

## Addresses

**For Action**  
GP practices

**For Information**  
Scottish General Practitioners Committee  
Primary Care Leads NHS Boards

## Policy Enquiries to:

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Dear Colleagues

## Introduction

1. This letter provides an overview of the current general practice patient registration arrangements. These include:
  - A process has been created to allow patients to complete the registration form online and then email it to the practice
  - Patient Registration Guidance; and
  - Registration during the pandemic

## Patient Registration Process

2. We are amending the patient registration process to reduce the spread of Coronavirus by limiting the volume of traffic to GP practices and reducing the amount of paper handled.
3. The amendment to the process will commence on Monday 14th December and patients will then be able to complete a registration form online (on NHS Inform) which can then be emailed to the practice. The registration form can be downloaded from the portals below.
4. We would encourage you to review the registration content on your practice websites. You can also upload the revised registration form to your practice website so patients can download it from there or insert the link to the NHS Inform page (see below). Your practice website will have to be updated to reflect the latest registration form which is now an editable PDF document and also to advise patients which practice email address to use to send the completed registration form to the practice.
5. Patients will email the completed forms to your nominated mailbox. Other registration processes will stay the same, although transferring patient details onto other systems

may be sped up as practice staff will be able to copy and paste from the electronic form.

6. On receipt of the email we would encourage practices to email the patient to confirm receipt and if their registration has been accepted or not, and if not why not e.g. your practice list is closed, the patient lives outwith the practice area etc.
7. The following portals are currently being updated to reflect the changes and will detail clear instructions for GPs and patients.
  - [NHS Inform - Registering with a GP practice](#)
  - [NHS National Services Scotland - Registering patients](#)

### **Patient Registration Guide**

8. Scottish Government published [guidance](#) on registering patients on 26 September 2018. This guidance is up-to-date and should not be affected by Brexit.
9. The two key principles of the guidance are:
  - No documents are required to register with a GP. The inability by a patient to provide identification or proof of address is not considered reasonable grounds to refuse or delay registering a patient; and
  - Anybody in Scotland may access primary care services at a GP practice without charge.

### **Registering with a GP Practice During the Covid-19 Pandemic**

10. As part of the [COVID-19 primary care update](#) Scottish Government advised that:

*Practices should continue to accept applications from new patients. It is important that patients who have moved to new areas are able to register with a GP. Patients who are already registered with a GP in their area are able to apply to another practice for inclusion on their list of patients but those practices are not obliged to accept them or Health Boards to assign them to a practice list.*
11. Scottish Government issued this guidance to prevent practices being overwhelmed by new patient registrations when neighbouring practices had to reduce, postpone or otherwise not offer services temporarily due to sickness or the need to self-isolate.
12. Scottish Government will review this advice once the current situation regarding the Coronavirus improves.

### **Enquiries**

13. Any enquiries resulting from this letter should be raised with David Rudden.

Yours sincerely



Michael Taylor  
Primary Care Directorate  
Scottish Government

## **Annex - Information for GP Practices Registering New Patients**

### **New Registration Process – December 2020**

From the 14<sup>th</sup> of December 2020 patients will have an option to download and complete the registration form from [NHS Inform](#) or [NHS NSS](#) and will then email their preferred practice with the attached completed registration form. Patients that do not have access to a computer to complete the registration form will be advised to phone the GP practice for an alternative method.

When a patient registers at a GP practice, their details are matched to the record on the Community Health Index (CHI).

Their details are matched or a new record is created. This provides the CHI number and other data, such as the NHS number, to the practice.

### **Next steps**

As per the GMS regulations, practices can register a patient whether they live in their practice area or not.

An application can be made by the patient or their representative, (i.e., parent, local authority, voluntary organisation etc.) and details should be recorded on the GP registration (GPR) form.

A GP practice should only refuse registration if it has reasonable grounds to do so which do not relate to the applicant's race, gender, social class, age, religion, sexual orientation, appearance, disability or medical condition and should write to the patient to inform them the reason for refusal.

Practices can refuse a patient's registration request if they live out with the agreed practice boundary, as per their GMS contract.

Registrations should be recorded in the GP practice clinical system as quickly as possible to ensure registration on CHI is confirmed and the medical record transfer process can begin.

### **Timings**

Registration transactions are received by Practitioner Services Medical Registration teams up to four times a day and are dealt with as quickly as possible.

Once the CHI is updated this information is shared with other CHI users such as national screening systems, Scottish Care Information (SCI) Store and others.

If you're having difficulties or feel there's been a delay, please contact your local Practitioner Services office who'll assist.

For any other technical problems, you should speak to your clinical system supplier.

### **Register Permanently with a GP**

Application to register a patient permanently with your practice  
[Download the 2020 GPR form \(PDF 764KB\) \(external link\)](#)