A document created to support practices with referral processing and pathways

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Contents (Quick tool, select the heading which will take you to the appropriate page)

[TRAQS – Introduction to Practices 4](#_Toc61353213)

[Contact & Opening Times 4](#_Toc61353214)

[What happens when a referral reaches TRAQS? 4](#_Toc61353215)

[SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS / ADMIN NOTES 5](#_Toc61353216)

[Referral Pathways NOT through TRAQS 5](#_Toc61353217)

[Services NOT currently available in Shropshire (SATH) 5](#_Toc61353218)

[What is NOT available on NHS (VBC/IFR) 5](#_Toc61353219)

[Value Based Commissioning Policy (VBC) 6](#_Toc61353220)

[Individual Funding Requests (IFR) 6](#_Toc61353221)

[TRAQS support notes to Practice (by speciality) 7](#_Toc61353222)

[2WW 7](#_Toc61353223)

[2WW - BREAST Clinic Referrals 7](#_Toc61353224)

[Advice & Guidance Requests (A&G) 7](#_Toc61353225)

[BMI/BP 8](#_Toc61353226)

[Cardiology 8](#_Toc61353227)

[Children and Adolescent Services 8](#_Toc61353228)

[Diagnostic Imaging 8](#_Toc61353229)

[ENT 8](#_Toc61353230)

[Audiology (Hearing Aid Assessments) 8](#_Toc61353231)

[Microsuction & Ear Wax removal (VBC) 9](#_Toc61353232)

[Tonsillectomy (VBC) 9](#_Toc61353233)

[Gynaecology 9](#_Toc61353234)

[Infertility (VBC) 9](#_Toc61353235)

[Marina Coil removal (VBC) 9](#_Toc61353236)

[Neurology 9](#_Toc61353237)

[Occupational Therapy 10](#_Toc61353238)

[Ophthalmology 10](#_Toc61353239)

[24 hour treatment/review 10](#_Toc61353240)

[General 10](#_Toc61353241)

[Cataract (VBC) 10](#_Toc61353242)

[Wet ARMD/AMD 10](#_Toc61353243)

[Pears Testing 10](#_Toc61353244)

[Orthopaedics – MSK & Podiatry 10](#_Toc61353245)

[ TeMS 10](#_Toc61353246)

[Podiatry 11](#_Toc61353247)

[Diabetic Foot Screening 11](#_Toc61353248)

[Verruca’s 11](#_Toc61353249)

[Respiratory 11](#_Toc61353250)

[Pulmonary Rehab 11](#_Toc61353251)

[Surgery 11](#_Toc61353252)

[Hernia (VBC) 11](#_Toc61353253)

[Hernia corset/truss 11](#_Toc61353254)

[Wheelchairs / Mobility Assessments 12](#_Toc61353255)

[e-Referral Service (ERS) 13](#_Toc61353256)

[Practice Worklist Action Points 14](#_Toc61353257)

[Common Questions / FAQ (Practices) 15](#_Toc61353258)

[There is a new team member at the practice who needs ICG access, how do I do this? 15](#_Toc61353259)

[What are local waiting times? 15](#_Toc61353260)

[Why do we need to provide up to date BMI/BP readings? 15](#_Toc61353261)

[A referral was rejected as it is missing documents/investigations, but we don’t have them on file, how do I progress? 15](#_Toc61353262)

[A referral has been returned due to patient not responding to contact, what should I do? 15](#_Toc61353263)

[A patient has temporary residency in the UK, how do I send a referral? 15](#_Toc61353264)

[How are choices confirmed to patients? 16](#_Toc61353265)

[Consultant to Consultant Referrals 16](#_Toc61353266)

[How do I report Issues and compliments with regards to TRAQS? 16](#_Toc61353267)

[Who is responsible for the ERS Worklist? 16](#_Toc61353268)

[Useful Telephone Numbers 17](#_Toc61353269)

[Patient Journey / Referral Pathway – GP, TRAQS, Providers 18](#_Toc61353270)

# TRAQS – Introduction to Practices

The TRAQS team is a local service managed by the Telford and Wrekin CCG, based in the NHS CCG building in Telford. Our aim is to ensure that patients get to see the right person, at the right time and place. The majority of referrals will be processed via the e-Referrals System (ERS, formerly Choose and Book) and pathways to support community treatment.

