**Patient Choice – Out of Area**

**Quick Guide and FAQs**

*This document should be read in conjunction with the Final Guidance Document and Service Level Agreement*

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There are two elements to the Patient Choice – Out of Area Scheme:

1. **The Contractual Element**

*This is where you have the option to register a patient who is resident outside of the practice boundary* ***without the need to provide home visits*** *– payment is via patient registration capitation count*

1. **The Enhanced Service Element**

*This is where you have signed up to the SLA and* ***agreed to provide face to face consultations and home visits*** *when a patient has returned home and is not registered with a practice in the area – payment is based on quarterly claim of £15.87 for face to face or telephone consultation and £60 for a home visit*

A draft letter (**Annex A**) sets out the service to patients.

A draft letter to provide to newly registered out of area patients regarding urgent care can be found in **Annex B**.

A draft letter (**Annex C**) can be used to inform the patient of their exit from the service.

1. **The Contractual Element** 
   1. **Patient Registration**

**Firstly** there is the contractual requirement (this is optional) and is embedded into your core contract. Therefore this is not something you sign up to or opt out of, however is optional.

From 5 January 2015 all GP practices are able to register new patients who live outside the practice area (e.g. Manchester, London or neighbouring boundary) without any obligation to provide home visits when the patient is unable to attend their registered practice.

There are generally four groups of out of area patients;

1. Convenience – closer to work;
2. Moved to the area but home outside of the practice boundary;
3. Moved house but did not want to change GP, and;
4. Better services offered by new practice.

**1.2 Registration Types – Out of Area**

Practices have always had the ability to register patients outside of their practice boundary, in doing so practices were required to offer the full range of primary care services, including home visits. From 5th January, when registering patients outside of the boundary practices will need to decide what type of registration:

* ***Register as Out of Area Patients*** 
  + No obligation to provide home visits
  + Practice must be satisfied it is clinically appropriate and practical to register the patient in this way
* ***Register as a Normal Patient***
  + Continue to provide full range including home visits
  + This may be appropriate for patients who live just outside the practice boundary area
* **Not register the Patient**
  + The ability to refuse to register a patient outside of the practice boundary remains unchanged
  + Ensures that registration of Out of Area Patient remains voluntary

*Please note this is* ***NOT*** *a dual registration, once the registration process in complete the patient will de-register from their current practice*

*Please note this does* ***NOT*** *replace the temporary resident registration process, this is a permanent registration*

* 1. **Considering the Registration of a Patient from Out of the Area**
* The practice must consider each application on an individual patient basis
* The practice must ensure when accepting a patient as out of area that the patient fully understands the terms of the registration – ***examples letters are available in the guidance documents***
* The practice needs to decide if the registration is clinically appropriate and practical for the patient, such as
  + Does the patient have a clinical condition that without the ability to provide home visits would compromise the patients clinical care
  + The patient relies on frequent home visit from current GP
  + Patient is currently receiving a package of home based care which would be difficult to coordinate remotely
  + The patient is not spending frequent periods of time in or near the practice area where they wish to register
* If the practice decides not to register the patient it will need to explain its reasons for this
  + There is no right of appeal against the decision, however the patient may make a complaint and the practice will be required to give reasons why the registration was refused

**1.4 When the Circumstances of the Patient Change**

* The practice must keep the registration under review to ensure it is still clinically appropriate
* This may be triggered by exceptional use of home visits or home area urgent care access when the patient returns home, such as
  + 2 home visits in 12 months
  + 4 face to face consultation in their home area in 12 months
  + GP practices will be notified of attendances directly from the provider delivering such services in the home area
* As the registering practice you should discuss with the patient and invite them to register with a GP closer to home if they trigger the exceptional use of home visits or urgent care access

**1.5 Registering an Out of Area Patient**

The process for registering an out of are patient is generally the same as the registration of any new patient.

* Once the practice has agreed to register the patient they will need to complete a GMS1 form
* Practice enters the patient registration details on the clinical system as normal and includes a manual note to identify patient as out of area before sending via the ‘GP links’
  + “OUT OF AREA REG”
  + “OUT OF AREA SCHEME”
  + “OOA REG”
  + “PC-OOA”
  + “PCS-OOA”
  + “OOAR”
* ***It is crucial that this code is included to identify that no home visits will be provided by the registering practice - No variation or abbreviation will be accepted***
* During registration, the patient should be provided with information on how to access the urgent care arrangements in the event that they are unwell at home and it is not appropriate to attend their registered practice. It is also important to advise patients that in all circumstances that they require support at home they are to contact their registered practice.

**1.6 Access to Other Services**

As the registered practice you are responsible for discussing the options, agreeing the actions and arranging any community care that might arise for that patient, for example if the patient lives in Manchester or London you will have to co-ordinate the care with the appropriate services in the area that they live

* When a patient requires access to community services, such as following an operation there are two options
  + Use community health teams attached to the practice
  + Use community services in the area where the patient lives
* Community services are mainly used by patients with continuing health care and therefore patients who regularly require this service should register with a practice closer to home
* CCGs should ensure there is readily available information and GPs can access this via NHS 111 and NHS choices

**1.7 Removal of Patients Out of the Area**

There are two routes by which a patient out of the area my exit the arrangement

* By the patient – The patient will simply re-register somewhere else
* By the practice – De-registering the patient on non-discriminatory grounds (not withstanding plans to amend the regulations below)

Currently there is no contractual term for removing patients on health grounds. The GPC and NHS England are currently in discussion to amend the regulations accordingly and will come in to force from 1 April 2015

**1.8 Payment**

* There is no requirement for practices to submit any claims as payment will be made through the monthly contract payment via Exeter and will be based on their quarterly patient capitation count.
* Practices will currently receive the same GMS global sum / PMS baseline funding, and any other payments such as QOF, DES etc
* NHS England is however considering whether there should be a small reduction in the capitation payment. NHS England will review the data in the first 6 months and will be subject to discussions with GPC.

**1.9 FAQs – see guidance for further examples**

* Can existing patients who move out of the area register as out of area patient without home visits?
  + Patients can be granted continued registration if they move out of the area but this would be considered as no change to their status and home visits would still be required
  + The practice may de-register the patient and then invite them to register as the new OOA category, however the patient must wish and understand what this change in registration will entail and it is clinical and practical to do so
* Can existing patients who live out of the area now register without home visits?
  + No, existing patients who live outside the practice area will continue to be registered as a normal patients and have access to home visits
* Can students be registered by university as out of area patients without home visits?
  + No, students will continue to be treated as registered patients

**2. The Enhanced Service Element**

* 1. **Practice Requirement**

**Secondly,** there is the Enhanced Service element. This is where practices have signed and returned the Service Level Agreement to deliver the service

Where practices have signed up to the Enhanced service, practices are to required provide services to patients during the in-hours period who are resident in the practice boundary area but registered with a practice out of the area, including

* Access to face to face and telephone consultations – where the patient believes themselves to be ill and for the purpose of identifying any need for treatment or further investigation
* Access to home visits – where in the reasonable opinion of the contractor, attendance at the practice is inappropriate

**2.2 Arrangements for access to urgent care while patients are at home**

* To access urgent care while at home, patients should be advised to ring NHS 111.
* This arrangement was implemented in January 2015 and NHS 111 will divert out of area registered patients accordingly, for example
* To a practice who has signed up to deliver the Enhanced Service
* To a walk in or urgent care centre
* Out of hours provider
* NHS 111 do not have access to Practice boundary maps, as a result they will direct patients to the nearest practice based on the post code given by the patient. Therefore there maybe instances when you will be contacted by a patient that resides outside of your practice boundary that is requesting to be seen or requires a home visit as part of the service.
* An amendment to the Service Level Agreement will issued shortly by the national team to reflect this change and will be shared with all practices as soon as this is available.

**2.3 Registering a Patient**

* Should the practice be required to consult with a patient or provide a home visit, the practice is advised to register the patients as an emergency registration.
* The practice is advised **NOT** to enter the string of codes linked to out of area patients as detailed in 1.5
* This **does not** replace the temporary resident registration – please see 2.6

**2.4 Monitoring form**

* Practices will be required to complete a claim form and submit to the area team on a quarterly basis
* The first monitoring form should be returned by 15 April with respect of January to March claims
* It is expected that the claim will be in the form of an excel spreadsheet or via a electronic survey where practices will receive confirmation and receipt of submission
* Information requested will include
  + The number of OOA patients accessing the service
  + The number of consultations per patient
  + The number of home visits per patient
* Similar to temporary residents, practices will be required to provide clinical details of each attendance to the registering practice in a timely manner

***A monitoring form will be distributed to practices as soon as possible and will include details on when are where to submit the form***

**2.5 Payment**

* Practices will receive £15.87 for each face to face or telephone consultation by GP or Health Care Professional
* Practices will receive £60 for each home visit
* Payment will be on a quarterly basis and processed the month following the month in which the claim is submitted

**2.6 Other Registration Types**

* Temporary Resident
  + Patients in the area for more than 24hrs and less than 3 months
* Immediate Necessary - Practice is obliged to provide such treatment during core hours where
  + Patient has been refused registration and not registered with another practice in the local area
  + Have been refused acceptance as a temporary resident
  + Who are present in the practice area for less than 24hrs

**Helpful sources**

NHS Choices have published a web page regarding the Out of Area Service to inform patients of the new service and how the service can be accessed by suitable patients.

