

# Northamptonshire Activity on Referral Scheme

## A Guide for Health Professionals



### 1. Introduction

This guide has been taken from the County Standard Protocol for the Northamptonshire Activity on Referral Scheme (AOR) scheme. It is a shortened version of the protocol specifically for the benefit of any Health Professional (HP) or Social Prescribing Link Worker (SPLW) who intends to refer a patient to the scheme.

### 2. Brief Overview

#### What is AOR?

The AOR Scheme provides sedentary individuals with a positive introduction to exercise; enabling individuals to start on their journey to a more active lifestyle in a safe and supervised environment.

#### Who qualifies for AOR?

The scheme is aimed at adults over the age of 16 years, who are considered to be inactive (i.e.: not exercised in the last 3 months) and have one or more health conditions.

The scheme allows HP's and SPLW's to refer patients to their local AOR accredited leisure facility where a tailored exercise programme will be devised for them.

Patients (service users) being referred will be required to book for an initial consultation with an Exercise Professional (EP). The EP will produce a bespoke exercise programme for the service user and will be shown how to use the equipment in the gym induction. The service user will be offered a AOR price or membership for a minimum of 12 weeks. They will be required to attend a 6 week review and an exit review at the end of the 12 weeks.

On completion of the programme, service users will be encouraged to continue exercising and will be provided with information on local activities. Most AOR sites offer discounted memberships to encourage service users to keep exercising.

### 3. The Referral Route

#### Who can refer?

The following may refer patients to the AOR scheme.

- General Practitioners
- Practice Nurses
- Health Visitors
- Physiotherapists
- Mental Health Professionals
- Dieticians Specialist  
Consultants & Nurses
- Healthcare Assistants\*
- Social Prescribing Link Workers\*

If any referrer listed above does not feel appropriately informed about a patient's condition to make a referral, guidance should be sought from the patient's GP.

## Where can I refer to?

The AOR scheme is currently being offered by 12 different leisure providers across 17 different accredited facilities covering the seven districts of the county. All accredited sites have at least one EP who is Level 3 GP Referral qualified. Some sites have EP's who have undergone additional specialist training in certain conditions (eg: Cardiac Rehab, Cancer Rehab, Pulmonary Rehab, Falls Prevention, Weight Management etc).

(Please see the [List of Accredited AoR Sites](#) for the list of centres offering the service)

## Can a patient be referred more than once?

As a rule repeat referrals will not be accepted, particularly if it is evident that the patient is already using the leisure facility or has used the leisure facility within a 3 month period. Repeat referrals will only be accepted if the patient has dropped out of the scheme due to personal problems, or if their medical condition has changed. Ultimately, the decision to accept re-referrals is at the discretion of each AOR facility.

## 4. The Referral Process

### Responsibilities of the Referrer

- The referrer should observe the INCLUSION and EXCLUSION criteria (See section 5) for the scheme prior to making the referral.
- There must be meaningful transfer of all relevant information from the referrer to the EP. The responsibility to ensure that this happens rests with the referrer, who will make a professional judgement as to what information must be disclosed to the EP's to enable them to tailor a safe and effective exercise programme that will meet the needs of the patient/service user.

### Responsibilities of the Exercise Professional (EP)

- The EP's are responsible for the safe and effective design and delivery of the exercise programme. All EP's involved in AOR are Level 3 exercise referral specialists or above, and committed to on-going CPD. They also have the appropriate skills and experience to support individuals with chronic health conditions.

### Responsibilities of the Patient

- They must give their **informed consent** within the limit of their competence to do so, whatever that limit may be, and to the best of their knowledge. Informed consent must be obtained from a carer or another appropriate person if their competence to give informed consent is limited.
- They must contact their preferred AOR Site to book their initial consultation. The patient needs to ensure they take their completed AOR Referral form along with them to the consultation.

### How do I make a referral?

To make a referral complete the AOR Referral Form found on SystemOne, EMIS and GP Portal <http://gp.neneccg.nhs.uk/services/referral-forms.htm>

A PDF or Microsoft Word format of the referral form is also available on request by contacting: [AOR@northamptonshiresport.org](mailto:AOR@northamptonshiresport.org)

A copy of the completed AOR Referral Form should be given to the patient so they can take it along with them to their initial consultation. A copy of the form should also be kept on the patient's medical records.