The TRAQS team is currently made up of:

* 1 TRAQS manager
* 5 patient advisers
* 4 supporting GP’s (Intermittent during Covid)
* Clinical support from Medicines Management and other CCG teams if required

# Contact & Opening Times

Phone: 01952 580441

Email: traqsteam@nhs.net

Opening Times: 9am to 5pm (Monday to Friday – Excluding Bank Holidays)

# What happens when a referral reaches TRAQS?

In order to allow TRAQS to process referrals in an efficient and timely manner, we need the following information added to the ICG referral:

* Up to date demographics (including daytime contact number)
* Primary reason for referral including clear referral instructions and duration of symptoms
* BMI/BP taken within the past 12 months (Supports VBC, private Care Pathways)
* Previous medical history and any recent investigations
* Current medications if applicable
* Please include any clinic letters that may be detriment to the referral (if a patient has been seen by a service previously, including the last clinic letter will support if they choose to go to an alternative provider who would reject without)

TRAQS review all referrals and if it is felt additional information should be supplied to support the referral; the practice secretaries will receive communications. This includes information in regards to the VBC policy.

# SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS / ADMIN NOTES

Please be aware that the admin note option in the ICG referral document is only visible to TRAQS. If there is specific information you want providers to be aware of, please make sure it’s all included in the body of the referral letter. This should please include any accessible information not already evident in the referral (language and physical barriers that may need to be considered).

# Referral Pathways NOT through TRAQS

* X-Ray and MRI (paper direct to provider) / Unless requiring consultant lead request (usually children’s pathway)
* Mental Health / Excluding Adult ADHD
* GU Medicine
* Obstetrics / Excluding pregnancy related Endocrinology & Physio
* Fracture clinic (Direct to SATH)
* Palliative Medicine
* Transgender
* Sexual Health
* Travel Health

If ever unsure on pathways, please feel free to contact TRAQS directly or alternatively you can visit the CCG website for further support <https://www.telfordccg.nhs.uk/>

# Services NOT currently available in Shropshire (SATH)

* Adult Allergy
* Neurology
* Neuro-Ophthalmology
* Neurosurgery
* Plastic Surgery
* General Anasthetic procedures for Cataract & Vasectomy

TRAQS will offer your patient’s choice of services/appointments where available and in line with any localised restrictions and funding policies. Should you require referral updates, please feel free to contact the team who can check on progress or advise further.

# What is NOT available on NHS (VBC/IFR)

The NHS cannot always fund treatments/operations that are not routinely funded by NHS, normally this is because they:

* Are not clinically effective or effectiveness has yet to be determined
* Are not cost-effective in comparison to all the competing demands on NHS funding
* Have a low clinical priority and offer little health gain
* Are largely cosmetic in nature.

Sometimes we will consider paying for a treatment or operation that is not normally funded. This happens when:

* A Patient has have a set of circumstances that are very different from anyone else with the same, or a similar, condition.  Your health professional will need to explain how you will derive greater benefits from the intervention than others who are in a similar position
* And there is good evidence to suggest that you would be healthier after the treatment or operation

Referrals should confirm that patient’s fulfil the criteria as outlined in the relevant area of the policy before referring the patient. TRAQS will request additional information if required and seek support from the medicines management team for clinical support. There are some providers that can be very strict in regards to this criteria being met, we appreciate that referrals are required to be processed ASAP, we aim to get the required information and progress as quickly as possible to support your patients.

# Value Based Commissioning Policy (VBC)

The full policy is available on the CCG website <https://www.telfordccg.nhs.uk/your-health/traqs-telford-referral-and-quality-services/clinicians/what-is-not-available-on-nhs>

TRAQS are well versed with the majority of VBC policy and should you have any queries, please contact the team who will be happy to support. TRAQS may ask for additional information to support referrals progressing to the appointment stage and many providers (especially local) can be very strict in regards to criteria.

Ultimately it is a CCG decision if a referral will be funded, so having as much information as possible in line with the VBC policy supports any treatment going ahead. If unsure, please contact the TRAQS team who can support you further.

# Individual Funding Requests (IFR)

The CCGs explicitly recognise that for each of the interventions listed in this policy there may be exceptional clinical circumstances in which the CCGs would consider the funding of these interventions. It is not feasible to consider every possible scenario within this document. In cases where specified criteria are not met, applications may be considered on an individual basis through an Individual Funding Request (IFR) process.

