

# RAD 02 IRMER SOP 05 ENTITLEMENT OF REFERRERS WITHIN A SPECIFIC SCOPE OF PRACTICE

## Policy – Issued by The Radiological Protection Centre (RPC)

### IDENTIFICATION AND ENTITLEMENT OF REFERRERS

A radiological examination shall normally only be performed upon satisfactory completion of a referral form signed by an entitled state-registered healthcare professional. Referrals can be submitted electronically or on paper referral forms. In the case of electronic referrals, the referrer’s name and signature are implied by the granting of password-protected rights for that individual to access the electronic referral system. Pre-signed referral forms and sharing of electronic passwords, both of which have the potential to permit requests by unauthorized/unentitled individuals, shall not be permitted and represent a breach of IR(ME)R 2017.

In special cases such as cardiology, where the referring doctor is also the practitioner and/or operator, a referral form is not required as long as the need for a radiological examination is indicated in the patient’s notes. In the case of theatre fluoroscopy, a conventional referral form may not be needed where there is a written record that use of X-rays is required e.g. via the theatre booking sheet.

In an emergency, verbal requests will be accepted and shall be written up subsequently.

***The referrer shall supply sufficient clinical information to enable the practitioner to determine if the exposure is justified.***

Only state-registered healthcare professionals, either medically qualified (GPs, consultants, dental surgeons etc.) or otherwise (physiotherapists, osteopaths, nurses etc.) with sufficient medical knowledge, appropriate training and experience can be entitled to refer patients for radiological procedures with the prior consent of the department. Medical referrers are normally given automatic entitlement to refer for all medical examinations relevant to their specialty. Referrers must be informed of their entitlement, where practical to do so.

The employer authorises the Radiology Manager and Consultant Radiologists to grant entitlement and scopes of practice to referrers.

Medically-qualified persons are not normally required to undergo specific training to be entitled to refer within their specialty. However, local training on the imaging request process should normally be provided by the radiology department to new referrers and this should include training relating to the cancellation of referrals made in error or those that were no longer required.

Non-medically qualified healthcare professionals should be subject to a formal procedure to be accepted as entitled referrers. Following an application to refer patients within a limited scope of practice, authorisation to refer should be granted by a suitable person from radiology. The category of referral/scope of practice must be stated and should normally be limited to a specific area e.g. ‘musculoskeletal radiography’. Non-medical referrers must be informed of their scope of practice and told that referral privileges may be withdrawn if they fail to work within it. An example of such a process is given in the Appendix. Non-medical referrers should provide a protocol against which their referrals

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are made, which should have a unique identification number. The protocol identification number should be provided when making referrals (e.g. in the clinical indications field).

All non-medically qualified referrers should attend an appropriate radiation protection course (which may form part of their vocational training) before being granted referral privileges. Radiation protection training should normally be updated every five years.

Referrals containing inadequate or incomplete information relating to the patient’s identification, the examination requested or the clinical information supporting the request shall be refused and returned to the referrer for further information. Referrals that are not indicated or cannot be justified against the criteria shall be refused and returned to the referrer with an explanation.

Referrals for more than one modality (e.g. a plain chest X-ray plus MRI of the abdomen and pelvis) should ensure that the requirement for each modality is completely clear where referred on a single form to avoid confusion.

The referrer should be contacted in the event of any confusion over the referral.

## SELF/PATIENT-INITIATED REFERRAL

**Patients are not permitted to request medical exposures for themselves (even where they are an entitled referrer).** All referrals must be attributable to an entitled referrer. In the following cases the patient may initiate the referral process. However, the radiographer (or other entitled referrer) taking the patient’s clinical history and determining the need for an imaging procedure will act as IR(ME)R referrer:

- Breast screening mammography, provided they meet the criteria of the departmental Breast Screening Policy.
- Bone density (DEXA)/body composition scanning, providing the local referral criteria are met.
- Other exceptions may be added after discussion with the Medical Physics Expert.

An up-to-date list of referrers shall be maintained. They shall be identified individually by name, or generically by group, along with a list of permitted examinations for each person/group.

## LIST OF CLINICIANS WITH ENTITLEMENT TO REFER PATIENTS

The Hospital Director on the advice of the Lead Radiologist entitles all medical and dental Clinicians listed below to act as referrers. Their medical qualifications and GMC or GDC registration, revalidation information and practicing privileges are sufficient evidence of competency and training to enable the group to act as referrers. Competency and Entitlement records for Medical Referrers may be maintained by Radiology Managers but this is not a mandatory requirement.

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Name of individual or group of referrers	Registration (e.g. GMC, GDC)	Referral Entitlement/ Scope of Practice	Entitlement given by: (name, designation & date):
Consultants with practicing privileges at Nuffield Health Hospital		All imaging modalities	
Other Hospital Consultants		All Imaging modalities	
RMO's within Nuffield Hospitals		As agreed by Radiologist and if justified	
GPs		X-rays, Limited CT and MR under agreed protocol	
Dental Practitioners		Dental x-rays including mandible if justified by Radiographer/Radiologist	

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## LIST OF OTHER HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS WITH ENTITLEMENT TO REFER PATIENTS AND SCOPE OF PRACTICE

Name and Position/Profession	HCPC registration number (or other relevant registration)	Radiation Protection Training Course/Date	Referral Entitlement/ Scope of Practice	Entitlement given by: (name, designation & date):