

# Northamptonshire Activity on Referral Scheme A Guide for Health Professionals



## Introduction

This guide has been taken from the County Standard Protocol for the Northamptonshire Activity on Referral Scheme (AoR) scheme. It is a shortened version of the protocol specifically for the benefit of any health professional who intends to refer a patient to the scheme.

This guide has been produced to ensure health professionals are made aware of the referral process and to ensure minimum standards and good practice are applied and aligned to the national standards outlined in *Exercise Referral Systems: A National Quality Assurance Framework* (Department of Health 2001).

## Brief Overview

### WHAT IS ACTIVITY ON REFERRAL?

The AoR Scheme provides sedentary individuals with a positive introduction to being physically active. The introductory exercise programme should enable individuals to maintain a physically active lifestyle, without dependence on the exercise professional in the longer term.

### WHO QUALIFIES FOR ACTIVITY ON REFERRAL?

The scheme is aimed at adults over the age of 16, who are considered to be inactive and have one or more medical conditions that would benefit from a programme of exercise. Patients must be a resident of Northamptonshire or registered with a Northamptonshire GP to access the scheme.

The scheme allows health professionals refer patients to an exercise professional at a local leisure facility, where a tailored exercise programme can be devised for them. For the 12-week period of the scheme participants are encouraged to build up their weekly activity levels by attending the supervised sessions at the centre of their choice.

All participants will take part in a consultation at the beginning and end of their 12-week programme. On completion of the programme, participants will be encouraged to independently continue with regular physical activity and will be provided with information on local activities and the option to continue exercising at the site as a member. Concessionary memberships will be made available at the majority of AoR accredited sites.

## The Referral Route

### WHO CAN REFER?

The following registered health professionals may refer patients to the AoR scheme.

- General Practitioners
- Practice Nurses
- Health Visitors
- Physiotherapists
- Mental Health Professionals
- Dieticians Specialist  
Consultants & Nurses
- Healthcare Assistants following guidance from a registered Health Professional

The referral should be completed after consultation with the patient regarding their health condition. If any health professional does not feel appropriately informed about a patient's condition to make a referral, he/she should direct the patient to their GP for referral to the programme.

### **WHERE CAN I REFER TO?**

The AoR service in Northamptonshire is currently being offered by 12 different leisure providers across 21 different accredited facilities covering the seven districts of the county. All accredited sites have at least one or more exercise instructor who are Exercise on Referral qualified. Some sites have exercise instructors who have undergone additional specialist training in certain conditions (eg: Cardiac Rehab, Cancer Rehab, Pulmonary Rehab, Falls Prevention, Weight Management etc).

*(Please see the **List of Accredited AoR Sites** for the list of centres offering the service)*

### **CAN A PATIENT BE REFERRED MORE THAN ONCE?**

As a rule repeat referrals will not be accepted, particularly if it is evident that the patient is already using the leisure facility or has used the leisure facility within a 3 month period. Repeat referrals will only be accepted if the patient has dropped out of the scheme due to personal problems or if the patient's medical condition has changed. Ultimately, the decision to accept re-referrals onto the scheme is at the particular AoR site's discretion.

## **The Referral Process**

### **RECRUITMENT ONTO THE SCHEME**

Patients will reach the point of referral through the following methods:

- Opportunistically through routine consultations with health professionals
- Patient initiated/self-referral to GP or health professional
- Advertisement through local surgeries/libraries/newspapers etc

### **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE HEALTH PROFESSIONAL**

There must be meaningful transfer of relevant information from the referrer to the exercise professional who will be conducting the exercise intervention with the patient. It is therefore the referring practitioner's responsibility to ensure a professional judgement is made as to what information must be disclosed to the exercise professional on the referral form to enable the exercise professional to develop a safe and effective exercise programme that will meet the needs and ability of the patient.

### **HOW DO I MAKE A REFERRAL?**

Health professionals can make a referral by completing the Activity on Referral Form found on SystmOne and the GP Portal. A PDF or Microsoft Word format of the referral form is also available on request by contacting: [Jackie.Browne@firstforwellbeing.co.uk](mailto:Jackie.Browne@firstforwellbeing.co.uk)

Health professionals will need to ensure a copy of the referral form is given to the patient so they can take it along with them to the initial consultation. A copy of the referral should be kept on the patient's medical records.

### **COMPLETING THE REFERRAL FORM**

The health professional must ensure that the patient's medical history is complete and correct to the best of their knowledge at the time of referral and must sign the referral form. The patient must sign the referral form, agreeing to data transfer and information sharing with the leisure provider.