The IFR policy for Shropshire is available at [www.shropshireccg.nhs.uk/policies](http://www.shropshireccg.nhs.uk/policies)

The IFR policy for Telford and Wrekin is available at <http://www.telfordccg.nhs.uk/your-health/medicines-management/individual-funding-requests>

# TRAQS support notes to Practice (by speciality)

TRAQS have a vast knowledge available to them about providers and pathways for referrals. If ever a practice is unsure of a pathway or would like additional support, we encourage them to please contact TARQS and we will be happy to support.

There are some providers that may expect additional information such as a proforma, scans and potentially other pathway evidence to enable them to accept your patient for treatment. There may also be instances where further criteria is needed to support an NHS funding decision (VBC),we endeavour to support all practices and patients to get referrals to where they are suitable to go as quickly as possible.

Where possible TRAQS will try to capture common reasons for rejection before the referral progresses to provider, so to avoid any unnecessary letters to patients which can potentially create confusion. There will of course be an instance where a consultant/specialist may feel additional information is required after the referral is booked, but we will try to support all practices with the knowledge and support available to avoid unnecessary rejections.

Below are some general reminders and support notes for referring via TRAQS. This has not included every speciality, if every under; please contact TRAQS who will happily support.

# 2WW

* Must include a 2WW proforma in ALL instances
* If referring to an out of area service, these too must include a 2WW proforma and in most instances are available on the speicific hospital websites. Or contacting their fast track/2WW service directly.
* Children pathways for 2WW Breast, Skin and Sarcoma referrals must be completed on an adult proforma.
* All other 2WW Children specialities should be discussed with the GP and on call oncologist who will let them know how quickly the patient needs to be seen (this information should be recorded on the proforma if coming via TRAQS).

# 2WW - BREAST Clinic Referrals

* The only way to refer into breast clinic is via the 2WW Breast pathway.
* Please review the proforma as you can select alternatives to cancer related, but the only way we can send this to the local provider is via 2WW.

# Advice & Guidance Requests (A&G)

* Where possible TRAQS will always direct this to the most local hospital, or as instructed if for a particular consultant/service

# BMI/BP

* It is recommended to include up to date BMI/BP with all referrals where possible (dated within the last 12 months), so to support provider triage once booked
* TRAQS will also request these to support the VBC criteria for some procedures and will request up to date readings if your patient could benefit from treatment with private care providers (quicker than NHS locally for most specialities).

# Cardiology

* In many referrals if a patient is needing a general consultant appointment, it is recommended by providers (secondary care) that a recent ECG should please be sought in the first instance, please consider before sending referrals.
* There is a community service available within the local area which usually has a considerably shorter waiting time (4-5 weeks) than that of secondary care providers (12+weeks). If the referral is not considered an urgent or a complicated cardiology request TRAQS may direct this referral to their pathway (we will offer the choice to your patient)

# Children and Adolescent Services

* Once a child reaches 16, they are considered an adult under NHS and should be referred through adult services
* This may differ for community based services not through TRAQS (for example mental health)
* Children under 6 weeks still fall in line with Post Natal for feeding and should be directed to the midwifes or health visitors
* **Tongue Tie** – Children under 2 years old, should be picked up with Health Visitor in the first instance as this is not supported under secondary care in early years

# Diagnostic Imaging

* Includes cardiology based testing such as ECG, Echocardiogram, 24/72 hour tape etc, Nerve Conduction Studies
* If unsure, please contact TRAQS and we will confirm
* **Open MRI** - Open MRI no longer comes via TRAQS, these should be sent directly to Burton Hospital by the practice. There is a form they need to complete and send to admin.radiology@nhs.net

# ENT

# Audiology (Hearing Aid Assessments)

* **SATH Proforma** – If using the audiology proforma (not a requirement for audiology requests), please note that if markers on the proforma are selected as **YES**, it needs to include a description of symptoms, else ENT will reject the request. For example “Persistent pain affecting either ear (defined as earache lasting more than 7 days in the past 90 days before appointment)” “Sudden or rapid loss or deterioration of hearing (sudden=within 1 week, in which case sent to A&E or urgent care ENT clinic, rapid = 90 days or less)”
* Domiciliary hearing assessments do come through TRAQS and are processed to SATH

# Microsuction & Ear Wax removal (VBC)

* ENT have a very strict process for Microsuction, please always refer to the VBC policy before referring and ensure the referral states why a patient should be seen within secondary care rather than in practice (many reasons such as perforated ear drums, previous surgery and others).
* Unless you practice categorically do not offer a irrigation service (confirmed with CCG commissioning), then irrigation should always be attempted within primary care first. This must be evidenced (a sentence) if it has been attempted within the referral letter.

