Table 1

General recommendations for referral[3]

Patients presenting with symptoms suggestive of colorectal or anal cancer should be referred to a team specialising in the management of lower GI cancer
In patients with equivocal symptoms who are not unduly anxious, it is reasonable to 'treat, watch and wait'
In patients with unexplained lower GI symptoms, a digital rectal examination should be performed
Only patients with new and persistent symptoms, listed in table 2, right, should be referred via the fast track (two-week rule) system