

Referrals for dental radiography

1. Objective

To establish referral criteria and to outline how a referral for a dental radiograph may be made, amended or cancelled.

2. Responsibilities

The employer must establish a referral process and referral guidelines for dental radiography, and shall ensure that these are available to all referrers.

3. Process of referral

A clinical history and examination of every patient is performed prior to requesting any dental radiograph or dental CBCT imaging.

4. When the referrer is also the practitioner and operator

Where the referrer also acts as the IRMER practitioner and operator for a dental exposure, they must ensure that the request for the exposure is documented within the patient's dental record. Within this record the clinical indications for the X-ray should be clear, fit with the referral criteria, the referrer must be identifiable and authorisation of the exposure as justified must be completed.

If the referral needs amending or cancelling note within the patient's dental record must be altered accordingly.

5. When the referrer is not the IRMER practitioner or operator

5.1 Within the practice

A note within the patient's dental record will be completed by the referrer with details of the clinical indications and sent to the practitioner. The practitioner will check the clinical indications fit with the referral criteria and if so authorise the exposure and this will be noted on the note within the patient's dental record. The practitioner will refer onto the operator who will check the patient's dental record, the operator will then undertake the radiograph.

If the practitioner decides that the exposure is not justified/does not fit with the practice's referral criteria it will be noted on the note within the patient's dental record, the referrer will be informed, the details will not be passed on to the operator and the radiograph will not be performed.

If the referral needs amending the referrer will alter the note within the patient's dental record accordingly and resubmit it to the practitioner to start the justification process again.

If a referral needs cancelling the referrer must inform the practitioner/operator forthwith and the note within the patient's dental record amended to show the requested is cancelled.

5.2 Referring patients to another dental practice/hospital for radiographic examinations

The employer will contact the practice/hospital request copies of their employer's procedure for making, amending or cancelling referrals, and their referral criteria guidelines. A service-level agreement will be established in writing between the two organisations before the first referral is made.

The practice will then work in accordance with the receiving practice's/hospital's procedures and SLAs.

5.3 *Accepting external referrals*

The employer will ensure that external referrers are supplied with a copy of the referral guidelines and a copy of this procedure. The employer will also ensure that a service-level agreement (SLA) is established with each referring practice prior to the first referral being accepted. The SLA must identify all individuals who will be referrers and/or will clinically evaluate the images and demonstrate that they have been adequately trained for their roles.

When accepting referrals for X-ray examinations from other dental practices, the IRMER practitioner will ensure that the referring practice has provided the following information on a suitably completed referral form:

- patient's full name, date of birth and address
- dental examination requested
- type of imaging requested
- sufficient clinical information to justify the radiographic exposure requested
- information required from the radiographic exposure
- name of referrer (printed) and GDC registration number
- date of referral

Each request for a radiographic examination will be justified and authorised by a practitioner prior to an exposure and this will be recorded on the referral form.

Where either party (the receiving practice or the referring practice) wishes to amend the referral the details of the required amendment must be submitted on the referral form or by email. The examination will not be authorised and will not take place until an amended referral has been received in writing.

If the practitioner wishes to reject the referral (eg it is not believed that a radiograph is indicated) the practice will inform the referring practice by returning the referral form by email, with the rejection noted and the reason why.

If the referring practice wishes to cancel a referral they must notify the practice forthwith (eg, by telephone and follow up with an email).

6. Referral guidelines

The referral criteria used at this practice are:

Faculty of General Dental Practice (UK) 'Selection Criteria for Dental Radiography', 3rd edition, FGDP (UK), 2013 (updated 2018). <https://cgdent.uk/selection-criteria-for-dental-radiography/>

Guidelines for the use of radiographs in clinical orthodontics. London: British Orthodontic Society, 4th edition, 2015. <https://www.bos.org.uk/Public-Patients/News-Publications/Orthodontic-Radiographs-Guidelines>

Radiation Protection No 172. Cone beam CT for dental and maxillofacial radiology (Evidence-based guidelines). Chapter 4 (for dental CBCT only). Available from: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/ec5936c7-5a29-4a93-9b3a-01a5d78d7b2e/language-en>

Other document (specify):

and copies of this document are made available to the referrers by access via the Triangle Dental Website on the referrals page.

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