

## HOW SHOULD A PSYCHIATRIST WRITE TO A GP?

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**Background:** Quality and clarity of correspondence with other professionals and especially GPs have been always important. Nowadays when patients would receive a copy of our letters automatically, this has become even more sensitive and paramount.

**Methodology:** A guideline and template were designed based on the best recommendations taken from available NHS policies, review of literature and interviewing six experienced psychiatry consultants in Oxford deanery.

**Outcome:**

- Decide about sending a copy of your letter to each patient individually. It is a clinical decision. Do not send a copy if this would mean compromising the information you need to give to GP. Situations like third party information, safeguarding issue, risk to therapeutic relationship and lastly, patient's refusal to have a copy of letter
- Send a separate letter to the patient if your are directly asked in one of situations outlined above. This letter should be short and simple containing clear treatment plan.
- Letter to GP should be short (200-300 words) with simple language.
- Use a standard template for writing to GP. Template should have headings for "Reason for referral", "Impression/diagnosis", "Summary of findings", "Prognosis", "Risks", "Information given to the patient", "Detailed treatment plan", "Name of care coordinator" and finally "Follow up details".

**Clinical implications:** Writing short, simple and clear letters would facilitate communication between psychiatrist and GP. This eventually will improve the quality of patient care. Using of a standard template, attending report writing courses and thoughtful deciding about sending a copy to each patient are greatly recommended.