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## Providing Information About Your Services

(This guidance replaces the booklet *Advertising*)

1. If you publish or broadcast information about services you provide, the information must be factual and verifiable. It must be published in a way that conforms with the law and with the guidance issued by the Advertising Standards Authority. If you publish information about specialist services, you must still follow the guidance in paragraph 35 of *Good Medical Practice*<sup>1</sup>.
2. The information you publish must not make claims about the quality of your services nor include comparisons with the services provided by colleagues. It must not, in any way, offer guarantees of cures, nor exploit patients' vulnerability or lack of medical knowledge.
3. Information published about specialist services should include advice that patients cannot usually be seen or treated by specialists, either in the NHS or private practice, without an appropriate referral, usually from a general practitioner. Specialists should take all reasonable steps to ensure that a similar statement is included in any advertisement for specialist services issued by an organisation with which they are associated.
4. Information you publish about your services must not put pressure on people to use a service, for example by arousing ill-founded fear of future ill health. Similarly you must not advertise your services by visiting or telephoning prospective patients, either in person or through a deputy.

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<sup>1</sup> Specialists should not usually accept a patient without a referral from a general practitioner. If they do, they must inform the patient's general practitioner before providing treatment, unless the patient tells them not to or has no general practitioner. In these cases the specialist must be responsible for providing or arranging any aftercare which is necessary until another doctor agrees to take over. (*Good Medical Practice*, paragraph 35).