

The Central Referral Service – Our story

Before the CRS

Growing demand for public outpatient specialist appointments

Increased patient delays for an initial specialist outpatient appointment

Limited tracking, auditing, and reporting of outpatient specialist referrals

No consistent process or single point of entry for referrals to public outpatient services within WA Health

Mostly paper-based processes for submitting and allocating outpatient referrals

Beginning years of the CRS

On 24 February 2014 the Department of Health launched the CRS to better manage external referrals for patients requiring a first specialist outpatient appointment within the public health system

First in Australia to implement a centralised outpatient referral service for statewide referrals to metropolitan sites

Introduction of electronic referral management system at CRS

All referrals can be tracked on the CRS system from referral receipt to acceptance to hospital site

Standardised, streamlined process for outpatient specialist referrals

One million referrals processed in June 2019

Referrers are notified when the referral is received by CRS and once the referral has been allocated to a hospital site and speciality

Patients are notified when the referral has been allocated to a hospital site and speciality

The CRS today

CRS used as a vehicle for strategic reform in the WA health system

The demand for the CRS is growing yearly with a 9% increase in the number of referrals received from 2018 to 2019

Approximately 1,200 referrals are received and processed per business day

All referrals are opened within one business day

Referrals are processed and allocated to the relevant hospital site within three business days

Over 1,400,000 referrals processed and counting since beginning 2021

Where to from here for the CRS

Projected increasing demand for the CRS

Broadening the range of specialties, referrers and sites that are suitable for referral through the CRS

Increasing the functions of the CRS

Ongoing improvements to service delivery and operations

Increasing electronic functionality over time

Maximising efficiency for the management of outpatient referrals and the broader WA health system

Enhance the function of the CRS to optimise demand management across the system – and support patients receiving their outpatient care in a clinically appropriate time