

'Personalised care' appears on clinic websites, brochures and booking pages so often that it can start to sound like a promise without much behind it. Patients may reasonably ask: what will actually be different for me?

A clinic should be able to answer that question in practical terms. Personalised care means taking account of a patient's circumstances, explaining the options that are clinically appropriate, and making clear what happens next, including the costs. It does not mean guaranteeing a particular outcome or offering a different treatment simply because someone asks for one.

For clinics, this is more than a matter of good bedside manner. Patient trust is a commercial asset: it affects whether people book, attend, continue with appropriate care and recommend the service to others. Trust is built through clear decisions and reliable follow-up, not just warm wording.

Start with the question patients really have: what happens after the first appointment?

Before promoting a clinic's approach, make the patient journey easy to understand. Someone considering a first appointment wants to know what they are booking, what information to bring, what the clinician will discuss and what the likely next steps may be.

The answer will vary according to the patient's needs and the clinician's assessment. A first consultation might lead to further investigation, advice, a treatment recommendation, a referral or a decision that a particular treatment is not suitable. Explain these possibilities before booking, without implying that every patient will follow the same route.

On the clinic website and in the online booking process, make the basics visible:

- Who the appointment is for and what it covers.
- Whether it is an assessment, a follow-up or another type of consultation.
- What records or information patients may be asked to provide.
- How long the appointment is expected to last and whether it is in person or remote.
- How the clinic will communicate decisions and arrange any follow-up.
- What the appointment costs and what it does not include.

This is where many clinics lose prospective patients. Vague phrases such as "your journey starts here" or "we'll guide you every step of the way" do not tell someone what to expect. Replace them with specific, useful information, such as: "After your consultation, the clinician will explain their recommendation and whether another appointment or investigation is needed."

Personalisation begins with assessment, not a pre-selected treatment

A genuinely individual approach starts with listening and assessment. It does not start with a treatment offer that is presented as suitable for everyone. Clinicians need to understand the reason for the appointment, the patient's relevant medical background and what matters to them before reaching a view on appropriate options.

That process may involve discussing symptoms, previous treatment, current medicines, allergies, relevant diagnoses, day-to-day circumstances and the patient's aims. The questions asked will depend on the service and the individual situation. The point is not to collect every possible detail; it is to gather the information needed for a clinically informed decision.

Make assessment questions explained

Patients may be unsure why a clinician asks about something that seems unrelated to their immediate concern. A short explanation can reduce anxiety and make it easier for people to share relevant information. For example: "We ask about current medicines because they may affect which options are appropriate."

Clinics can also help patients prepare by explaining what information may be useful before the appointment. Be clear that patients should not delay seeking advice simply because they do not have every document to hand. If information is missing, the clinician can explain whether it affects the assessment and what to do next.

Recording **individual medical history factors** should support clinical judgement, not create a tick-box impression that a decision is automatic. A patient's history is one part of the picture. Their current needs, preferences, examination findings where relevant, and any other pertinent information may also matter.

Explain the role of clinical judgement

Personalised care does not mean that every requested treatment will be provided. A clinician may recommend one option, suggest further assessment, discuss alternatives or explain why a particular approach is not suitable. These decisions should be communicated respectfully and in language the patient can understand.



Professional standards matter here. The General Medical Council (GMC) sets standards for doctors' professional practice, including communication and decision-making with patients. Clinics should ensure their processes support clinicians to make appropriate decisions and explain them clearly. Marketing language <https://fundingguru.com/blog/patient-trust-is-a-business-asset-what-specialist-clinics-need-to-get-right> should never get ahead of the assessment or imply that a specific outcome is assured.



Explain treatment options without overwhelming patients

There is a balance between giving too little information and flooding someone with technical detail. Patients need enough to understand the options, ask questions and make an informed decision, but they do not need a long list of every possible treatment in the first few minutes.

A useful conversation usually makes clear:

- Which options are clinically relevant to the patient's situation.
- What each option involves in practical terms.
- Any material benefits, limitations or risks the clinician considers important.
- Whether monitoring, further appointments or additional services may be needed.
- What the patient can do if they want time to consider the options.

Where there is more than one suitable option, the clinician can explain the main differences and invite the patient to discuss their preferences. If one option is recommended, explain why. A simple comparison can help patients keep track without turning the consultation into a sales pitch.

