.

Your safety

We are committed to providing high quality care for all those who use our services. A robust approach is taken to risk management to protect the safety and well-being of patients, staff and members of the public. This includes zero tolerance of violence and aggression toward staff. Aggressive patients, relatives or visitors will be asked to leave the premises and in some cases the police may be contacted.

Teaching

We provide training for nursing, medical and other health care staff. You have the right to choose whether or not to take part. If you refuse your care will not be affected in any way.

Fire precautions

The fire alarm system is tested once a week. You may hear a loud ringing, or siren, the staff will let you know if it is not a test.

Northumbria Healthcare is Smokefree

Northumbria Healthcare is a smokefree environment. As an NHS organisation, we have a duty to protect and care for the health and wellbeing of our patients, staff and visitors. Many of the people who access our services such as pregnant women, babies, children and those with medical conditions are particularly vulnerable to the harmful effects of second hand smoke. Being smokefree means that smoking is not permitted on any of our sites including all buildings, grounds and vehicles, there are no designated smoking areas on any of our hospital sites.

All patients accessing our services will be asked about their smoking status and those who do smoke will be offered advice and support to help refrain from smoking. This will include a referral for on-going support, for those who wish to give up smoking on a permanent basis and access to Nicotine Replacement Therapy during their admission.

E-cigarettes provide nicotine but do not contain the many chemicals and toxins found in smoked tobacco. Many people have switched to using e-cigarettes/vaping and these have been proven to be an effective way of helping people to quit smoking completely. As e-cigarettes do not expose others to second hand smoke and offer a less harmful alternative to smoking their use is permitted in the grounds of our sites, but their use is not permitted indoors.

For further advice and support to stop smoking contact:

Northumberland Stop Smoking Service on: 01670 813135

North Tyneside Stop Smoking Service information: 0191 643 7171

NHS Smokefree Helpline number: 0300 1231044

NHS Smokefree website for information on stopping smoking and links to local services <https://www.nhs.uk/smokefree>

Northumbria Healthcare Smokefree page
<https://www.northumbria.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/smokefree/>

Our commitment to patients

We continually try to improve our services and will endeavour to:

- Treat you as an individual
- Consider your needs and rights
- Maintain confidentiality
- Ensure maximum privacy
- Ask questions about what matters to you and ensure that we make decisions about your treatment and care in partnership with you
- Discuss your symptoms and stages of treatment with you
- Provide information about our services
- Ensure that your visit goes smoothly, especially when it is necessary for you to visit a range of departments.

Help with travelling expenses

The trust follows the Department of Health guidelines for reimbursement of patient travel expenses for people who receive certain benefits. You may be entitled to reclaim the cost of your travel to and from the hospital as well as car parking charges.

Parents or escorts accompanying a young person may be entitled to help with costs if they receive one of the relevant benefits. To find out if you are entitled to claim please visit www.nhs.uk

If you are entitled to receive re-imbusement of your travel costs you can reclaim them from the hospital cashier's office. Hospital staff will direct you here and you will need to produce the following documents:

- Proof of entitlement from the relevant awarding body
- Your appointment card or letter
- Your tickets for the journey to hospital or proof of payment (ticket or receipt) if you are claiming for car parking charges.

Only costs that are “necessarily incurred” can be paid:

- Expenses incurred when visiting someone
- The travel expenses of any escort (including your husband, wife or partner) can only be paid if you have a letter from your GP stating that you need to have an escort for medical reasons
- Taxi fares are only paid if your GP has given you a letter stating that for medical reasons you are unable to travel by public transport

As you leave

If the doctor or nurse wants to see you again, the next appointment may be made before you leave the hospital. Most appointments will be sent out to you in the post. You may be asked to report to the reception desk at the end of the consultation.

If it matters to you, it matters to us

We are committed to providing you with a high quality health service and the best care and treatment possible. For this reason your feedback is extremely important to us so we know what we're doing right, and understand more about what we need to do to change things for the better.

