



GP Registration Toolkit

Aims

The aims of this toolkit are:

- To promote awareness of challenges clients may face when trying to get access to a GP
- To give guidance on how to deal with complaints about treatment by GPs practices



Key points

- Anyone in England may register and see a GP without being charged. This includes the people who are homeless, asylum seekers and refugees, overseas visitors. The rules around this will probably change soon due a recent consultation.
- Clients do not need a fixed address or ID or British citizenship/permanent residence to register at and receive treatment from a GP practice
- A Practice can refuse to register someone if it is full or the patient lives outside the Practice boundary, but they must provide the reason in writing within 14 days
- Prescriptions are free of charge for those claiming benefits. Those not entitled to benefits (No Recourse to Public Funds) can apply for help with prescription costs by completing a HC1 form:

<https://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Healthcosts/Documents/2016/HC1-April-2016.pdf>

Registering with a GP

What resources can I give to clients to help them register with a GP?

[Groundswell](#) and [Healthy London Partnership](#) have produced the “My right to access to healthcare” card to ensure people who are homeless are aware of their rights when accessing GP care. You can [download and print versions of the card here](#) or email info@groundswell.org.uk to request cards. The front of the card is pictured (left) and reverse (right).





In addition to showing their “My right to access to healthcare” card, clients can quote from the NHS England’s Patient Registration Standard Operating Principles for Primary Medical Care (<https://healthwatchealing.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/patient-registration-guidance-for-GPs.pdf>):

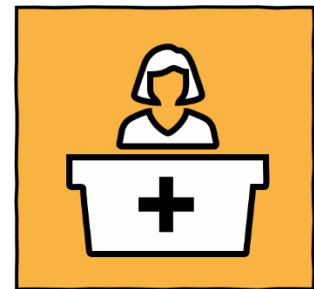
“Inability by a patient to provide identification or proof of address would not be considered reasonable grounds to refuse to register a patient.”

Groundswell have also produced a [handy guide](#) for people experiencing homelessness on how to register with a GP and their rights.

What steps should a practice take if a patient is unable to provide proof of a fixed address?

When a practice has a policy in place to ask for identification for practical reasons, it should have a clear policy in place for what to do when a patient is unable to provide any form of ID.

If a patient cannot produce proof of identification or address, but states that they reside within the practice boundary then practices should accept the registration. If necessary, the practice address, or a day centre, can be used as the address to register a patient.



When can a GP practice refuse registration?

A practice can refuse to register someone:

1. If it’s waiting list is full,
2. Or the patient lives outside of the practice boundary, **but they must provide reason for refusal in writing**. They must record the name, date and reason for the refusal and write to the patient explaining why they have been refused, within a period of 14 days of the refusal.
3. Other “reasonable” grounds, for example, if someone is violent or abusive to staff.

A practice cannot refuse a patient on discriminatory grounds, such as their age, sex, race, social class.



Making a complaint and seeking medical help

If the GP practice still refuses to register a patient, they can get advice from [Healthwatch](#) by calling **020 89687049**. Healthwatch will inform them of their rights and advise them of to say to the Practice.

If the Practice still refuses to register them, they will need to call the **NHS England on 0300 311 2233**.

If the client is waiting for a response from the NHS advocacy service or the Practice, they can receive care from a walk-in clinic.