The exercise professional has the right to refuse acceptance of a referral if the medical information shared on the referral form is incomplete, or if the health condition of the patient is not included in the 'Referral Criteria'. Referral letters or forms without the relevant information or containing only blanket phrases such as 'I know of no reason why Mrs X should not engage in exercise' are NOT acceptable as part of the referral process.

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PATIENT

Once the patient has received a copy of the completed referral form it is the patient's responsibility to contact their preferred AoR Site to book their initial consultation. The patient needs to ensure they take their referral form along with them to their initial consultation with the exercise professional.

## Medical Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

### POPULATIONS SUITABLE FOR THE SCHEME:

- CVD risk factors
- Overweight BMI >25 plus one other risk factor / Obesity BMI >30
- Pre-diabetes / Diabetes (controlled)
- Hypertension (controlled)
- Hyperlipidaemia
- Anxiety, Stress or Depression (mild-moderate)
- Mild Arthritis in hips or knees
- Back Pain (not acute)
- Impaired Mobility or Strength
- Neurological (Parkinson's/MS)
- COPD / Pulmonary related (Controlled)
- Osteoporosis (T-score -2.5 or lower with no history of low trauma fractures)
- Stable Angina (Controlled & stable for 6 months)

It is the health professional's responsibility to ensure that patients are referred onto the scheme for the right reasons. The scheme welcomes people with disabilities, however some facilities are more accessible than others.

Carers may attend with their client's for support and encouragement only. Carers do not need to pay to attend with their client but may not participate in the sessions for their own individual benefits, however may assist their client's when performing the exercises where appropriate.

### CONDITIONS EXCLUDED FROM THE SCHEME:

The AoR Scheme cannot accept referrals for any of the following conditions;

- Heart Failure/Unstable Arrhythmias
- Patients that have undergone back surgery or other complicated surgery
- Uncontrolled Hypertension
- Uncontrolled Diabetes
- Uncontrolled COPD/Pulmonary related disease
- Patients who are receiving treatment for Cancer
- Acute Psychiatric Illness

Please see [Referral Criteria](#) for further guidance.

## Other Specialist Services Available:

### CARDIAC REHAB

People with heart conditions are excluded from the AoR Scheme but patients can be referred to Cardiac Rehab programme. Cardiac Rehab Phase IV exercise in the community is offered at a number of sites. Referrals are made following referrals Phase III within the Cardiac Rehab Services at KGH and NGH.

Cardiac Rehab Phase IV Exercise in the Community is available at the following sites:

- Lodge Park Sports Centre, Corby
- Reach for Health, Daventry
- Manor Sports Centre, Raunds.

## **GET UP & GO FALLS PREVENTION PROGRAMME**

'Get Up & Go' is a programme of strength and balance exercise classes aimed at older people who are at deemed 'at-risk' of having a fall. Health professionals can refer anyone 'at risk' of falling to the programme or people can self-refer. For more information about the programme and where the sessions are taking place visit: <https://www.northamptonshiresport.org/getupandgo>

## **CANCER REHAB**

The AoR Scheme excludes patients who are receiving treatment for cancer. The scheme will only accept patients who have been in remission for over 6months. However, the sites below do have trained exercise professionals in this area and therefore will accept referrals to their facilities. A referral must be made by the patients Oncology Specialist before any type of exercise programme is commenced.

- The Nene Centre in Thrapston
- The Pemberton Centre in Rushden

## **COPD / PULMONARY CONDITIONS**

People with long term lung problems such as COPD should be encouraged to exercise so that they can train their body to utilise and deliver the oxygen to their muscles more effectively. Unfortunately most COPD sufferers are afraid to exercise as they are worried about getting breathless. The Restart Team from NGH run a number of group exercise sessions in the community:

- Reach for Health in Daventry
- Danes Camp Leisure Centre in Northampton

## **STROKE REHAB**

The Community Stroke Team work alongside a number of AoR sites to offer rehabilitation programmes for patients who have suffered a recent stroke.

- Reach for Health in Daventry
- The Pemberton Centre in Rushden

### **For further information or queries:**

Jackie Browne, Northamptonshire Sport

[Jackie.Browne@firstforwellbeing.co.uk](mailto:Jackie.Browne@firstforwellbeing.co.uk)

[www.northamptonshiresport.org/activity-on-referral](http://www.northamptonshiresport.org/activity-on-referral)

