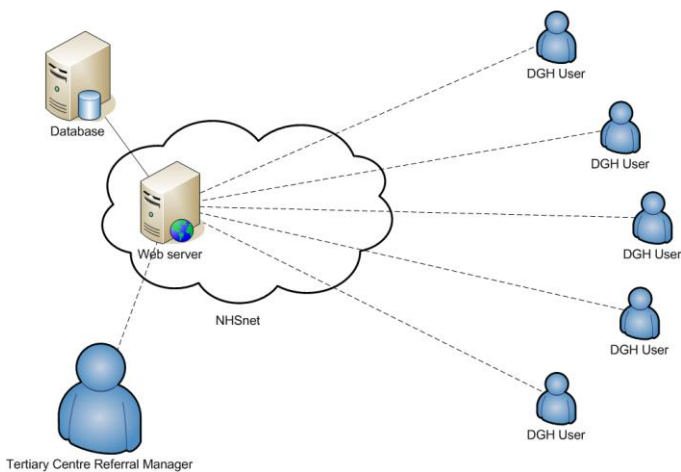


## The Network Referrals System

### About the system

The network referrals system is a secure website, run inside NHSnet, which facilitates both the making of referrals between institutions in the NHS, and the recording and subsequent reporting of those referrals. The website is developed and hosted by Data Transparency Ltd and is the result of a collaboration with the North East London and Essex Cardiac networks.



### Background

Recent government targets, such as the general 18 week and the cancer 62 and 31 day targets, have presented the NHS with a unique challenge in terms of cross institution monitoring of the patient pathway. Patients may enter the healthcare system by a variety of methods. They may be referred directly by their general practitioner, arrive at a walk in centre or at an accident and emergency department, or they may be internally transferred from another specialty as a result of an incidental finding or mistaken initial diagnosis. Whichever entry route, the patient pathway itself may be extremely complex, involving a large number of institutions, from satellite clinics of a district general hospital to tertiary centres. Patients may need to travel to distant sites for specialist imaging and again to yet other sites for specialist diagnostic procedures before being ready for review by a multidisciplinary team.

Whatever the patient pathway, the institutions involved need clear records of the patient journey, for the purposes of audit and assessment of target compliance. Credit may then rightly be attributed to the various portions of the patient pathway. Steps can then be taken to praise and fine tune best practice and highlight areas found to act as bottlenecks.

While the simplest pathways may be handled by a single institution and can be monitored straightforwardly, many clinical activities have much more complex pathways and their monitoring would benefit from a network based approach.

It is clear that existing technology rarely captures all of the patient referrals; it allows referrals on the basis of inadequate information and generally fails to provide even rudimentary cross network monitoring.

### What does it do?

Data Transparency has developed a flexible NHSnet web based solution that aids the referral process while monitoring the metrics of the patient's journey. This approach minimises staffing costs and provides real time management data. Potential breaches can be predicted and dealt with in good time.

The solution functions as a central system for managing referrals between institutions. It facilitates the making of the referral as well as the receiving and subsequent management of that referral at the receiving centre. Users at any authorised institution can log onto the website and create, manage and track referrals that they or their colleagues have made.

Each destination centre has a customised referral wizard that facilitates the making of electronic referrals to them. This wizard ensures that the referring party submits a full set of validated information with the referral. The wizard guides the referrer through the sometimes complicated set of information required to make a referral and even allows incomplete referrals to be saved and then resumed by the user or a colleague at a later time. Once the referral wizard is complete, the referral is sent to the receiving institution where it is then prioritised and managed using the website through the acceptance and transfer processes.

Files such as test results or letters from a GP may be attached to the referral and transmitted along with it to the receiving centre.

The status of the referral can be updated by the receiving institution and is available at the sending institution so that they are always up to date with the referral's progress.

The Network Referrals System is fully scalable and can handle anything from simple inpatient referrals between specialities within a unit to the whole patient pathway from general practitioner to tertiary centre. This may include any number of diagnostic pathways through a host of diverse medical units. The system handles the auditing of the whole process including "Stopping the Clock" for legitimate reasons.

Your designated administrator can manage your system assigning rights to each user from admin to read only. Bed managers and clinical staff can view individual patient reports while management can access reports summarising pathway performance and highlighting potential breaches of national targets. This enables the instigation of prompt action to prevent such problems.

We have a number of off the shelf referral modules that can be used as they are or customised to your requirements. You can start with a small system to help with a problem area and add to it later.

## How can it help?

Wherever your institution is positioned in the patient pathway we can offer you a system that monitors your activity and manages your patient flow. However the greatest benefits are achieved with network wide systems which allow referring institutions to monitor the onward progress of their patients. The main benefits of the Network Referrals system are:

- Fast reliable referrals between institutions
- Validated data
- Automatic risk scoring and prioritisation
- Referral management and feedback to the referring institution
- Good quality live and retrospective data on referrals between institutions.
- Scheduled as well as live metric reports, data exporting and advanced analysis

## Can any institution use the system?

Any institution with a connection to NHSnet can use the system. No firewalls have to be opened and there is no software to install or manage. This means that setup is painless and quick. The website is simple to learn and

intuitive. Most users, even with basic IT experience, need only a few minutes of guidance before they are able to refer and manage patients

## Is it secure?

The system uses industry standard encryption between the browser and the server to ensure patient confidentiality. User accounts can be administered locally or through our service desk.

## Where is it being used?

The system is being used already by Bart's and the London NHS Trust, the Essex Cardiothoracic Centre and twelve other hospitals in the UK. Referees are available on request.

## What are the costs?

The system is available by annual subscription, per referral type per institution. Training and support is included as is personalisation of the system to your local requirements. No additional hardware is required at your institution.

The cost for customisation and installation vary depending on local requirements and quotes are given free of charge.

## How quickly can the system be delivered?

A referral system utilising Data Transparency standard datasets can be delivered immediately. For bespoke datasets the development time is dependent on complexity.

## Contact Details

Email: [enquiries@datatransparency.com](mailto:enquiries@datatransparency.com)

Web: [www.datatransparency.com](http://www.datatransparency.com)

