

Non-Medical Referrers (NMR)

What is a Non-Medical Referrer (NMR)?

A Non-Medical Referrer (NMR) is a nurse or allied health professional who has extended their role to include referral to radiology to improve the delivery of care to patients. The Ionising Radiation (Medical Exposure) Regulations 2017, {IR(ME)R17} defines an NMR as being a member of a profession regulated by a body mentioned in section 25(3) of the National Health Service Reform and Health Care Professions Act 2002(a).

What training is required?

All NMRs should receive training which is regularly updated. The training should cover the principles of radiation protection, legislation, benefits and risks of the examinations being referred for including an understanding of the dose.

What is the referrer entitlement process?

Entitlement must be given in writing by the employer, in accordance with their written procedure. This duty is normally delegated to either the radiology department or the radiation protection committee.

The NMR must have a defined scope of practice.

The NMR must be included in the employer's register of referrers.

Entitlement is **NOT** transferable between employers.

What governance arrangements are needed?

There are a number of factors that need to be considered as part of the NMR process. Key points:

- There must be a doctor, either a consultant or general practitioner, who is responsible for providing mentorship, advice and guidance on patient care.
- There must be processes in place for both results acknowledgement and clinical management handover.
- Annual audit of the NMR's practice.
- Where an NMR is required to review an image and then act on it before the formal report is received e.g. Emergency Nurse Practitioner or Minor Injuries Nurse, this would be considered 'Clinical Evaluation' under IR(ME)R17. In this situation the NMR would need formal written entitlement from the employer to act as an operator for clinical evaluation and must have had documented training in image interpretation

What about high dose examinations?

Referrals for high dose examinations such as CT and PET-CT should only be made by NMRs as part of an MDT or consultant led care pathway.

What about referrals to MRI and Ultrasound?

Although there are no statutory regulation covering MRI and Ultrasound the same principles as those used for ionising radiation should be followed.

Further Information

The BIR has put together more detailed guidance available at <https://www.bir.org.uk/media-centre/position-statements-and-responses/guidance-for-non-medical-referrers-to-radiology/>