Introduction

In most instances patient transfer is an uneventful process. However, just occasionally problems do arise and this is usually due to one of the following: a non-orthodontic referral route i.e. self-referral or from a general dental practitioner, no case records, or a long period without appliance adjustments. As a result the new orthodontist may be unaware of the starting malocclusion; the stage of treatment; the appliance system; the aims of treatment and the financial arrangements or otherwise that were entered into with the previous orthodontist. To help in patient transfer these guidance notes are subdivided into three:

1. Transferring a patient

Finding a new orthodontist

There are a number of ways of locating an orthodontist in the UK including: personal knowledge of a colleague close to the patient’s new address; by contacting the patient’s new PCT, Community Dental Service or Hospital; by using the BOS directory, or by searching the GDC orthodontist specialist list by town on:

http://www.gdc-uk.org/searchspec.php

For transfers overseas the BOS office holds a copy of the Orthodontic Directory of the World. Alternatively some overseas organisations such as the AAO allow you to search their member database on the web.

(http://www.aaomembers.org/eseries/ScriptContent/referral.html)

Once the new orthodontist has agreed to accept the patient a more formal transfer can take place.

The transfer method

When transferring a patient, sufficient information should be forwarded to the new orthodontist to enable treatment to continue with the minimum of disruption. A suggested minimum data set is outlined on the BOS Case Transfer Form and should include a set of duplicate records where appropriate. You should keep the original records until after the transfer has taken place.

Prior to the transfer

- Try to ensure all the appliances are in good order and that the oral hygiene is as satisfactory as possible.
- It is advisable to take up to date records, such as study models and photographs, just prior to transfer to the new orthodontist.
- Both the patient and parents should be advised that the accepting orthodontist will have full authority to treat the case in a manner that they feel is best for the patient. They should also be reminded that orthodontic treatment normally involves appliance change throughout treatment and the new orthodontist may therefore make further changes.
- The patient/parents should also be made aware that private fee schedules vary throughout the country and that it is reasonable to expect a change in the fee arrangements.
- Try to avoid making statements as to the period of time the new orthodontist will require to complete the treatment.
- The patient/parents should be advised that all the pertinent records will be forwarded to the new orthodontist, but that the referring orthodontist will continue to be available until the transfer is complete.
- If treatment is yet to begin it is often best to advise the patient/parents that it will not be started until the patient sees the new orthodontist.
2. **Accepting a transfer**

Once you have received a referral letter and records consider the following:

- If you are unable to accept the transfer, or following examination feel unable to do so, let the referring orthodontist know as soon as possible. If possible try to secure the services of another competent orthodontist in your area.
- Following a review of the diagnostic data, inform the patient and/or parents of the procedures necessary to achieve a successful treatment outcome and particularly any fee schedule where relevant.
- If all parties are in agreement regarding the transfer of treatment to the new orthodontist, then the patient should be welcomed into the practice as quickly as possible.
- Occasionally patients are transferred who are ready for treatment but have not yet started. In such cases consideration should be given to crediting the time the patient may have spent on the previous orthodontist's waiting list.
- Sometimes patients under treatment arrive without being referred. In such cases it is prudent to write to the original orthodontist to request the necessary transfer information, as outlined in the BOS Case Transfer Form, along with a set of duplicate records, in order to avoid unnecessary confusion.
- It is advisable to get up to date records, such as study models and photographs, before continuing the orthodontic treatment.
Date:

To:  
From:

Patient’s name:              Gender:
D.O.B.:

Old Address:                 New Address:

Postcode:                   Postcode:
Tel No:                     Tel No:

Date of Move:

Relevant Medical/Dental/Social History:

Aims of treatment:

Treatment plan:

Appliance system:

Progress:

Records:  Study Models  X-rays  Photographs
Contract:  Specialist practice  Hospital  Community  GDP
          NHS  Private  Fees due: