



GP Registration Project

Haringey PPG Network



Why we needed to make it easier for patients to register with a GP

- We were contacted by a number of local people who told us they found it difficult to register with some Haringey GPs as the reception staff insisted on proof of address or identification.
- A man was told he needed proof of his Haringey address from three months ago, even though he had only just moved into the area.
- A migrant support organisation told us a client had tried to register at four GP surgeries in Tottenham but they all asked for proof of address and proof of ID, which they could not supply.
- A Haringey Welcome survey in 2019 found “...of 15 GP practices, 10 practices refused to register a patient if they had no formal ID”.



What are the rules?



I have the right to register and receive treatment from a GP practice

I do not need a fixed address.

I do not need identification.

Anyone in England can see a GP.

Our GP Registration project

From October 2022, Healthwatch Haringey started checking every Haringey GP practice to find out if they would register a new patient without proof of address or ID.

We are doing this in three ways

1. Calling the practice and introducing ourselves as HW Haringey
2. 'Mystery shopping' GP practices through phone calls
3. 'Mystery shopping' GP practices through practice visits.

We want to make sure that practice staff know what the rules are and know how to help people who can't provide ID.



Do you need to see a doctor?

Everyone in England has the right to register with a GP (General Practice) doctor's surgery, regardless of immigration status or not having a fixed address.

Find out more inside >>



We've produced a leaflet explaining people's right to see a GP

This leaflet is on our website.

It will be printed.

It will be translated into

Turkish

Spanish

Polish

Bulgarian

Somali

Headline findings

- So far we have spoken to most of the GP Practices by phone
- We are half way through the in person mystery shopping visits.

In the phone calls where we introduced ourselves as Healthwatch Haringey...

We asked 38 Practices if they required proof of ID

27 answered 'yes'

10 answered 'no'

1 refused to answer any questions

We asked 38 Practices if they required proof of address

24 answered 'yes'

13 answered 'no'

1 refused to answer any questions

We found 9 Practices were following the guidance and not insisting on ID



Some other things we found out

- One Practice said they never asked for documents and this didn't cause any additional problems.
- One Practice claimed to be full up – but checking on their website and on the NHS website - they were taking new patients.
- I called one Practice three times on different days but the line was busy with no queuing system. I finally got through by calling another branch and asking to be put through.
- I waited for the phone to be answered for more than an hour at one surgery. Then I got cut off.



We hope to achieve...

- More GP practices follow government guidelines and do not require proof of address or identity.
- More people from refugee or migrant backgrounds and people affected by homelessness find it easier to register at GP surgeries without the need to provide proof of address or identity.
- More people from refugee or migrant backgrounds can register at GP surgeries with confidence that their details will not be shared with the Home Office.
- More people working in the voluntary sector can understand how to support people to safely register with a GP.



What next?

- We are launching the posters and leaflets at events in May 2023.
- At the same events we will release the results of the surveys of GP practices
- We are asking voluntary organisations, food banks, migrant support organisations, community centres, shops, supported housing providers and other community organisations to display a poster and make leaflets available.



How you can help?

- Have the people you know experienced barriers when trying to register with a GP? We'd like to hear about that.
- Have you heard of any good experiences? We want to highlight good practice.
- Would you be able to take posters and / or leaflets to give to people you know?
- Do you have any in-person events, drop-ins or meetings? Invite us to speak to volunteers or staff.



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