



# Rapid Diagnostic Service

## Vague symptom pathway

**NHS**  
East Suffolk and North Essex  
NHS Foundation Trust

### Introduction

Your GP has invited you to be investigated by the Vague Symptoms (VSP) pathway. This leaflet is designed to help you to understand why the pathway is in place and what it will involve.

VSP is part of a new national programme to find the quickest, most efficient way to reach a diagnosis in patients who have non-specific symptoms.

For a rapid diagnosis it is important that you make yourself available for all appointments.

Please take time to read the following information carefully. Should you require any further information, please speak to your GP.

### What is the purpose of the VSP?

Many patients visit their GP with vague or general symptoms such as weight loss and tiredness. These symptoms are called “non-specific”, as they affect the whole person. Often the cause of these symptoms remains unclear after your GP has assessed you.

These ‘non-specific’ symptoms may sometimes be caused by a serious disease, such as cancer but the risk of this is very low.

Your GP has assessed you to have one or more of the “non-specific” symptoms for which VSP has been developed.

There could be a number of reasons for these symptoms and although the risk of serious disease is low, there are some patients for whom, early tests could help make a diagnosis quicker and treatment started sooner.

This pathway is designed to give GPs a quick and efficient way to access this full group of tests for patients with “non-specific” symptoms. It should help to understand if there is a serious cause or not as fast as possible for you.

Following your first appointment, which maybe by telephone or at one of our community locations, the clinical information received from your GP and all of your test results will be reviewed by the VSP team.

The next step will be one of the following:

- Refer you to a hospital specialist or VSP clinic or
- Arrange any further tests needed which will be within 4 weeks or
- Refer you back to your GP with advice

### Follow-up

Your follow-up care will be decided by the VSP team based on your clinical information and test results.

You may require more tests if further information is needed, or a referral to another specialist who will assess you further or offer treatment if it is needed. This could be a cancer referral or a referral for another medical condition if this is more likely.

If the results from the CT scan and other tests do not indicate that further hospital tests or treatment are needed, the VSP team will write to your GP. The team will tell you your results first, this maybe by telephone, especially in COVID times.

### Patient experience feedback of the VSP

We may ask you to complete a questionnaire about your experiences of the VSP to help with planning of future services for patients.

### SUMMARY OF VAGUE SYMPTOMS PATHWAY (VSP)

When you see your GP your GP will:-

- Make a referral to the Vague Symptoms Pathway
- Give you this information leaflet
- Arrange for you to have some blood tests, ask for a urine sample, arrange a chest X ray if you haven't had one recently and consider an ultrasound of your tummy
- Give you a poo sample pack (also known as a FiT test) to be returned to your practice as soon as possible.

Your first appointment you will:-

- Be given the opportunity to ask any questions
- Hand in your poo sample (FiT test) if not already handed in at your GP practice
- See or speak to a doctor

The next appointment will most likely be one of the following:-

- Further tests if required to make a diagnosis, which may include a CT scan or
- A specialist clinic at one of the Hospital sites with a Consultant or one of the VSP team, or
- An appointment with your GP

IF YOU HAVEN'T HEARD FROM ONE OF THE VSP TEAM WITHIN 2 WEEKS OF REFERRAL TO BE OFFERED AN APPOINTMENT PLEASE RECONTACT YOUR GP SURGERY.