



Pharmacy First

Referral Claiming Quick Guide

Pharmacy First – When You CAN Claim Even If Gateway/Pathway Is Not Met

The LPC are aware that some Pharmacy First referrals are being rejected when they could still result in a claimable consultation. In many cases, pharmacies can still claim a consultation fee even if the patient does not meet the clinical pathway criteria or requires escalation to another service. Rejecting these referrals unnecessarily may result in missed payments and delays in patient care.

The guidance below provides a quick reminder of the most common situations where a claim can still be made.

Key Message

If a pharmacist carries out a consultation and assesses the patient, a Pharmacy First consultation can usually still be claimed even if:

- The patient does not meet pathway criteria
- The patient needs escalation
- The medicine cannot be supplied
- The consultation was performed remotely (by a pharmacist on the pharmacy premises via phone for minor illness and urgent medicines referrals or via good quality video link for the clinical pathways)

But if the referral is *rejected* or the *patient is not consulted*, it cannot be claimed.

1 Clinical pathway referral but patient does not meet pathway criteria; **you can still claim by switching to the Minor Illness consultation**

Example:

- Patient referred for earache clinical pathway
- Patient is 18+ (not eligible for acute otitis media pathway)
- Pharmacist can provide a Minor Illness consultation instead

2 Patient referred but has red flags/more serious condition - **do not reject the referral.**

If during the consultation you identify:

- red flags
- serious symptoms
- need for GP referral

You can:

- escalate to GP
- refer to A&E/999

It is still classed as a Minor Illness consultation and consultation can still be claimed

3 Urgent medicines referral but supply cannot legally be made

Example:

- Controlled drug that **cannot be supplied under emergency supply regulations**

If the pharmacist:

- assesses the patient
- ensures they speak to another appropriate healthcare professional (GP practice or out-of-hours provider)

Record consultation in Pharmacy First system - **Consultation fee can still be claimed**

4 Urgent medicine referral when GP is open

- **Do not automatically reject.**
- If the pharmacist decides supply is **appropriate based on patient circumstances** (eg away from home, urgent dose needed) **emergency supply can be made and consultation claimed**

Situations Where You CANNOT Claim

For clarity, these are common mistakes:

- Patient referred but cannot be contacted
- Pharmacy rejects the referral
- Patient referred for blood pressure check instead of minor illness
- Clinical pathway patient sent to another pharmacy for stock
- Walk-in patient fails gateway before consultation

If you have questions or need any further support, please contact sara@cpcw.org.uk

The Community Pharmacy England (CPE) website has a wealth of information about the Pharmacy First Service including some useful Myth Busting article: <https://cpe.org.uk/national-pharmacy-services/advanced-services/pharmacy-first-service/>

Pharmacy First – Referral Claiming Quick Guide – Summary Tables

Common Situations Where Pharmacies CAN Still Claim

Situation	What to Do	Claim?	Key Point
Patient referred for a clinical pathway condition but does not meet pathway eligibility	Provide a Minor Illness consultation instead	✓ Yes	Do not reject the referral simply because the patient is not eligible for the pathway
Red flags or more serious symptoms identified during the consultation	Escalate to GP / GP OOH / ED / 999 as appropriate	✓ Yes	This still counts as a consultation
Urgent medicines referral but supply cannot legally be made	Ensure patient speaks to GP practice or OOH provider and record consultation	✓ Yes	A consultation fee can still be claimed
Urgent medicines referral when GP practice is open	Assess the patient's circumstances and supply if appropriate	✓ Yes	Do not automatically reject

The 3 Most Common Incorrect Referral Rejections

Incorrect Action	Correct Approach
Rejecting referrals when the patient does not meet the clinical pathway criteria	Manage under the Minor Illness strand
Rejecting referrals when red flags are identified	Assess and escalate – this is still a consultation
Rejecting urgent medicine referrals because GP practice is open	Assess the patient first before deciding

When Pharmacies Cannot Claim

Situation	Reason
Patient cannot be contacted	Consultation cannot take place
Referral rejected unnecessarily	No consultation recorded
Walk-in patient fails Gateway before consultation	Gateway must be passed for walk-ins
Referral is for another service (e.g. BP check)	Patient should be redirected to correct service

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