

Home Visit Requests

Due to increasing demand on primary care services and an ongoing national shortage of GPs, we have had to outline a home visiting policy. Home Visits are discretionary and not an absolute requirement of GP terms and services.

If you are requesting a home visit for yourself or somebody else, please call as early as possible and, if capacity allows, your request will be sent to a GP.

Home visits may be carried out by a member of the Acute Visiting Team (AVS) or the GP and are reserved for the following groups of patients:

- Terminally ill
- Bed-bound (unable to leave the bed even for using the toilet)
- Severely ill and cannot be mobilised in a wheelchair
- Severe mental health issues e.g. Severe learning disabilities

If you do not fulfil the above criteria, it is at the doctors' discretion

Please remember that a doctor can see up to four patients in surgery in the time it takes to make one visit. Patients can also be examined more thoroughly in a surgery environment and there is access to all your medical records including those held on computer. Consultations outside of the surgery carry a higher risk of medical errors. Please help us to help you and our other patients by visiting the surgery whenever possible.

Babies and small children should always be brought to the surgery where we will do our best to see them promptly. If the reception staff are made aware that your child is particularly unwell, they will do everything they can to see that you are not kept waiting unnecessarily to see the doctor.

Transport/social problems

We cannot undertake home visits for reasons of convenience, lack of transport, or because simply a patient is a resident in a residential care home, sheltered accommodation or nursing home. We will be happy to provide you with details of local taxi firms and volunteer car services. From experience, we are aware that relatives, neighbours or friends are often willing to help out. Our responsibility to you is to resolve the medical problem you have; your responsibility is to take all reasonable steps you are able to, to enable us to do that.

If you are too ill to attend the surgery and require a home visit, please telephone at 8am, if possible. Please be aware that if we have reached safe capacity on the day you call, you will be signposted to NHS111 to request a visit. A member of the healthcare team will telephone you prior to the visit to assess the need for a home visit and may decide that it would be better to see you at the surgery. Alternatively, it may be that your problem can be dealt with by telephone advice and it can also help the health professional to collect some information required as necessary for the visit.

Conditions that do not require routine home visits:

- Young children – Fevers, coughs and colds, wheezing, difficulty breathing, earache, rashes, diarrhoea and vomiting, tummy pains and most other problems
- Older children and adults – Fevers, coughs and colds, "flu", sore throats, back pain, tummy pain, minor breathlessness and other minor illnesses
- Senior citizens – Poor mobility, joint pain, poor memory or tiredness

The general rule is that if a patient is fit enough to visit an optician, attend a hospital outpatient appointment, dentist, friend, relative, do own shopping or hairdresser, they can come to surgery.

In the past, GPs were able to do routine follow-up home visits. Sadly, pressures of time and more patients needing attention means this is no longer possible.