

How to guide – General Practice Nurses undertaking House Calls

This 'How to Guide' has been written for the nurse working in a general practice setting providing services to a patient in their own home.

Whilst PNs are employees of an independent contractor, who is therefore not bound by all Board policies, it might be helpful for practices, as employers, to consider the issues covered in this guidance and the Board policies.

While home visiting can have significant benefits to patients, there are risks associated with nurse home visits for the nurse, patient and employer that require policies and procedures to be established by Practices. These systems should address occupational health and safety requirements and highlight potential risks to ensure the House Call role is maximised.

Planning

Practice team is aware of risks, benefits, processes and roles

To ensure a successful framework for PNs undertaking House Calls there needs to be a whole practice approach.

- All staff must be aware of the role they will play.
- Consideration of the benefits to the patient as they may already have good rapport with GPN. The nurse's knowledge of patient, family and social circumstances and they may be well placed to support family at home.
- Consideration of impact of the changes of the role to the individual nurse.

Consideration of the following will allow the creation of a robust policy for use within your Practice.

PN role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide clear guidance as to activities that the PN will carry out whilst on house calls • PN Job Description/Contract, how will this be amended to include change of duties
Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHS GGC Lone Working information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ NHS GGC Lone Working Policy ○ NHS GGC Partnerships Lone Working page • Practice Policy Level (above NHS GG&C guidance can support development of below) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Management of Lone Working <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider producing policy • Risk assessment • Personal safety • Communication
Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What equipment is required • How will this be carried • Transport of samples • Transport of vaccines/cold chain • Waste disposal
Practice Arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are House Calls allocated • Frequency of House Calls • Time allocation per visit • Travel time in between visits • Who makes appointments • IT/notes availability during visit • Consider integrating into current processes
Future Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider training for GPN to include verification of death • Increased collaboration with community nursing team
Travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Method of travel • If using car, Drivers licence, insurance cover.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree policy if accident occurs during House Calls • Mileage costs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consider using template for logging miles ○ Payment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree payment mechanism • Agree mileage costs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ https://www.gov.uk/expenses-and-benefits-business-travel-mileage/rules-for-tax ○ http://www.nhsemployers.org/your-workforce/pay-and-reward/nhs-terms-and-conditions/nhs-terms-and-conditions-of-service-handbook/mileage-allowances
Insurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice: Are the Practice's indemnity arrangements robust? • PN: some Unions provide indemnity for House Calls: check with the General Practice Nurse • Car: GPN's car insurance policy will need to include work within car usage section. This often costs extra, consider implications/reimbursement of cost

Implementation

Support the practice staff in their roles

- Consider supporting process with check list
- Practice Nurse must inform staff that they are about to leave and ensure there is robust understanding as to where they are going and expected times at each patient and expected time of return to Practice.
- Consider creating a process for escalation should an issue occur during visiting

Review

After the first few visits reflect on the process, issues that arose and what improvements can be made.