SIGNPOSTING, ENABLING AND REFERRING

'Signposting' is a form of self-help in which patients, and their family and carers are given information about accessing services that are relevant to their needs. Referring is where the staff member requests that the patient is seen by an appropriate service. Taking steps to make it likely that patients, their family, and carers will actually access these services is an important part of the process.

Knowledge

An ability to draw on knowledge that signposting and referring aim to help the patient and their family and carers, access sources of support that are relevant to their circumstances and of which they may not be aware	
An ability to draw on knowledge that signposting should be offered alongside onward (formal) referral	

Delivering signposting, enabling, and referring

An ability to judge when the patient and their family and carers may need support to access services by identifying any potential barriers to uptake and collaboratively problem solve and manage these obstacles	
An ability to draw on knowledge of the available services the patient and their family and carers can be 'signposted' or referred to and ensure that information about these sources of support:	
	is up to date
	accurately characterises the level of support on offer
	includes information on their eligibility criteria
An ability to draw on knowledge of the types of services (NHS and third sector) that may be most appropriate for the patient and their family and carers, such as:	
	talking therapies and counselling
	care agencies
	occupational therapies
	peer-led support groups
	mental health groups
	addiction/substance misuse groups
	carers support groups and organisations
	charity organisations for trauma survivors, refugees, and asylum seekers
	vocational and educational organisations
	LGBTQ+ mental health services
An ability to judge the type of service most relevant to the patient and their family and carers, and collaboratively decide which may be most suitable	
An ability to identify services that are accessible to the patient and their family and carers (for example, considering any disabilities that may make it difficult to travel or to make use of the service)	
An ability to convey information about the service	
	If known, an ability to be honest and transparent about potential delays or waiting times
An ability to pass on contact information in a form that makes it likely to be retained and so used, for example:	
	in written rather than verbal form
	using the medium most likely to be accessed (for example, electronically, via social media or an app, or 'paper and pencil')
An ability to judge the type of support that matches the patient and their family and carer's needs and situation (i.e., when access to self-help and/or non-professional services is suitable, and when signposting to statutory services is more appropriate) based on:	

the nature and severity of their distress and current and past behaviour
their expressed preferences and willingness to access services
the service’s eligibility criteria