# Tonsillectomy (VBC)

* ENT have a very strict process for Tonsillectomy, please always refer to the VBC policy before referring your patient.
* Referrals must clearly evidence how the patient meets criteria and will be returned by TRAQS if we need additional information.

# Gynaecology

* Where appropriate referrals will be directed to the community gynaecology team (managed by PRH), who will triage and contact the patient in regards to a suitable location/appointment.

# Infertility (VBC)

* Must include proforma, which should have partners details on
* If either of the couple has children from current/previous relationships, NHS will not fund treatment or investigations
* Must include patients up to date BMI
* If patient has had previous IVF support, this will not be funded again via NHS

# Marina Coil removal (VBC)

* Coil removal should always be attempted within primary care first. This must be evidenced (a sentence) if it has been attempted within the referral

# Neurology

**NOT AVAILABLE IN SHROPSHIRE**

* Currently there is no pathway available within Shropshire.
* Please ensure any previous clinic letters are provided with all referrals if your patient needs a new review.
* Many out of area neurology departments will request scans to be included with referrals, please ensure all relevant information is available when submitting the referral

# Occupational Therapy

* **Home adaptions** – If a patient has a TF post code TRAQS direct this through to the local Access team via T&W council.
* If your patient lives **out of area** (Shropshire, Stafford etc…), you would need to direct this referral to their local council. Basically it’s to whom they pay their council tax.

# Ophthalmology

# 24 hour treatment/review

* If an opticians sends a requests that states they need treatment/review within 24 hours, please send direct to the **SATH Ophthalmology Service** (Humming Bird Centre, please call direct to confirm process)

# General

* GOS18’s could be provided with all referrals. Exceptions to this may be for Chalazia/lesions removal
* In most instances, patients would have been seen by local opticians before referral.

# Cataract (VBC)

* Referrals will be rejected is missing GOS18 detailing Visual Acuity
* BMI/BP readings: There are several options for private provider treatment and this is required to assess suitability

# Wet ARMD/AMD

* These preferably should be sent direct to SATH / SATH Ophthalmology Service (Humming Bird Centre)
* TRAQS will process if received to avoid delay in patient care

# Pears Testing

* Please send direct to hospital

# Orthopaedics – MSK & Podiatry

* The majority of these types of referrals will likely be seen in the local community team in the first instance.
* TeMS - The services require completed proforma with all referrals and will be rejected without.

# Podiatry

# Diabetic Foot Screening

* Any Low Risk Diabetic Foot Screening should be e carried out within the Medical Practices
* The D**iabetic Foot Screening** service will now only see patients who are deemed High or Moderate Risk (please detail in referral).

# Verruca’s

* There is no pathway through TRAQS for podiatry or dermatology, however the **Shropshire Podiatry** service will offer advice to patients treat and can be contacted on **01743 277 681**

# Respiratory

# Pulmonary Rehab

* **No longer through TRAQS** / a direct referral from the GP. They have a new email and number, and If practices call asking how to process these referrals, they will need to email the proformas to shropcom.pulmonaryrehab@nhs.net , contact number – 01743 730034
* **Long Covid Referrals** – These do come through TRAQAS and are directed through to the Single Point Team (SPR), who will refer onto secondary care if required.

# Surgery

# Hernia (VBC)

* BMI/BP readings, several options for private provider support available and this is needed to review suitability

# Hernia corset/truss

* Requests for a Hernia corset/truss, the pathway is not through TRAQS and these should be directed via a prescription to the pharmacies.
* Medical practices should be sending a script that confirms diagnosis of hernia, where it is, size and weather it is reducible.
* There are a numbers of TRUSS available on the prescription system and if practices are still unsure what type is needed, they should then consider an A&G request and not a referral, as this is not suitable for an appointment.

# Wheelchairs / Mobility Assessments

* **Adults** – Go via Singlepoint through TRAQS (Including electrical)
* **Children** – NOT VIA TRAQS / Practices would have to have a Wheelchair & Posture Referral form completing. This can only be completed by an accredited user, who will have completed a training course directly with them. Persons who can support would be as follows: School Nurse, Senco, Members of Children’s Services, Some Physio’s and OT

# ****e-Referral Service (********ERS)****

Where possible TRAQS process all referrals through the e-Referral Service (ESR), a national database of NHS providers. There will be instances where referrals may be processed a different way, these are usually due to community provider pathways, however TRAQS have an auditable process through the ICG systems to check this.

