



## **Guidance on Overseas Patients 25 August 2017**

We have been asked by several practices about the regulation concerning the registration and treatment of patients from overseas. The following guidance aims to clarify GP practices obligations under the GMS/PMS/APMS contract surrounding patient registration, particularly overseas patients, in GP practices.

### **Key Point**

The overriding principle that applies to patient registration is anyone, regardless of nationality and residential status may register and consult with a GP without charge.

This means that anyone, regardless of nationality and residential status, including tourists or those from abroad visiting friends or family in England, may register and consult with a GP. The practice cannot charge for this, even if the patient is visiting and is not resident in the country, unless the person requesting GP services chooses to be treated privately. They should be treated in exactly the same way as a UK resident.

### **Duty to provide emergency and immediately necessary treatment**

You should also be aware that all practices have a contractual duty to provide emergency treatment and immediately necessary treatment free of charge for up to 14 days to any person within their practice area that has been:

- refused application for inclusion in the contractor's list of patients
- who is not registered with another provider of essential services
- whose application for acceptance as a temporary resident has been rejected

Unfortunately, there is no definition of immediately necessary treatment in primary medical services contract regulations and practices will need to use their own clinical judgement to decide whether the treatment is immediately necessary. However, in relation to people who are visiting or not a resident in England, immediately necessary should be viewed as including treatment of new conditions and also pre-existing conditions that have become exacerbated during the period of a person's stay in England, subject to the contractor's clinical judgement.

### **Registering without proof of identity and address**

We have been asked about the practice responsibility to ascertain proof of identity, address or immigration status. While it is good practice to get such proof there is no contractual duty to seek evidence of any of these. Therefore practices should not refuse registration on the grounds that a patient is unable to produce such evidence. GP practice are not expected to act as immigration officials.

To re-iterate, anyone who is in England is entitled to receive NHS primary medical services at a GP practice and applications for registration for any patient in England must be considered in exactly the same way, regardless of country of residence.

For further information, or to arrange an interview, please contact:  
Dr Susie Bayley, Head of Communications, Derby and Derbyshire LMC





### **Do we registering these patients as temporary or permanent residents?**

The length of time that a patient is intending to reside in an area will determine whether a patient is registered as a temporary or permanent patient. Patients should be registered as a temporary resident if they are intending to reside in the practice area for more than 24 hours but less than 3 months.

It should be stressed that this guidance only applies to service provided by GPs and the regulations for secondary care are different. In general, with the exception of attendance at A&E, hospital care is chargeable unless the visitor has an exemption or is from a country where reciprocal arrangements exist. I have included a link to the [Guidance on implementing the overseas visitor charging regulations](#) should you require any further information on the regulations about secondary care.

**David Gibbs**  
**Head of Business Support**  
**Derby and Derbyshire LMC**

For further information, or to arrange an interview, please contact:  
Dr Susie Bayley, Head of Communications, Derby and Derbyshire LMC

 01332 210 008  [office@derbyshirelmc.nhs.uk](mailto:office@derbyshirelmc.nhs.uk)

