



Seeing a doctor

Your guide to registering with a GP practice
in Manchester



Quick reference guide

This leaflet will tell you how to register with any GP practice in Manchester. Every GP practice has a **boundary** (see p3). A GP practice should accept you as a patient if you live within their practice boundary, are entitled to NHS treatment and their practice list is not closed. If you are eligible, but not necessarily entitled to NHS treatment (e.g. an overseas visitor), the practice can still register you as an NHS patient, but they do not have to.

In order to register, you will be asked to provide proof of **identity** and proof of **activity in the community** (see list on back page). If you can't provide this, or if you don't know how long you'll be staying, you can ask to register as a **temporary patient** (see p5). If the practice will not register you, they must explain why in a **letter of refusal** within 14 days (see p4).

If you are ill and need to see a doctor urgently, your local GP practice must provide **immediate and necessary treatment** (see p5) whether you're registered with them or not.

If there's a problem, you can contact the PALS service (see p6) and if you've tried to register at three practices without success, you can ask to be **allocated to a GP** (see p7).

Acknowledgements

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Finding a GP

There are a number of ways to find a local GP practice:

- Recommendations from other patients
- Online at NHS Choices - **www.nhs.uk**
- Online at NHS Manchester - **www.manchester.nhs.uk**
- By calling the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on **0800 015 1462**
- Text 'doctor' to **64746** to receive three free messages with contact details of your three nearest practices

There will usually be a number of GP practices nearby. You don't have to register with the one nearest to you, but you should choose one that is easy for you to get to. Many patients also consider the following when choosing a GP service:

- Opening hours
- Choice of male or female GPs
- Close to home or work
- Friendly staff
- Particular services or clinics
- Availability of other services
- Can you see a GP on the same day (*see page 6*)

Obviously the choice is yours - it might be a good idea to ring or call in to a couple of local practices to find out more about their services before you make your decision.

Practice Boundaries

Each GP practice works within specific local area called a practice boundary. Practices can still register patients who live outside this area, but they **must** register patients who live within their boundary if their list is open. The practice should be able to show you theirs.

What you'll need

When you register, your GP will need to know who you are and how you can be contacted, as well as the name of your last GP practice so that they can ask for your medical records to be sent to your new doctor. You will need to provide at least the following information:

- Your name
- Your date of birth
- Your address or a c/o address (if you have one)
- Your NHS number (if you know it)
- Your phone number
- Details of your last or current GP
- Your last address

In addition to this, you'll need to provide **proof of identity** (see *List 1 on the back page*) and **evidence of activity in the community** (see *List 2 on the back page*) - sometimes this is known as proof of address, but an address is not always needed. If you cannot provide this evidence, your GP may not be able to properly register you as a patient.

If a practice cannot register you immediately, they must provide you with a letter explaining why within 14 days. This is called a **letter of refusal** and you will need this if you want us to allocate a GP to you (see *Allocations on page 7*).

Any GP practice can offer **immediately necessary treatment** in an emergency or can register you as a **temporary patient** for up to three months if you cannot provide the evidence needed, or don't know how long you'll be staying in the area (see *page 5 for more information*).

Seeing a doctor if you are not registered

You can still see a doctor if you need to, even if you are not registered with their practice. You can receive **immediate and necessary treatment** in an emergency, or you can register as a **temporary patient**.

Immediate and necessary treatment

A GP practice can see and treat you as an emergency patient even if you are not registered with them. Any GP practice must provide you with the medical care you need if treating you is **immediately necessary**. This service is for emergencies, but can be used if you need a supply of your regular medicines and running out of them would make you ill.

Registering as a temporary patient

If you are staying in Manchester, but may not stay here permanently, you can register with a nearby GP practice as a **temporary patient**. Temporary registration allows you to be taken onto the doctor's list for up to three months without having to leave your permanent doctor, if you have one. At the end of this period, your temporary registration will stop, so you must either register permanently or make sure that the practice has contact details for you and/or your usual doctor. This is so that things like follow-up appointments, test results and any letters and case notes can be passed on.