The worklist on ERS is the practices responsibility to manage for patient and referral updates, to include advise provided on cancelled appointments, rejections and advice and guidance responses. Triage Response can also include rejections – Please always review in case providers were unable to select a rejection function)

Please feel free to contact the TRAQS team with worklist support, we are adept at using this system and we will be happy to support you. Actions will often require you to **remove** from worklist or **end triage request** and potentially to **cancel** the ERS referral all together.

If TRAQS are confident that they know where to redirect this referral and we do not need any additional input from the GP, we will onward refer to the appropriate clinic/provider. However there may be instances where practices may need to send new referral in the usual manner

The majority of things on the practice worklists will just be comments from providers to confirm acceptance of referrals or advise next steps. It’s recommended this is reviewed as a minimum weekly for any rejections.

There are 2 areas in the practice worklists that should be reviewed regular

**Awaiting Booking / Acceptance (Not often used)**

* You can filter by referring Dr to see process in referrals, however not often used
* Please note that if the referring Dr is not yet on ERS, TRAQS may use an alternative to ensure no delay with processing the referral.

**Awaiting Booking / Acceptance (Not often used)**

* You can filter by referring Dr to see process in referrals, however not often used
* Please note that if the referring Dr is not yet on ERS, TRAQS may use an alternative to ensure no delay with processing the referral.

The other 2 areas are not used by practices as TRAQS manage one daily, as part of our processing/quality checking on referrals processed that day and the other is seldom used.

**Outstanding Referral letters**

* TRAQS check this daily

**Awaiting Booking / Acceptance (Not often used)**

* You can filter by referring Dr to see process in referrals, however not often used
* Please note that if the referring Dr is not yet on ERS, TRAQS may use an alternative to ensure no delay with processing the referral.

Selecting each option will allow you to review the referral and check if there is action required such as new referrals, 2WW updates, rejections etc…

To action requests you would need to click the UBRN number to review the provider comments, which will be up an actions dropdown. Dependant on the type of referral and action required will depend on what you may need to select.

# Practice Worklist Action Points



|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **- Actions -** | **What does this do** |
| Remove | This will clear this patient’s referral from your worklist. Ensure you have completed any actions required or contact TRAQS should you need assistance |
| View History | This will show you the different actions that this referral has had from point of booking by TRAQS to where the provider has accepted, rejected or offered other advice. If unsure of the action required, usually the history will give a good indication if providers were unable to reject |
| View Request | There are 3 sections in this area Appointment Request Details (shows where it was booked and any additional notes added – By TRAQS), Clinical Information (All the documents received by TRAQS and added to the referral) and Service provider Activity (shows a brief history). |
| End Triage Request | Where a referral has been directed to an assessment based service, providers can often respond with acceptance and rejection comments. By ending the triage request, this will remove the referral from the work list and close this request completely.  |
| Cancel Booking | This will cancel the referral completely and ask for a reason |
| Modify Referral Letter / Please do not use | If documents need to be amended and the providers have not yet accepted/printed the referral, this action can be used to update. It is advised that should you need to send additional information, you send it directly rather than through ERS in case the provider does not review additional information once accepted. If unsure, please contact TRAQS. |
| Update Book / Please do not use | This should only be actioned by Providers and TRAQS when changing appointments directly with the patient – Please do not USE |

Further support information about worklists is available on the main help page on ERS <https://digital.nhs.uk/services/e-referral-service/document-library/referring-a-patient#managing-worklists>

# Common Questions / FAQ (Practices)

## There is a new team member at the practice who needs ICG access, how do I do this?

Email directly to traqsteam@nhs.net with confirmation of team member name and nhs.net email account

The team will create a profile and send a password link

## What are local waiting times?

In most instances TRAQS have a good visibility to local provider waiting times and where possible will try to inform practices to the best of our knowledge of alternative pathways should it mean quicker treatment for your patients.

## Why do we need to provide up to date BMI/BP readings?

* In many instances there are options for patient’s to be treated by private providers who are contracted by NHS, requesting up to date readins supports triage for suitability

## A referral was rejected as it is missing documents/investigations, but we don’t have them on file, how do I progress?

* There will be occasions where you may be aware about dome findings having had a direct conversation with a service, if you don’t have the investigations/documents available, please ensure it is clearly confirmed in the referral so providers will not reject
* If a referral mentions that a patient has been seen previously, please include the most recent clinic letter relating to the previous treatment
* Where possible TRAQS will try to request this information before progressing referrals to appointments. There are some services that are stricter than others in regards to the information they require which include local MSK services and out of area services not available locally

## **A referral has been** **returned due to patient not responding to contact, what should I do?**

* Please contact your patient to confirm contact details before resubmitting the referral
* When TRAQS receive a new referral where it is required to call the patient directly, we will attempt this on all available numbers from the referral and ERS if different. TRAQS will leave messages and will also send a contact letter if at the point of second attempt the patient has not responded. The referral will automatically reject back to the practice (via email generated by ICG) after 16 days.