Compliments and comments

We are always delighted to receive positive comments about our staff and services. If you are pleased with the care or treatment you have received, please let us know and we will pass on your compliments to the person or service concerned. If you have any comments please let us know – your feedback will help us to review and improve the services we provide.

Concerns

If you, a member of your family or a carer, wish to discuss any concerns you have about your treatment or care you should speak to the person in charge of your care so they can help resolve the matter straight away. This will usually be the ward manager or modern matron. However, if you would prefer to talk to someone who is not involved in your care or are unsure who to talk to, you can contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). PALS provides free, confidential advice to patients, their families and carers; they will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and help to sort out problems quickly on your behalf.

You can contact PALS on:

Freephone: 0800 032 0202

Text/SMS: 01670 511 098

Email: northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk

Write to: FREEPOST PALS

Complaints

If you are unhappy with the treatment or service you have received from the trust you have the right to make a complaint, have it investigated and receive a response. Care will be taken to ensure your complaint remains confidential.

How to contact us:

Patient Services and Quality Improvement Department
Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
Unit 7/8 Silver Fox Way
Cobalt Business Park
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE27 0QJ

Telephone: 0191 203 1340

Email: patient.services@northumbria.nhs.uk

Alternatively you can contact us by completing the form inside the 'If it matters to you, it matters to us' leaflet which is available from every ward. PALS leaflets are also widely available.

Getting the most out of your appointment:

We want to ensure that decisions are made in partnership with you and that the care and support you receive reflects what is important to you. Before you come to the clinic you might want to think about:

What are the most important things you'd like to discuss at the appointment?

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These are some things that people sometimes want to talk about, you may have others. *Circle any that are important to you.*

Sleep	Feeling down, stressed or lonely
Memory	Eating the right amount
Medication	Giving up smoking
Monitoring my health	My day-to-day health
Healthier eating	Alcohol
Pregnancy and contraception	Keeping active and getting around
Driving/travel	Relationships/sex life
Work/benefits/money	My future health
Pain/Discomfort	Feeling anxious or worried

Sometimes there will be choices to make about your healthcare. If you are asked to make a choice, make sure you get the answers to these 3 questions:

What are my options?

What are the possible benefits and risks?

How can we make a decision together that's right for me?

Don't be afraid to ask if you don't understand.

We will offer you a copy of your clinic letter summarising the consultation, but feel free to take notes as well if you would like.



1 **HEXHAM GENERAL HOSPITAL**

Corbidge Road, Hexham, NE46 1QJ

2 **NORTH TYNESIDE GENERAL HOSPITAL**

Rake Lane, North Shields, NE29 8NH

3 **WANSBECK GENERAL HOSPITAL**

Woodhorn Lane, Ashington, NE63 9JJ

4 **THE NORTHUMBRIA**

Northumbria Way, Cramlington, NE23 6NZ

5 **ALNWICK INFIRMARY**

South Road, Alnwick, NE66 2NS

6 **BERWICK INFIRMARY**

Infirmary Square, Berwick-upon-Tweed, TD15 1LT

7 **BLYTH COMMUNITY HOSPITAL**

Thoroton Street, Blyth, NE24 1DX

8 **HALTWHISTLE WAR MEMORIAL HOSPITAL**

Westgate, Haltwhistle, NE49 9AJ

9 **MORPETH NHS CENTRE**

The Mount, Morpeth, NE61 1JY

10 **ROTHBURY COMMUNITY HOSPITAL**

Whitton Bank Road, Rothbury, NE65 7RW



Alternative Formats

If you would like a copy of this information in large print, another language, audio tape or other format please call the Contact Centre on **03 44 811 8118**

Other sources of information

NHS 111

NHS Choices

www.nhs.uk/pages/homepage.aspx

NICE (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence)

www.nice.org.uk

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Freephone: **0800 032 0202**

Text: **01670 511098**

Email: northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk

Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

General Enquiries **03 44 811 8111**

www.northumbria.nhs.uk

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