Please note: *Your GP may not prescribe certain medicines, such as strong painkillers or Benzodiazepines to temporary patients who have not provided sufficient proof of identification and activity in the community.*

What to do if there's a problem

Sometimes, things don't go as well as we would like them to. If you have any problems, our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) can help. You can call them on **0800 015 1462** or email **pals@manchester.nhs.uk**

It is possible that a GP practice might not want to register you if their list is closed or if you can't provide the evidence we need. NHS Manchester has to make sure that all the people in the city can have access to a GP so we can allocate a GP for you if you're having trouble getting registered with a local practice. We only do this for patients who have tried and been unable to register with at least **three** local GP practices.

If a GP practice does not agree to register you, you are entitled to have that refusal in writing, along with the reason. This is called a **letter of refusal**, and the practice has up to 14 days to provide you with one. This is important - you will need to provide us with three refusal letters if want us to allocate a GP to you. See the next page for detailed instructions about how to do this.

Same Day Access

Many Manchester GP practices take part in our 'same-day-access' programme. This means that if you need an urgent same-day appointment with a GP you will be offered an appointment **OR** your surgery will assess your condition (by telephone or face to face) to decide how best to manage you. Not all practices do this, so ask about it before you register if this service is important to you.

Allocating a GP

The NHS can allocate GPs to patients if needed. This means that we can simply place you on a GP's list if you have been unable to find a local GP to take you on. We will only do this if you can show that you have tried to register with **three** local GPs.

A GP cannot refuse to register you on the basis of race, gender, social class, age, religion, sexual orientation, appearance, disability or medical condition. If a GP is unable to register you, they must provide you with a **letter of refusal** within 14 days explaining why. You will need to provide three letters of refusal if you want to request an allocation.

To request an allocation, please write to us at the address below. You'll need to provide the following information:

- Your name
- Your date of birth
- Your address or a c/o address (if you have one)
- Your NHS number (if you know it)
- Your phone number
- Details of your last or current GP
- The name of the **first** GP practice you went to and the date you tried to register
- The name of the **second** GP practice and the date
- The name of the **third** GP practice and the date

You must **enclose three letters of refusal** (one from each practice you have tried to register with). Send your request to:

Patient Data (allocations)

NHS Manchester

Parkway 3, Parkway Business Centre,

Princess Road, Manchester

M14 7LU

The evidence we accept

You will need to provide evidence of identification (*List 1*) and activity in the community (*List 2*) to register with a GP practice in Manchester. You will need **one item from each list**.

List 1: Identification

- Passport
- UK driving licence (full or provisional - a photocard is only valid if presented with the associated counterpart licence)
- Birth certificate (UK and Channel Islands) - issued within 12 months of date of birth – full or short form acceptable including those issued by UK authorities overseas, such as Embassies, High Commissions and HM Forces
- ID card for foreign nationals
- EU National ID card
- HM Forces ID card (UK)
- Firearms licence (UK)
- Adoption certificate (UK and Channel Islands)
- ARC card (UKBA)

List 2: Activity in the Community

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ■ Marriage/civil partnership certificate | ■ HC2 certificate (current) |
| ■ Bank/building society statement* | ■ Vehicle registration document (document V5 old style and V5C new style only) |
| ■ Credit card statement* | ■ Documentation issued by court services* |
| ■ P45/P60 statement** | ■ Letter from a head teacher* |
| ■ National insurance card | ■ Store card statement * |
| ■ NHS card (UK & Channel Islands) | ■ Utility bill* - electricity, gas, water, telephone – including mobile phone contract/bill |
| ■ Insurance certificate** | ■ Addressed payslip* |
| ■ Exam certificate eg GCSE, NVQ, O levels, degree | ■ Mail order catalogue statement* |
| ■ Connexions card | ■ Financial statement ** eg pension, endowment, ISA |
| ■ Letter of Introduction (on letterhead) from temporary accommodation or support worker* | ■ Council tax bill for current year (UK & Channel Islands)** |
| ■ General medical council certificate | ■ Court claim form** (UK) |
| ■ Benefit statement* - eg child allowance, pension | ■ TV licence** |
| ■ Document from central/local government/government agency/ local authority giving entitlement to eg to housing benefit | ■ Mortgage statement ** |
| ■ Replacement birth certificate | ■ Work permit/visa (UK) ** |
| | ■ CRB, disclosure Scotland and ISA certificate (UK)** |

* *Must be less than three months old*

** *Must be less than 12 months old*