



Homelessness services



Are your clients able to access the vaccine through a GP?

GP registration provides a **gateway into the health system**. Without registration a person's healthcare needs may go undiagnosed and left untreated until reaching a crisis point. GP registration is particularly important to ensure people can access the COVID-19 vaccine. **It is likely that people who aren't registered with a GP will be excluded from the COVID-19 vaccine rollout plan.** Some local areas might have other methods for vaccinations for people who are homeless, however the most effective way to ensure that people are called for the first and subsequent vaccines are through the GP.

- Anyone can register with a GP surgery.
- You do not need proof of address or immigration status.
- The client might be able to register with a GP surgery that's not in the area you live. Find out about registering with a GP surgery out of your area: www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/gps/registering-with-a-gp-outside-your-area/
- Registering with a GP: www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/gps/how-to-register-with-a-gp-surgery/
- Find a GP that suits what they need. You can look up GP surgeries to see what they offer and how they compare: <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-gp>

If the client is registered with a GP consider the following:

- Is the GP practice local to where the client is staying?
- Does the GP practice have **up to date contact information** for the client? This can be address, phone number and/or email address and can be a care of or temporary address.
- Does the client **need any support to engage with their GP practice**? This can be to make appointments; filling in forms; the need for a translator; to request medication; attend appointments online, on the telephone or face to face.

If the client is not registered with a GP:

- To register with a new practice, follow **individual practice registration** processes
- Once you have identified a surgery that the client is happy with, you may want to contact the surgery on the client's behalf to let them know they client will be attending to register.
 - Make sure the surgery knows your client is NFA, may not have ID and may not have regularised immigration status
 - Give an indication of client's possible health needs
 - Confirm with the surgery that they know that the client has a right to register even as someone without a fixed address, without ID and/or regularised immigration status.
- The patient will need to fill in a form to register with a GP (you can assist with this or ask the surgery for help filling in the form if required). There are several ways to complete registration:
 - Check the GP surgery website to see if you can register online
 - Download a GMS1 registration form: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gms1>
 - Pick up a form from the GP surgery



GP registration refusal:

- **A GP surgery can refuse to register someone because:**
 - they are not taking any new patients
 - the client lives outside the practice boundary and they are not accepting patients from out of their area
 - the client has been removed from that GP surgery register before
 - it's a long way from your client's home and they require extra care (e.g., home visits)
- If a patient is refused registration because they are asked to provide proof of address or proof of ID, in the first instance try to speak to the staff member who said this. Make sure they know that the **NHS England guidelines on GP registration state that a patient should not be refused registration on the grounds that they are unable to provide this, and that they can register using a temporary or care of address.**
- If this does not resolve the issue, ask to speak to the Practice Manager and have the same conversation. If registration is still refused request this in writing.
- If you have problems registering with a GP surgery, call the **NHS England Customer Contact Centre** on **0300 311 22 33** or contact your **local Healthwatch** for additional support:
<https://www.healthwatch.co.uk/your-local-healthwatch/list>

Useful resources

- Information about **Groundswell's 'My Right to Healthcare' cards** including a link to download and print a copy of the card: <https://groundswell.org.uk/what-we-do/resources/healthcare-cards/>
- NHS England leaflet about GP registration for people experiencing homelessness which includes a section for practices to complete if they advise they cannot register the patient and clear guidance on what to do if a patient is refused registration: <https://assets.nhs.uk/prod/documents/how-to-register-with-a-gp-homeless.pdf>
- Find your **local Patient Advice and Liaison service (PALS) for confidential advice, support and information** on health-related matters: [https://www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/other-services/Patient%20advice%20and%20liaison%20services%20\(PALS\)/LocationSearch/363](https://www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/other-services/Patient%20advice%20and%20liaison%20services%20(PALS)/LocationSearch/363)

