

Policy for Shared Care Agreements with Private Providers

Introduction

This policy outlines the stance of Ridgeway View Family Practice on shared care agreements with private providers. Our primary concern is to ensure the highest quality of care for our patients while maintaining the integrity and sustainability of our services. This policy ensures that the quality of care remains consistent, patient safety is prioritised, and the workload on NHS services is manageable.

Scope

This policy applies to all medicines that fall under shared care policy and guidance as determined by BSW ICB. The list of included medicines is regularly updated regularly on the BSW Medicines Optimisation websites.

Policy Statement

Ridgeway View Family Practice will not enter into any shared care agreements with private providers from 1st June 2025. This includes private providers offering NHS services under 'Right to Choose'.

Rationale

1. Quality Assurance

Private providers may not have undergone the same robust quality assessment procedures as NHS-commissioned services. The NHS has stringent standards and regular inspections by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to ensure patient safety and high-quality care. Without similar assurances, we cannot guarantee that private providers meet these standards.

2. Consultant Oversight

There is a significant concern regarding the continuity of care and consultant oversight. Should a patient decide to discontinue their private treatment due to financial constraints or other reasons, the loss of consultant oversight could compromise their care. This could lead to gaps in treatment and potential risks to patient safety. This would automatically breach any shared agreement and leave the patient without treatment.

3. Workload Pressures

Entering into shared care agreements with private providers would place additional workload pressures on our practice. This includes increased administrative tasks, coordination efforts, and potential clinical responsibilities. Given the current demands on NHS services, it is not feasible to take on these additional responsibilities without impacting the care we provide to our NHS patients.

4. NHS Constitution Principles

The NHS Constitution emphasises the importance of maintaining a clear separation between private and NHS care. Engaging in private shared care agreements could blur these lines, potentially leading to governance and quality assurance issues, as well as promoting health inequalities.

Implementation

This policy will be communicated to all staff members and will be included in our practice's standard operating procedures. Any requests for shared care agreements with private providers will be politely declined, and patients will be advised to seek alternative arrangements. This policy comes into effect from 1st June 2025 for all new requests.

Conclusion

Our commitment is to provide the highest standard of care to our patients within the framework of NHS services. By not entering into shared care agreements with private providers, we aim to ensure consistent, high-quality care and maintain the sustainability of our practice.