What the patient needs to understand What clear communication sounds like The purpose of the recommendation "Based on what you've told me, I recommend we consider..." What happens next "The next step would be a follow-up to review how things are going." Whether a decision is needed today "You can take time to think this over; here is how to contact us with questions." What is not yet known "We need the assessment results before we can advise on that."

Good explanations also make uncertainty visible. If a clinician cannot predict exactly how someone will respond, say so. Trust is more likely to be sustained by a realistic conversation than by an appealing but unsupported promise.

Make the treatment plan and review schedule visible

A recommendation is only useful if the patient understands how it will be put into practice. A clear treatment plan should set out the agreed next step, who is responsible for arranging it, and what the patient should expect from

the clinic. It should also explain what to do if circumstances change or the patient has a concern.

The **treatment plan review schedule** should be explained in terms the patient can act on. Rather than saying “we’ll review as needed”, say when a review is expected, how it will be arranged and what the review is intended to check. The timing will depend on clinical judgement and the service; avoid presenting one fixed schedule as suitable for everyone.

Patients should not have to guess whether they need to book again, wait for a call or contact another department. Before the appointment ends, confirm the next action and the contact route. After the appointment, a written summary or clear follow-up message can reinforce what was discussed, where appropriate.

Make responsibility clear

When a clinic asks a patient to take an action, such as providing records or booking a review, explain how to do it. When the clinic is responsible for the next step, tell the patient what to expect and when they should follow up if they have not heard anything. This simple distinction prevents avoidable uncertainty.

It is particularly important after payment. The patient should know whom to contact with a booking query, a clinical question or an administrative issue. If those enquiries go to different teams, explain the difference and provide the relevant contact details in one place.

Show the full price, not just the entry price

Pricing is part of the care experience. A low first-appointment price can attract attention, but it may damage confidence if patients later discover that reviews, tests, reports, prescriptions or other relevant elements cost extra. Transparent pricing means showing the likely costs across the care journey, while being honest that clinical needs can change after assessment.

On the clinic website and during the online booking process, distinguish between what is included and what may be charged separately. If costs depend on the individual plan, explain the factors that affect them and when the patient will be told the price. A patient should have an opportunity to understand the cost before agreeing to a paid service wherever practicable.

A useful pricing table might include:

- The initial assessment fee and what it covers.
- The price of follow-up appointments, or how that price is calculated.
- Any likely additional charges, such as tests or reports, if applicable.
- Whether payment is due at booking or after the appointment.
- Cancellation, rescheduling and refund terms.
- How patients can ask about costs before proceeding.

Do not scatter important fees across unrelated pages or bury them in terms and conditions. Link pricing information directly from appointment descriptions and booking screens. If the final cost cannot be known before assessment, say why and explain how the clinic will discuss it before the patient commits to further paid care.

Some patients may ask about ways to manage the cost. If a clinic mentions an external finance provider such as Funding Guru, explain clearly that finance is separate from the clinical recommendation and make the relevant terms and eligibility information available. Do not imply that borrowing is necessary to receive appropriate care.

Likewise, if a clinic references another provider, such as Releaf, do so in a way that is relevant and factual. Patients should not be left to infer that a named company guarantees a particular result, or that a commercial relationship determines which treatment is suitable. Keep clinical decisions and any commercial arrangements clear.

Use the website and booking flow to build trust

The clinic's website is often the first place a patient looks for reassurance. The online booking process then tests whether the information is consistent. If the website describes a detailed assessment but the booking page simply sells a short appointment with no explanation, patients may question what they are paying for.

Review the journey from the patient's point of view. Can they identify the right appointment? Do they understand the fee before they enter payment details? Is it clear what information they may need to provide? After booking, do they receive confirmation, preparation guidance and a reliable contact route?

Keep language plain and specific. Swap broad claims such as "care built around you" for descriptions of what the clinic actually does: "Your clinician will review your relevant medical history, discuss suitable options and explain the recommended next step." That is a more meaningful account of personalisation.

Personalised care is a practice, not a slogan

For patients, personalised care means being listened to, receiving an assessment that considers their circumstances, understanding the options and knowing what happens next. It also means being told what is not yet known and what the journey may cost.

For clinics, these details are operational as well as clinical. Clear explanations can reduce avoidable calls, missed appointments and confusion about fees. More importantly, they show respect for patients' time, money and decision-making. That is how trust becomes a commercial asset without turning care into a sales promise.

The strongest claim a clinic can make is not that every patient will receive the same reassuring outcome. It is that each patient will receive a clear assessment, an honest explanation of appropriate options, transparent costs and a reliable account of what happens next.