### Completing the referral form

The referrer must ensure that the patient's medical history is complete and correct to the best of their knowledge at the time of referral and must sign the referral form. The patient must sign the referral form, agreeing to data transfer and information sharing with the AOR site (leisure operator).

EP's have the right to refuse acceptance of a referral if the medical information shared on the referral form is incomplete, or if the health condition of the patient is not included in the 'Referral Criteria'. Referral letters or

forms without the relevant information, or containing only blanket phrases such as 'I know of no reason why Mrs X should not engage in exercise' are NOT acceptable as part of the referral process.

## 5. Medical Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

### Conditions suitable for AOR:

- CVD risk factors
- Overweight BMI >25 plus one other risk factor / Obesity BMI >30
- Pre-diabetes / Diabetes (controlled)
- Hypertension (controlled)
- Hyperlipidaemia
- Anxiety, Stress or Depression (mild-moderate)
- Mild Arthritis in hips or knees
- Back Pain (not acute)
- Impaired Mobility or Strength
- Neurological (Parkinson's/MS)
- COPD / Pulmonary related (Controlled)
- Osteoporosis (T-score -2.5 or lower with no history of low trauma fractures)
- Stable Angina (Controlled & stable for 6 months)

### Conditions excluded from AOR:

The AoR Scheme cannot accept referrals for any of the following conditions;

- Heart Failure/Unstable Arrhythmias
- Patients that have undergone back surgery or other complicated surgery
- Uncontrolled Hypertension
- Uncontrolled Diabetes
- Uncontrolled COPD/Pulmonary related disease
- Patients who are receiving treatment for Cancer
- Acute Psychiatric Illness

(Please see [AOR Referral Criteria](#) for further guidance).

## 6. Other Specialist Services Available:

### Cardiac Rehab

People with heart conditions are excluded from the AOR but patients can be referred to Cardiac Rehab programme. Cardiac Rehab Phase IV exercise in the community is offered at the sites listed below. Referrals are made following Phase III within the Cardiac Rehab Services at KGH and NGH.

- Lodge Park Sports Centre, Corby
- Reach for Health, Daventry
- Manor Sports Centre, Raunds.

### Get Up & Go Falls Prevention Programme

'Get Up & Go' is a programme of strength and balance exercise classes aimed at older people who are at deemed 'at-risk' of having a fall or those who have already experienced a fall. Those who would benefit from programme can self-refer to the scheme by contacting: [Fraser.Lodge@northamptonshiresport.org](mailto:Fraser.Lodge@northamptonshiresport.org) Tel: 07912 891993

For more information about the programme and location of sessions visit: <https://www.northamptonshiresport.org/getupandgo>

### **Cancer Exercise Referral Pathway**

A new Cancer Exercise Referral Pathway has been developed for patients who have been diagnosed with Cancer and are undergoing treatment. The sites below are currently part of the Referral Pathway.

- The Nene Centre in Thrapston
- The Pemberton Centre in Rushden
- Reach for Health in Daventry
- Fitness without Boundaries in Northampton.

For more information about the Cancer Pathway and to make a referral contact [AOR@northamptonshiresport.org](mailto:AOR@northamptonshiresport.org)

### **COPD / Pulmonary Conditions**

People with long term lung problems such as COPD should be encouraged to exercise so that they can train their body to utilise and deliver the oxygen to their muscles more effectively. Unfortunately most COPD sufferers are afraid to exercise as they are worried about getting breathless. The Restart Team from NGH run a number of group exercise sessions in the community to support people with these conditions:

- Reach for Health in Daventry
- Danes Camp Leisure Centre in Northampton

### **Stroke Rehab**

The Community Stroke Team work alongside a number of AOR sites to offer rehabilitation programmes for patients who have suffered a recent stroke.

- Reach for Health in Daventry
- The Pemberton Centre in Rushden
- Fitness without Boundaries in Northampton

#### **For further information or queries:**

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[AOR@northamptonshiresport.org](mailto:AOR@northamptonshiresport.org)

[www.northamptonshiresport.org/activity-on-referral](http://www.northamptonshiresport.org/activity-on-referral)

