

Eligibility

A patient does not need to be “ordinarily resident” in the country to be eligible for NHS primary medical care – this only applies to secondary (hospital) care. In effect, therefore, anybody in England may register and consult with a GP without charge. Where a GP refers a patient for secondary services (hospital or other community services) they should do so on clinical grounds alone; eligibility for free care will be assessed by the receiving organisation.

Asylum seeker hotels or rough sleeper hostels

All asylum seekers and refugees, students, people on work visas and those who are homeless, overseas visitors, whether lawfully in the UK or not, are eligible to register with a GP practice even if those visitors are not eligible for secondary care (hospital care) services.

Requirements for registration

GP practices are able to register new patients who live outside the practice catchment area with no obligation to provide home visits or services out of hours when the patient is unable to attend their registered practice. At the point of registration, practice to decide whether it is clinically appropriate and practical to register the individual patient. This also applies if patient moves out of area - they might need to register with a new Practice closer to their new address.

Registering children

The legal definition of a child is 0 to 18 years of age; however young people may be able to make independent decisions from as young as 13 year old, depending on their Gillick competency. It is important for GP Practice to know the identity and name of those registering the child and their relationship to that child. If a child under 16 attempts to register alone or with an adult that does not have parental responsibility, the Practice Child Safeguarding Lead will be alerted. For purposes of safeguarding children, the following should be considered whilst recognising that patients must still be registered in the absence of documentation and policies must be applied in a non- discriminatory manner. The practice should seek assurance through:

- Proof of identity and address for every child, supported by official documentation such as a birth certificate, (This helps to identify children who may have been trafficked or who are privately fostered). It may be necessary to use another form of identification such as the Red Book.
- An adult with parental responsibility should normally be registered at the practice with the child. The ID of the adult is preferable as it can be matched to the birth certificate details. However, the practice should not refuse to register a child if there is no-one with parental responsibility who can register at the same practice, as it is generally safer to register first and then seek advice from the Practice Child Safeguarding Lead, Health Visitor or Practice Manager. There may be legitimate

exceptions to this, such as where both parents are serving in the armed forces and are registered with an 'armed forces' GP.

- Offering each child a new patient registration health check if the child arrives with no medical history as soon as possible after registration.
- Proof of parental responsibility or relevant guardianship agreements.
- Seeking collaborative information (supported by official documentation) relating to - Current carers and relationship to the child, Previous GP registration history, Whether the child is registered with a school and previous education history, Previous contact with other professionals such as health visitors and social workers.
- Children who have been temporarily registered with the practice should be reviewed regularly and proceed to permanent registration as soon as possible and ideally within three months of initial registration. Likely length of stay should be determined at initial registration and patient registered as temporary/permanent as appropriate.