

Utilising capacity

What do we mean by 'Utilising capacity'?

There are several ways that we can 'make the most' of the services we have across Sussex and neighbouring counties. This could mean patients get referred to alternative hospitals where they can be seen quicker – this needs to be based on patient choice.

Patient choice

The NHS Constitution sets out where patients have a legal right to choose where they receive treatment and care in the NHS. Although this doesn't apply to all healthcare services, patients should still be offered some choices depending on what's available locally.

Patients should be offered this choice at the point of referral and the decision can be made based on personal circumstances as well as the waiting times at each location.

The hospital chosen for the first appointment is also likely to be the same place they attend for treatment if required.

There are some healthcare services where you cannot make choices, such as cancer services, maternity, and specialist services.

For more information on patient choice: [Your choices in the NHS - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

Workshop focus

We would like to hear your thoughts on the above to understand:

- What's more important: being seen closer to home or being seen sooner?
- What information/support would be required to make this decision?
- What information/support would be required if attending an appointment in a different hospital?