

St Peter's Medical Centre

Registration of new patients policy

New Patients Who can register?

Nationality is **not** relevant in giving people entitlement to register as NHS patient at St Peter's MC. Anyone who is in the UK may receive NHS primary medical services at a GP practice.

There is no set length of time that a patient must reside in the UK in order to become eligible to receive NHS primary care services.

A patient does not need to be "ordinarily resident" in the UK to be eligible for NHS Primary Care.

The length of time that a patient is intending to reside in an area in the UK dictates whether a patient is registered as a temporary or permanent patient. Patients should be offered the option of registering as a temporary resident if they are resident in the practice area for more than 24 hours but less than 3 months.

This includes asylum seekers and refugees, overseas visitors, students, people on work visas and those who are homeless

Overseas visitors, whether lawfully in the UK or not, are also eligible to register with St Peter's practice even if those visitors are not eligible for secondary care services. Patients should be offered the option of registering as a temporary resident if they are resident in the practice area for more than 24 hours but less than 3 months (or immediately necessary if clinically appropriate).

Immediately necessary treatment

General Practices are also under a duty to provide emergency or immediately necessary treatment where clinically necessary irrespective of nationality or immigration status. They are also required to provide 14 days of further cover following provision of immediate and necessary treatment.

Refusing Patient Application to register:

We can only refuse an application to join St Peter's MC list if the practice has "reasonable grounds for doing so that do not relate to the applicant's race, gender, social class, age, religion, sexual orientation, appearance, disability or medical condition".

Reasonable grounds include:

- Patient not living within the practice's defined practice boundary
- Patient previously removed from the list following the breakdown of the GP/patient relationship

All patients whose applications have been refused must be given the reason for refusal in writing within 14 days. Patients name, date and reason must so be recorded and available to commissioners upon request.

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Patients who move outside of the catchment area

- Patients who live/move outside of the practice catchment area are advised to register with another surgery.
- Patients who have not registered with a new GP are manually removed from the practice list.
- Those who are a long way out of the catchment area will be contacted by the registrations department at the CCG
- Patients who have moved just beyond the catchment area are written to by the practice and will also receive a letter from the CCG.
- Reason for removal must be noted in the patient's consultations.

Documentation

- We are not obliged to ask patients for official documentation in order to prove ID or proof of residence and there is no requirement in the regulations for them to do so.
- However it is not unreasonable for us to ask for documentation in order to establish where a patient lives, and who a patient is, if they choose to do so.
- Any practice that does request such documentation must do so for every patient, inconsistent application of policy could lead to legal action against them under the 2010 Equalities Act.
- Although all individuals working within the NHS have a duty to protect NHS resources it is not the role of general practice to police fraud. If a practice suspects a patient of fraud (such as fake or multiple ID) then we should register and treat the patient but hand the matter over to their local counter fraud specialist.

Determining if the patient lives in the practice area

- If a practice asks new patients for proof of residence then it must request this from all patients. Anyone who resides within the practices boundary is entitled to apply to register for primary care medical services and the practice boundary should be clearly advertised to patients on the GPs practice leaflet or website if they have one.

Proof of identity

- When asking new patients to provide some form of ID then we must request this from all patients. Seeing some form of ID will help to ensure the correct matching of a patient to the NHS central patient registry to ensure previous medical notes are passed onto the new practice.
- Patients can reasonably be asked for their NHS card but if they do not have one than any other form of personal ID should be sufficient. This does not have to be photo ID (practices cannot insist on seeing passports for example as this could be discriminatory). The following are examples of some of the types of documentation which patients may provide:

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- Utility bill (gas, electricity, community charge etc.)
- Phone bill stating address
- Credit card/Bank statement
- Rent book or tenancy agreement.
- Pension book
- Benefit/family credit book
- Home office permit to stay
- Bank card
- Document showing University/college hall of residence
- TV License
- Driving License (with address)
- HM Revenue and Customs Statements
- Council Tax Bill/Council Rent Book
- Home Insurance Policy
- Documentation from a reputable source, for example a letter from a voluntary organisation or a refuge

Summary of principles

- Practices GP registration policies must be clear, transparent, equitable and consistently applied.
- A patient is entitled to join a practice list if they live in the practice area.
- In order to register with a practice, patients can provide their medical card and/or complete a GMS1 form (or equivalent).

- Practices may request some form of proof of residence and ID but these requests must be asked of all patients and it may be necessary to apply this sympathetically to an individual's particular circumstances
- Immigration status does not affect eligibility to primary care (see page 7 for secondary care regulations) - practices should not enquire about patients immigration status
- All individuals working within the NHS have a duty to protect NHS resources. If a practice suspects a patient of fraud (such as fake or multiple ID) then they should register the patient but contact their local counter fraud specialist for advice.
- Practices should endeavour to allow patients to register everyday that they are open and not on selected days of the week.

- Practices should register those who live in their practice area, including those who wish to change practices from another local practice, unless they have reasonable non-discriminatory grounds for refusing (see below).

- Appointments to see the doctor should not be withheld where the patient has need of one, because of the unavailability of a new patient check appointment.
- Appointments should also not be withheld because of the unavailability of proof of residence or personal ID

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- Practices must keep a record of patients that they refuse to register and make this available to the PCT on request. The practice must have reasonable non-discriminatory grounds, and they should inform the applicant in writing of their refusal and reason for it.
- Practices should ensure that their registration process and practice boundary is clearly outlined on their practice leaflet, relevant NHS Choices section or website if they have one.

NB: *Please also see attached documents for:*

1. *Refusal of Application for registration Letter*
2. *Refusal of Application for registration Log*