

Registering with a doctor

You need to register with a GP as soon as you can, so you can see the GP when you are sick.

What does it cost?

There is no charge to register with a GP in England. Once you are registered, there is also no charge to see your GP. If your GP decides that you need medicine, you will receive a prescription. To get your medicine, take the prescription to any pharmacy. If you have an HC2 certificate, you will not be charged for the medicine. You should show this to the staff at the pharmacy and also tick the correct box on your prescription.

If you haven't got an HC2 certificate, you will need to apply for one using the HC1 form with help from a support group, if needed. Application criteria does apply, so if you want more information you can contact Help with Health Costs on **0300 330 1343** or go onto the following website at www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/1125.aspx

If you need to see a GP, but have difficulty speaking or understanding English, tell the staff at the GP surgery. They will be able to arrange an interpreter. You will not be charged for this service.

Do I need ID to register?

You do not have to provide ID when registering with a GP, but it is helpful to do so. It is helpful if you can provide at least one of the documents below when registering with your GP:

- ➔ **Passport**
- ➔ **Birth certificate**
- ➔ **HC2 certificate**
- ➔ **Rough sleepers' identity badge**
- ➔ **Hostel registration/mail forwarding letter**



Finding a doctor

Before you register, contact the GP practice to explain that you are 'of no fixed abode' or living or staying temporarily in the vicinity of their practice. You are entitled to register in the area where you are, without 'proof of address'.

You can register with any GP in your local area as long as they have space for new patients. You can also get help by:

- ➔ **Asking friends**
- ➔ **Asking at the library**
- ➔ **Asking local organisations such as schools, mosques, temples, and churches**
- ➔ **Asking a support worker**
- ➔ **Looking on the NHS Choices website - www.nhs.uk**



Registering with a doctor

Ask to register at the GP reception. Show this leaflet and they will ask you to fill in a registration form. Ask for help with filling in the form if needed and return it to the GP reception.

Help with filling in the form

Local organisations that support homeless people may be able to help you fill in the GMS 1 form or local registration form.

If you can't get help, tell the GP receptionist. Ask them to help you fill in the form so you can register.

- ➔ If you prefer, you can ask to see a female GP (if available). If not, ask the receptionist for a female chaperone.
- ➔ You can expect to be treated politely and with dignity.
- ➔ The GP and staff will expect you to treat them politely.
- ➔ You can ask for help if you feel they don't understand your needs.
- ➔ You can ask to discuss your health issues and personal details in a quiet and confidential place at the GP surgery.
- ➔ Your details should always be kept confidential and safe by the GP.

Help if you are refused registration

Ask the GP receptionist to write the reason why they cannot register you in the box overleaf. You cannot be refused registration because you are homeless, do not have proof of address, identification or because of your immigration status.

If the GP already has too many patients they can refuse to register you. In this instance they must explain why in writing. If this happens to you, or a helper, you can seek advice on how to access GP services from a local homeless support organisation, day centre or hostel.

You can make a complaint

By email: england.contactus@nhs.net (for the attention of the complaints manager in subject line).

By post: NHS England, P.O. Box 16738, Redditch, B97 9PT.

By phone: 0300 311 2233 (Telephone Interpreter Service available).

For further information

You may be able to get help and advice from your local Citizens Advice: www.citizensadvice.org.uk or your local Healthwatch: 0300 068 3000 www.healthwatch.co.uk

This information can be made available in alternative formats, such as easy read or large print and may be available in alternative languages upon request. Please contact 0300 311 2233 or email england.contactus@nhs.net

Message to the GP Practice

Thank you for helping to register this patient. We hope the patient was able to show you relevant documents. NHS Guidelines say 'If a patient cannot produce any supportive documentation but states that they reside within the practice boundary then practices should accept the registration'.

Please be aware that a homeless patient cannot be refused registration on the basis of where they reside because they are not in settled accommodation. For safety reasons they may need to change the places where they sleep rough on a daily basis. There is no regulatory requirement to prove identity, address, immigration status or an NHS number in order to register as a patient and no contractual requirement for GPs to request this.

Those who are homeless, vulnerably housed or 'of no fixed abode', asylum seekers, refugees and overseas visitors, whether lawfully in the UK or not, are eligible to register with a GP practice even if they have to pay for NHS services outside of the GP practice.

The patient **MUST** be registered on application unless the practice has reasonable grounds to decline. GP practices have limited grounds on which they can turn down an application and these are; if

- ➔ The commissioner has agreed that they can close their list to new patients.
- ➔ The patient lives outside the practice boundary.

(N.B. As this relates to patients in settled accommodation, it is not an applicable ground to refuse to register a homeless patient.)

If you require further information or advice, please contact your local NHS England primary care commissioning team (www.england.nhs.uk/about/regional-area-teams).

Please refer to the NHS England Guidance on Patient Registration: Patient Registration Standard Operating Principles for Primary Medical Care (GP), November 2015: www.england.nhs.uk/commissioning/wp-content/uploads/sites/12/2015/11/pat-reg-sop-pmc-gp.pdf

To be completed by the GP practice

If you cannot register this patient, please identify the reasons from the list below and sign and date the form so the patient is informed.

A: Our list is closed to new patients as from (date)

B: The patient states that they live outside the practice boundary and we do not offer an enhanced registration service.

(N.B This relates to patients in settled accommodation so is not an applicable ground to refuse to register a homeless patient who sleeps rough or is vulnerably housed in the vicinity of your practice)

C: We cannot register the patient due to other reasons as stated below:

Name:

GP Practice:

Other reason (if applicable):

Date:

Signature:

PEOPLE WHO ARE HOMELESS

How to register with a doctor (GP)

