

## Patient Information Sheet to

### Accompany Emergency Department Visit for Suspected Cauda Equina Syndrome

You saw the physiotherapy team mainly for your back and/or leg pain, but you also mentioned some other symptoms. You may have told them about recent changes to your toileting or sexual function, or numbness of your bottom or genitals. You have been asked to go to your local hospital straight away. This is because these details, along with the assessment they did today, make us think you need to be assessed by a medical team to decide if you need an MRI scan. We are concerned you might have something called Cauda Equina Syndrome. This is a condition caused by pressure on the nerves that supply your bladder, bowel, sexual function, and the feeling around your bottom and genitals. Cauda equina syndrome is very rare. When we look at the MRI scans of 100 people that we think might have this condition, 90-95 of them do not.

But, for the 5-10 in 100 that do have cauda equina syndrome, it can be life changing and needs emergency treatment. This is why it is important you are assessed to see if you need an MRI scan, and we do that through the Accident and Emergency Department.

#### **What now?**

We feel it is very important to assess you further today.

Go straight to the Grange University Hospital Accident and Emergency Department (A&E)

**DO NOT DELAY**

Please show the triage team the letter given to you.

You will be assessed for the need of an MRI scan by the A&E team.

There may be a long waiting time at A&E but please continue to wait as even though the chances of having cauda equina syndrome are low if you need surgery for it there is a limited timeframe where surgery would be effective and we would not want you to miss out.

#### **MRI**

If an MRI scan is arranged a doctor (Radiologist) will look at it to see if it shows Cauda Equina Syndrome

#### **Results**

You will be told the result of your MRI scan in the Accident and Emergency Department.

In rare cases you may need to come back at an arranged time for your scan. In these cases you will be contacted by the hospital once the MRI results have been looked at. It is important they have your up-to-date contact details.

There will be two possible outcomes:

1. You do not have Cauda Equina Syndrome on the MRI

If this is the case, you do not need emergency treatment and it is safe for you to go home. If needed, the Accident and Emergency team will make sure you have some pain relief to take home.

You should continue to see the person who referred you in, or someone at your GP surgery, who will work with you in planning the next steps of your treatment.

2. You do have Cauda Equina Syndrome on the MRI

You will be seen by an Orthopaedic Spinal Surgeon. The surgeon will talk to you about your options. Treatment may involve an operation on your back. But each person is different.

**This document is available in Welsh /  
Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg**