

REFERRAL PATHWAY FRAMEWORK

Neuro Gateway Support Network

1. Introduction and Purpose

Neuro Gateway Support Network is committed to ensuring that individuals and families affected by neurological conditions are able to access timely, appropriate, and coordinated support. Given the complexity of health, social care, and legal systems, individuals often require clear guidance and structured pathways to access the services they need.

This Referral Pathway Framework establishes a comprehensive and consistent approach to managing referrals both into and out of the organisation. It ensures that referrals are handled in a professional, transparent, and person-centred manner, while maintaining safeguarding standards, data protection compliance, and clear professional boundaries.

The framework supports effective collaboration with partner organisations and ensures that individuals are guided towards appropriate services without duplication or delay.

2. Scope of the Framework

This framework applies to all individuals acting on behalf of Neuro Gateway Support Network, including trustees, volunteers, and any individuals involved in service delivery or administration.

It covers:

- Self-referrals from individuals and families
- Referrals from external organisations (e.g. NHS, Local Authorities, charities)
- Internal case progression and escalation
- Referrals to external services and partner organisations

This framework applies to all referral activity regardless of whether it takes place in person, remotely, or via digital communication.

3. Principles of Referral Management

All referral activity within *Neuro Gateway Support Network* is guided by the following core principles:

Referrals must be person-centred, ensuring that the needs, wishes, and circumstances of the individual are central to all decisions.

Referrals must be timely and responsive, recognising that delays in accessing support can increase risk and distress.

Referrals must be appropriate and proportionate, ensuring that individuals are directed to services that are relevant to their needs.

All referral processes must be conducted in accordance with safeguarding responsibilities, ensuring that any risks to individuals are identified and addressed.

Confidentiality and data protection must be maintained at all times, with information shared only where lawful and necessary.

The organisation must maintain clear professional boundaries and must not assume responsibilities that fall outside its remit.

4. Types of Referrals

Neuro Gateway Support Network recognises several types of referrals within its service model.

4.1 Self-Referral

Individuals or families may contact the organisation directly to request support. These referrals are typically initiated via phone, email, online forms, or in person.

4.2 Professional Referral

Referrals may be received from external professionals or organisations, including:

- General Practitioners
- Social Workers
- NHS services
- Advocacy organisations
- Care providers
- Legal professionals

4.3 Internal Escalation

Within the organisation, cases may be escalated where additional input, oversight, or safeguarding action is required.

4.4 External Referral

The organisation will refer individuals to appropriate external services where needs fall outside its remit, including:

- Health services (e.g. memory clinics, GPs)
- Social services
- Safeguarding teams
- Legal services
- Financial or benefits support
- Specialist charities

5. Referral Intake Process

All referrals must be received and recorded in a structured and consistent manner. Upon receipt of a referral, the organisation will:

- Acknowledge the referral in a timely manner
- Gather relevant information about the individual and their circumstances

- Clarify the reason for referral and desired outcomes
- Identify any immediate risks or safeguarding concerns

Where information is incomplete, reasonable efforts will be made to obtain additional details while maintaining confidentiality and consent.

All referrals must be recorded in accordance with the organisation's Case Recording and Data Protection Policies.

6. Initial Assessment and Triage

Following intake, each referral will be subject to an initial assessment to determine the level of need, urgency, and appropriate response.

This assessment will consider:

- The nature and complexity of the individual's needs
- Any identified risks or safeguarding concerns
- The urgency of the situation
- The individual's capacity and support network
- Whether the referral falls within the organisation's remit

Referrals will be triaged into categories such as:

- **Standard Support** – guidance and signposting required
- **Priority Support** – complex needs requiring closer input
- **Urgent / Safeguarding** – immediate risk requiring escalation

Where urgent risk is identified, immediate action must be taken in line with safeguarding procedures.

7. Decision-Making and Allocation

Following assessment, a decision will be made regarding how the referral will be managed.

This may include:

- Allocation to an appropriate individual within the organisation
- Provision of guidance and information
- Signposting to external services
- Escalation for safeguarding intervention

Decisions must be documented clearly, including the rationale and any actions taken. The organisation must ensure that individuals are not supported beyond its remit and that appropriate referrals are made where specialist input is required.

8. Referral to External Services

Where an individual's needs cannot be met within the organisation, a referral will be made to an appropriate external service.

This process will involve:

- Identifying suitable services based on the individual's needs
- Providing clear information to the individual about the referral
- Obtaining consent where appropriate
- Sharing relevant information in accordance with the Information Sharing Protocol
- Supporting the individual in accessing the referred service where necessary

The organisation will ensure that referrals are appropriate and that individuals understand the purpose and process.

9. Safeguarding and High-Risk Referrals

Where safeguarding concerns are identified at any stage of the referral process, these must be addressed immediately.

This may include:

- Referral to local safeguarding authorities
- Contacting emergency services where necessary
- Escalating internally to the Safeguarding Lead

Safeguarding considerations take precedence over all other aspects of the referral process. The organisation must ensure that individuals are protected and that appropriate action is taken without delay.

10. Communication and Follow-Up

Effective communication is essential throughout the referral process.

The organisation will:

- Keep individuals informed of actions taken
- Provide clear explanations of next steps
- Maintain communication with partner organisations where appropriate
- Follow up on referrals where necessary to ensure outcomes

The level of follow-up will depend on the nature of the referral and the needs of the individual.

11. Record Keeping and Documentation

All referral activity must be recorded accurately and securely.

Records must include:

- Details of the referral
- Assessment and triage decisions
- Actions taken
- Information shared

- Outcomes and follow-up

Records must be factual, proportionate, and compliant with the organisation's Data Protection Policy.

12. Roles and Responsibilities

All individuals acting on behalf of *Neuro Gateway Support Network* are responsible for adhering to this framework.

Specific responsibilities include:

- Ensuring referrals are handled appropriately and professionally
- Identifying and escalating risks
- Maintaining accurate records
- Communicating effectively with individuals and partners

Trustees hold overall responsibility for ensuring that referral processes are safe, effective, and aligned with organisational policies.

13. Monitoring and Quality Assurance

The organisation will monitor referral activity to ensure that processes are effective and consistent.

This may include:

- Reviewing case records
- Identifying patterns or trends
- Seeking feedback from service users and partners
- Evaluating outcomes

Findings will be used to improve service delivery and strengthen referral pathways.

14. Relationship with Other Policies

This framework should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Information Sharing Protocol
- Data Protection Policy
- Incident Reporting Policy
- Case Recording Procedures

Together, these policies ensure a comprehensive and safe approach to service delivery.

15. Policy Review

This framework will be reviewed annually, or sooner if required, to ensure that it remains aligned with best practice, legal requirements, and organisational needs.

15. Final Statement

Neuro Gateway Support Network is committed to ensuring that all referrals are managed in a professional, structured, and person-centred manner. Through effective referral pathways, the organisation aims to ensure that individuals receive timely, appropriate, and coordinated support.

By maintaining clear processes, strong partnerships, and a focus on safeguarding, the organisation seeks to reduce barriers, improve outcomes, and support individuals with dignity and respect.