**Advice for GPs and Dentists re: referrals for cleft services in adulthood**

Dear Doctor or Dentist,

Thank you for seeing this patient. This patient is visiting you to request a referral to return to the NHS Cleft Lip and Palate Multidisciplinary Team (“Cleft Team”). Assuming that your patient qualifies to receive NHS services, adults are entitled to return to the cleft team at any age, and are entitled to an assessment for any reason relating to cleft (including for a reason which may appear cosmetic). The cleft team will determine eligibility for further treatment. If you are unsure whether the query is cleft related, please refer to the cleft team who will make this determination upon assessing the patient.

The relevant parts of the NHS service specification for cleft are included below (Source: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/d07-cleft-lip.pdf>, page 7). Also available at [www.clapa.com/timeline](http://www.clapa.com/timeline).

*“Cleft Lip and/or Palate (CLP) is a congenital anomaly resulting from failure of fusion of embryological parts forming the lip, nose and palate.* ***Its management requires the multidisciplinary involvement of many specialties through growth and development to the age of at least 20 years, as well as treatment of adults of any age****. Routine care often does not cease at 20 years of age and may continue for a number of further years. Children must be followed up routinely until at least 20 years of age and* ***adults must be able to access and be treated by the service at any age after 20****. Care covers pre-natal and post-natal diagnosis and advice including feeding advice, corrective surgery including specialist and outreach nursing, lip and palate repair, speech assessment, investigation and treatment/surgery, children’s dentistry, bone grafting, orthodontics, dento-alveolar surgery,* ***restorative dentistry including implant treatment, rhinoplasty, orthognathic surgery****, audiology/Ear Nose and Throat (ENT) (hearing and ENT problems),* ***clinical psychology, genetics, and revision treatment*** *(see National Service Definitions and HSC 1998-238).* ***Delivery of services will be through a network of care managed and often delivered from the specialist centre hub.*** *The network will commonly include outreach and spoke delivery of services and will always rely on strong links with and coordination of local community services. The specialist centre will provide advice, education and support for spoke and community services.”*

Not every NHS Trust will have their own cleft centre. If your trust does not have one, you must refer to one in a neighbouring trust. The up to date list and contact details of cleft teams are here: <https://www.clapa.com/treatment/nhs-cleft-teams/>

If you have any difficulties making this referral, please contact the cleft team who will be able to assist you further in making the referral. Both GPs and Dentists can make a referral to the cleft team for any services offered by the cleft team (e.g. a GP can request a referral for restorative dentistry).

Thank you for processing this referral for this patient. If you have any questions or concerns about the contents of this letter, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours faithfully,

Adult Services Team  
Cleft Lip and Palate Association  
Phone: 020 7833 4883