

If you have any questions about your care and treatment at this hospital please contact Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) Telephone: 0118 322 8338 or email: [talktous@royalberkshire.nhs.uk](mailto:talktous@royalberkshire.nhs.uk)

### Further information

General Medical Council  
<http://www.gmc-uk.org/guidance/21774.asp>

NHS Choices  
<http://www.nhs.uk/chq/Pages/910.aspx>

This document can be made available in other languages and formats upon request.

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# Changing your hospital doctor or asking for a second opinion

Advice to patients on medical second opinions under the NHS

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This leaflet advises what to do if you feel you want to change your consultant or seek out a second opinion about your condition or treatment.

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The General Medical Council, which regulates doctors, state that all doctors must 'respect the patient's right to seek a second opinion'.

The Department of Health accepts that if a doctor thinks that it is in the best interest of the patient to refer for a second opinion, they should do so. Although you do not have a legal right to a second opinion, a healthcare professional will rarely refuse to refer you for one.

### Do you need a second opinion?

Before asking for a second opinion, it is worth asking your consultant team to go over your diagnosis and explain anything you don't understand. If you're unhappy with your diagnosis or would like to consider a different

course of treatment, discuss this with them. Your consultant team will be happy to explain things and in many cases there may be no need for a second opinion.

### Second opinion from a different consultant

If you would like a second opinion after seeing a consultant team you need to go back to your GP and ask them to refer you again. If your GP agrees to refer you to a new consultant, the consultant will be told that this is for a second opinion. They may request any relevant test results or X-rays previously carried out.

If you want to be treated by the new consultant, this will need to be arranged with the new consultant and their hospital.

### Things to consider:

- People who are referred for a second opinion are treated as a new patient referral and are assessed appropriately.
- A second opinion with a different consultant team may be at a different hospital which might, in some cases, involve additional travelling.
- Whilst waiting for your second opinion, you may wish to discuss or inform your initial consultant team about this.
- If you have a serious medical condition requiring urgent treatment, we advise that you discuss this with the team and ask whether any delay in starting treatment could affect your wellbeing.