<http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/AboutNHSservices/doctors/Pages/patient-choice-GP-practices.aspx>

**Annex A**

**Suggested text for GP practices to incorporate into leaflets and letters to patients setting out details of the out of area registration without home visiting**

**Out of area registration:**

New arrangements introduced from January 2015 give people greater choice when choosing a GP practice. Patients may approach any GP practice, even if they live outside the practice area, to see if they will be accepted on to the patient list.

GP practices have always had the ability to accept patients who live outside their practice area. Regardless of distance from the practice, the practice would still provide a home visit if clinically necessary.

The new arrangements mean GP practices now have the option to register patients who live outside the practice area but without any obligation to provide home visits.

Out of area registration (with or without home visits) is voluntary for GP practices meaning patients may be refused because they live out of area.

If your application is considered the GP practice will only register you without home visits **if it is clinically appropriate and practical in your individual case**. To do this we may:

- Ask you or the practice you are currently registered with questions about your health to help decide whether to register you in this way

- Ask you questions about why it is practical for you to attend this practice(for example, how many days during the week you would normally be able to attend)

If accepted, you will attend the practice and receive the full range of services provided as normal at the surgery. If you have an urgent care need and the surgery cannot help you at home we may ask you to call NHS 111 and they will put you in touch with a local service (this may be a face to face appointment with a local healthcare professional or a home visit where necessary).

We may decide that it is not in your best interests or practical for you to be registered in this way. In these circumstances we may offer you registration with home visits, for example, if you live just outside the practice area or we may not register you and advise you should seek to register (or remain registered() with a more local practice. If accepted but your health needs change we may review your registration to see if it would be more appropriate for you to be registered with a GP practice closer to your home.

This new arrangement only applies to GP practices and patients who live in England. For further information visit the NHS Choices website ([www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)).

**Annex B**

**Out of area registration -model communication for GP practices**

**Suggested text for GP practices to incorporate into letters to patients registered as out of area patients (without home visiting) on who to contact when have an urgent care need**

**Out of area registration (without home visits): who to contact**

We have recently registered you at the practice as an ‘out of area’ registered patient. We are aware that you live outside the practice area (catchment area) and when we registered you we explained that we are not required to provide you with a home visit.

You may on occasion, develop an urgent illness or injury at home that means attending the GP surgery as normal would not be appropriate.

If you require a GP please contact the practice in the first instance. If we determine you need access to services local to where you live we may ask you to call NHS 111.

In these circumstances NHS 111 will direct you to the local service that has been established by NHS England for patients such as you. This local service could be a GP practice near to where you live, the local walk-in or urgent care centre, A&E or minor injuries unit.

This local service will then decide if you can attend for an urgent face to face appointment with a healthcare professional or if a home visit is needed which will be based on your individual circumstances.

If this is in the out-of-hours period when GP surgeries are normally closed – between 6:30pm and 8:30am weekdays and during weekends – NHS 111 will direct you to the local out-of-hours provider.

**Annex C**

**Out of area registration -model of communication for GP practices**

**Suggested text for practices to incorporate into letters to patients where it is no longer deemed appropriate for them to be registered out of area**

Dear patient

You will recall that when you registered with this GP practice on \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ we advised you that you were joining our list of patients under arrangements which did not require us to provide home visits to patients who live outside the practice area.

You were accepted on to our list under this arrangement because it was agreed it was clinically appropriate and practical to register you in this way.

In considering this type of arrangement, it is very important that your individual health needs can be safely and effectively provided by a GP practice that is away from your home address.

Since you registered with us, we have come to the professional opinion that it would be more clinically appropriate and practical for your specific healthcare needs if you registered with a GP practice nearer to your home that can provide any home visits or urgent appointments more conveniently for you.

We therefore invite you to register with a practice closer to home.

If you need help in finding a local GP practice or returning to your previous GP practice, you can access the NHS Choices website (www.nhs.uk) or telephone NHS 111 which can provide details of local NHS services.