## ****A patient has**** ****temporary residency in the UK, how do I send a referral?****

**The patient will need to be registered to your practice in order to refer for treatment in the UK. Patients cannot be referred without a valid NHS number.**

## ****How are**** ****choices confirmed to patients?****

**Where choice can be given (Most secondary care services):**

* TRAQS will call patients to offer choice of secondary care services (including private providers if appropriate) and book appointments via ERS.

**Where choice is not available (local pathways and restrictions may limit choices)**:

* Patients will receive a letter advising where the referral has been sent.

Patients will **NOT** be able to choose if:

* A service is provided by local authorities (community), as the choice will depend or may be restricted to what is in place locally.
* Services for suspected cancer.
* Services may also be restricted to a particular level of care.
* If a service is not funded by NHS
* If local services are the only option due to national situations

## Consultant to Consultant Referrals

Consultant to consultant referrals may not occur when:

* **It can be done in primary care or in a community setting.** E.g. lumps and bumps excision. If in doubt speak to a TRAQS.
* **Sub-specialisation** in the same department; it is not proposed that a second outpatient referral should be paid when due to subspecialisation the patient is seen by the wrong consultant in a trust speciality who redirects the referral to a colleague in the same department
* A patient reveals **symptoms unrelated to the referring condition** e.g. dyspepsia when referred for back pain.
* Referrals from A&E to other Consultants, unless part of immediate emergency or urgent care.
* **A procedure of “low clinical value”** as defined by the Telford and
* Wrekin Policy

## How do I report Issues and compliments with regards to TRAQS?

* If you are experiencing any issues with TRAQS or want to provide complements and feedback, suggestions or seek clarification on anything, please feel free to contact the team directly on **01952 580441** or email to traqsteam@nhs.net
* Alternatively feel free to email the team manager **Kelly Lawrence**by email on kelly.lawrence2@nhs.net

## ****Who is responsible for the ERS**** ****Worklist?****

* The ERS worklist is primarily the practices responsibility to manage
* In quieter times TRAQS will support practices and clear anything that may be irrelevant and potentially email the practice about reminders and rejections not actioned
* If possible, TRAQS will onward book referrals, however there may be instances where practices may need to send new referral in the usual manner
* You do need to check daily/weekly for rejections.
* Please feel free to contact the TRAQS team with worklist support, we are adept at using this service and we will be happy to support you. Actions will often require you to remove from worklist or **end triage request** and potentially to cancel the ERS referral all together

# Useful Telephone Numbers

**CCG & TRAQS**

TRAQS 01952 580441

Telford & Wrekin CCG (Swichboard) 01952 580300

CCG PALS Team 01952 580407

Prescription Ordering Department (Telford POD) 01952 580350

**SATH – General**

Princess Royal Hospital (Switchboard) 01952 641222

Princess Royal Hospital (Appointments) 01952 282810

Princess Royal Hospital PALS 01952 282888 / 01952 641222 ext. 4382

Royal Shrewsbury Hospital (Switchboard) 01743 261000

Royal Shrewsbury Hospital (Appointments) 01743 261044

Royal Shrewsbury Hospital PALS 01743 261691 / 0800 7830057

**Other Hospitals commonly referred to for Shropshire patients**

County Hospital 01785 230104

New Cross Hospital 01902 307999

Nuffield Health (Shrewsbury) 01743 816997

Robert Jones & Agnus Hunt Hospital 01691 404000

Royal Stoke University Hospital 01782 715444

**Other local/useful services:**

Patient Transport Services (FALK) 03300 585695

Community Health and Eye Care (CHEC) 01772 717167

Shropshire Podiatry 01743 277681

Single Point of Referral (SPR) 03333 584584

Spa Medica 0330 058 4280

St Michaels Clinic (Dermatology) 01743 590010

Telford Musculoskeletal Services (TeMS) 01952 204476

# Patient Journey / Referral Pathway – GP, TRAQS, Providers