

## **London GP registration scheme for people in contact with the Criminal Justice System**

### **Frequently Asked Questions FAQs**

#### **Why do we need GP registration for offenders?**

We know that offenders find it difficult to access mainstream health services, and suffer disproportionately poor health. Offenders often find it particularly difficult to registering with a General Practice, the gateway to other services. Offenders may struggle with the registration process because of: -

- Lack of appropriate paperwork
- Homelessness
- Poor Literacy skills
- Chaotic lives

#### **Why is this an issue- we already do this?**

We are aware that many practices already provide a very good service to patients, regardless of whether they are offenders or not. This program is to raise awareness in those practices that are not yet aware that NHSE has agreed that they can register offenders without a fixed address.

#### **What if the patient cannot provide proof of identification (ID) and address when they come to register?**

Practices are not obliged to ask patients for official documentation in order to prove ID or proof of residence and there are no requirements in the regulations for them to do so. Please see the attached pan-London NHSE registration guidance, agreed with the LMCs. Lack of official documentation is not a reason to refuse registration.

### **What if our practice policy is to ask for proof of ID and a patient who is an offender cannot provide it?**

Following agreement with NHS England and the probation service people will be able to provide proof of identity via their allocated probation officer /drug and alcohol service/youth offending service. Where a patient has been recently released from prison a further second proof of identity may be available from the releasing prison. As a minimum requirement the arrangements set out in p 4-6 of Pan London Operating Standards will apply.

### **What if they do not have an address, or are unable to provide proof of address?**

There will be occasions when the patient is unable to provide you with an address. This might be because they have been recently released from prison. Where patients are homeless NHSE has agreed that you should register them using the local probation office, youth offending service or community drug service address as the patient's **proxy** home address- see the attached pan-London NHSE registration guidance, agreed with the LMCs

### **Can I refuse registration because a patient is an offender?**

No. Your GMS or PMS contract states that you can only refuse to register a patient if you have “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”

### **Is it part of my contract?**

Yes. As above

### **Will I be responsible for managing any drug or alcohol treatments?**

No. Drug and alcohol services are subject to separate commissioning arrangements and will be delivered in the normal way

### **Should I have concerns about the safety of my staff and other patients?**

Generally speaking you will find that offenders present in a similar way to your other patients. In the rare instances where any patient exhibits threatening or violent behaviour you should adhere to your practice guidelines in dealing with difficult behaviour. Any concerning behaviour can be shared with partners sharing this agreement.

### **How can I be sure my staff will be safe?**

Practices should ensure that adequate health and safety arrangements are in place to ensure the safety of all.

### **Will I get any extra money?**

You will receive payment through the normal GP capitation, so your global sum will be more for having extra patients on your practice list; the capitation formula does not attribute extra weighting to patients who are offenders.

### **Who will benefit from the new arrangements?**

We believe that there are benefits: -

- a) to the individual as they are enabled to access vital primary care services;
- b) to your practice in making a big difference to patients who are often in most need of care, and in fulfilling your obligations as part of your contract to provide an equitable service;
- c) to the wider community in preventing communicable disease and general health promotion.
- d) broader cost savings to the NHS through a reduction in chaotic/unplanned attendance at A&E departments

### **Why should I do it?**

Remember that these are patients who should be registered in the normal way. They are just a vulnerable 'hard to reach' group.

The GP patient registration operating principles for primary care sets out the requirements for GPs throughout London to follow these guidelines. Registering all eligible patients also ensures compliance with the requirements of the CQC inspectorate who assess GP practices against this standard.

**Will I have a point of contact in the probation service?**

A Probation Officer, Youth worker or community drugs officer nearest to your surgery, will be appointed as the responsible officer for an offender subject to a post prison release licence or probation order. You will be provided with their name, office location and contact details. These staff are there to ensure that your patient is resettled and rehabilitated back into their local community.

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