



Cobalt

Medical Charity

Diagnosis • Research • Education

Registered Charity No: 1090790

Cobalt Health

Referrers Scope of Practice for MRI, PET, CBCT, CT, USS & X-ray Examination Requests

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DOCUMENT DETAILS

Version	Revision	Date	Approved By
1.0	Original document	August 2010	CHoD Committee
2.0	Reviewed and updated	March 2013	CHoD Committee
3.0	Reviewed and updated	August 2013	CHoD Committee
4.0	Reviewed and updated to new format	March 2015	CHoD Committee
4.1	Reviewed with minor changes	March 2017	CHoD Committee
4.2	Reviewed and updated to include CBCT	July 2018	CHoD Committee
4.3	Reviewed and updated to expand referrers scope of practice	December 2021	CHoD Committee
4.4	Reviewed and updated to include X-ray image stitching examinations	May 2023	CHoD Committee
4.5	Updated to include Targeted Lung Health Check (TLHC) nurses and clarification on age ranges for Non-Medical Referrers (NMRs). Inclusion of CBCT for podiatrists.	December 2023	ULU/IDL

Referrers Scope of Practice for MRI, PET, CBCT, CT, USS & X-ray Examination Requests

Based on Royal College of Radiologists iRefer (Making the best use of clinical radiology)

Any referrer able to refer to Cobalt must have been entitled to do so and have an agreed scope of practice. Please refer to the Referral Vetting Process and Policy (including triage and management of inappropriate requests) for further information. The process for accepting referrals from new referrers can also be found in the Referral Vetting Process and Policy.

1. Radiologists

- Radiologists who practice at Cobalt (and those who procure mobile MRI services from Cobalt) can refer any patient for MRI, CT, CBCT, USS or X-ray examinations.
- Radiologists can refuse any referral received by Cobalt deemed inappropriate or can suggest an alternative diagnostic imaging modality where appropriate and discuss this with the referrer.
- Radiologists can refuse any referral from entitled referrers who attempt to refer outside of their expertise and scope of practice.

2. Consultant Clinicians (Medically Trained)

Inclusion Criteria:

- All types of imaging examination may be requested by the clinician in their area of specialist expertise. Their specialty must be clearly indicated on the referral.

Exclusion Criteria:

- None

3. General Practitioners (GPs)

Inclusion Criteria:

- All types of examinations (excluding PET/CT) in any body area may be requested by a general practitioner for self-pay patients.
- Patients referred via a NHS contract, for example Increasing Capacity Framework agreement (ICS), referral must be in accordance with the referral criteria outlined within the contracts. These contracts typically limit the type of imaging and body areas which may be requested. Body areas covered by the contract should be checked prior to acceptance.

Exclusion Criteria:

- Body areas and/or clinical indications excluded within NHS contracts.
- All PET/CT
- X-ray whole spine and leg length image stitching examinations.

4. Dentists and Orthodontists

Inclusion Criteria:

- Only MRI examinations of the face, mandible, temporomandibular joints and sinuses can be requested. CT may be a more appropriate examination for sinuses, which a radiologist can justify.
- MRI head (excluding brain for neuro) for specific conditions may be requested. These referrals must be justified by a Cobalt radiologist.
- Plain film of skull, mandible, and facial bones.

Exclusion Criteria:

- All PET, CBCT, CT and USS examinations.
- Plain film radiography of all other areas.
- MRI – All other areas not listed above.

5. Non-Medical Practitioners - Chiropractors

Inclusion Criteria:

- Musculoskeletal MRI, USS or plain film examinations can be requested in the referrers area of specialist expertise. This is typically limited to the following body areas:
 - C-Spine
 - T-Spine
 - L-Spine
 - Pelvis/Hips
 - Chest wall
 - Shoulder
 - Elbow
 - Wrist
 - Knee
 - Ankle

Referrals outside of these body areas may be accepted on a case-by-case basis, after assessment and justification by a Cobalt radiologist if the request is deemed to fall within the individual practitioner's area of expertise. Appropriate clinical history, indications and question to be answered must be provided for all referrals.

Exclusion Criteria:

- All X-ray examinations of children and young people aged below 18 years.
- All PET/CT, CT and CBCT
- X-ray whole spine and leg length image stitching examinations
- MRI, USS and X-ray – All other body areas not indicated above.

Entitlement: All new Non-Medical Referrers (NMRs) will be required to complete an application enabling their entitlement to refer patients for imaging. Each individual must submit details of the qualifications, registration, practice and specialties prior to approval as an entitled referrer. Requests for examinations using ionising radiation will also require evidence of IR(ME)R training and evidence of revalidation every three years.

6. Non-Medical Practitioners - Osteopaths

Inclusion Criteria:

- Musculoskeletal MRI, USS or plain film examinations can be requested in the referrers area of specialist expertise. This is typically limited to the following body areas:
 - C-Spine
 - T-Spine
 - L-Spine
 - Pelvis/Hips
 - Chest wall
 - Shoulder
 - Elbow
 - Wrist
 - Knee
 - Ankle

Referrals outside of these body areas may be accepted on a case-by-case basis, after assessment and justification by a Cobalt radiologist if the request is deemed to fall within the individual practitioner's area of expertise. Appropriate clinical history, indications, and question to be answered must be provided for all referrals.

Exclusion Criteria:

- All X-ray examinations of children and young people aged below 18 years.
- All PET/CT, CT and CBCT
- X-ray whole spine and leg length image stitching examinations
- MRI, USS and X-ray – All other body areas not indicated above.

Entitlement: All new Non-Medical Referrers (NMRs) will be required to complete an application enabling their entitlement to refer patients for imaging. Each individual must submit details of the qualifications, registration, practice and specialties prior to approval as an entitled referrer. Requests for examinations using ionising radiation will also require evidence of IR(ME)R training and evidence of revalidation every three years.

7. Non-Medical Practitioners – Physiotherapists/Extended Scope Physiotherapists

Inclusion Criteria:

- Musculoskeletal MRI, USS or plain film examinations can be requested in the referrers area of specialist expertise. This typically includes all regions of the axial and appendicular skeleton.

Exclusion Criteria:

- All X-ray examinations of children and young people aged below 18 years.
- All PET/CT, CT and CBCT.
- X-ray whole spine and leg length image stitching examinations.
- Non-musculoskeletal MRI, USS, and X-ray (excluding requests for MRI Brachial Plexus imaging).

Entitlement: All new Non-Medical Referrers (NMRs) will be required to complete an application enabling their entitlement to refer patients for imaging. Each individual must submit details of the qualifications, registration, practice and specialties prior to approval as an entitled referrer. Requests for examinations using ionising radiation will also require evidence of IR(ME)R training and evidence of revalidation every three years.

8. Non-Medical Practitioners – Podiatrists/Chiropodists

Inclusion Criteria:

- Musculoskeletal MRI, USS, CBCT or plain film examinations of the lower limb only.

Exclusion Criteria:

- All X-ray examinations of children and young people aged below 18 years.
- All PET/CT and CT.
- X-ray whole spine and leg length image stitching examinations.
- MRI, USS and X-ray of all other body areas.

Entitlement: All new Non-Medical Referrers (NMRs) will be required to complete an application enabling their entitlement to refer patients for imaging. Each individual must submit details of the qualifications, registration, practice and specialties prior to approval as an entitled referrer. Requests for examinations using ionising radiation will also require evidence of IR(ME)R training and evidence of revalidation every three years.

9. Other Non-Medical Practitioners – Sports Massage Therapists, McTimoney Chiropractors

Inclusion Criteria:

- Musculoskeletal MRI examinations may be requested in the referrers area of specialist expertise.

Exclusion Criteria:

- All PET/CT, CT, CBCT, USS and X-ray examinations
- MRI – All other body areas not included in the specific area of expertise.

Entitlement: All new Non-Medical Referrers (NMRs) will be required to complete an application enabling their entitlement to refer patients for imaging, Each individual must submit details of the qualifications, registration, practice and specialties prior to approval as an entitled referrer.

10. Advanced Nurse Practitioners (ANPs)/Consultant Nurses

Inclusion Criteria:

- CT examinations of the chest, as part of the Targeted Lung Health Check programme (TLHC). An agreement must be in place for the suitably trained non-medical practitioner to refer for specific examinations, under the guidance of their medical practitioner/director.

Exclusion Criteria:

- All PET/CT, CT (of other body areas), MRI, USS and X-ray examinations.

Entitlement: All new Non-Medical Referrers (NMRs) will be required to complete an application enabling their entitlement to refer patients for imaging. Each individual must submit details of the qualifications, registration, practice and specialties prior to approval as an entitled referrer. Requests for examinations using ionising radiation will also require evidence of IR(ME)R training and evidence of revalidation every three years.