

GP Registration in Hackney, the right to access healthcare (4th Review)



**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.



**If I have any problems I can call 0300 311 2233
If I need more information I can visit www.nhs.uk/register**

- I may need help filling in forms.
- I may need help reading and understanding.
- I would like to speak to someone confidentially.

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Executive Summary

In England, access to primary care, including the ability to register with a GP, is established by law, upholding the right to health for all individuals. NHS guidelines clearly state the importance of equitable access and non-discrimination for all individuals, regardless of their background or circumstances. Nonetheless, feedback shared with us by Hackney residents suggests that barriers to registration persist, often preventing the most vulnerable from fully enjoying their right to health.

This review of GP registration practices follows three previous reviews, all showing significant improvements in relation to patients being asked to provide proof of address and identification documents.

Our fourth review of GP practices focused on three questions:

- 1. What does the overall registration **experience** look and feel like for a new patient wanting to register with a GP in Hackney?*
- 2. To what extent is the information **consistent** across phone enquiries, in person interactions and online GP practices' websites?*
- 3. What questions in the online registration form might pose a **barrier** to registration for a new patient, with a particular focus on requests for proof of address and identification?*

Findings from mystery shopping and reviews of each GP practice's website and online registration form showed that:

- 37% of GP practices (14 out of 38) proactively offered both online and paper options for registration.
- 58% of practices (22 out of 38) proactively encouraged online registration and offered a paper form only upon request.

- 68% of GP practices (26 out of 38) did not ask for proof of ID and/or address consistently in all three mystery shopping exercises.
- 32% of GP practices (12 out of 38) asked for proof of ID and/or address in at least one of three mystery shopping exercises.
- Following feedback to practice managers, 2 practices have continued to consistently ask for proof of ID and/or address – these are The Riverside Practice and Well Street Practice.
- 39% of practices are inconsistent: the information on new patient registration provided on the phone, in person and online does not match.
- 100% of practices ask the date of entry into the country as a compulsory piece of information for registration. This is a mandatory field in the registration form for all GP practices across England and it is not in the practice’s power to change the form.
- 5 practices adopt an online registration form that includes barriers to registration, some of them significant. These are one or more of the following: immigration status (refugee, asylum seeker); whether the patient is in education; name of the education’s setting.

Our recommendations aim to address the barriers and challenges we identified in the GP registration process, ensuring equitable access to primary healthcare services for all prospective patients in Hackney.

Recommendation to NHS England and the Department of Health and Social Care

Review the patient registration form GMS1 and all existing guidelines on patient registration, and remove the question about date of entry into the country. Ensure that this feeds into the functionality of GP clinical systems.

Recommendation to NEL ICB

Building on the substantial work that has already taken place, NEL ICB Primary Care Commissioning and the Local Medical Committee in conjunction with the Local Training Hub should continue supporting practices with best practice training and take individual practice-level action where required.

Questions on whether a patient is a refugee or asylum seeker should not be mandatory.

Recommendations to GP Practices

1. GP Practices should review their patient registration form to ensure that only relevant, essential information is collected from patients wishing to register. Sensitive questions about patients' personal circumstances should be addressed during private health check appointments, not at the point of registration. This approach allows GPs to gather necessary information in a respectful and confidential manner, ensuring a more humane treatment. By doing so, patients are more likely to feel comfortable and supported, which can lead to a stronger patient-provider relationship and better health outcomes.
2. The question about the date of entry into the country should be optional. A softer tone is recommended, "**Please provide the date you came to live in England**".
3. The question about immigration status (refugee or asylum seeker) should be optional. An asterisk should be added to the question to explain why it is asked. The following explanation is recommended: "**We are asking this question to ensure you receive an enhanced health check and any additional specialized support you might need**".

4. The question about educational status should be optional. An asterisk should be added to the question to explain why it is asked. The following explanation is recommended: "**We are asking this question to make sure you receive your free prescriptions and any other welfare benefits you're entitled to. It also helps us work with other organisations to provide you with better support, if needed.**"
5. The question about the educational institution attended is not necessary and should be removed, unless the individual registered is a child.
6. GP practices should sign up as a [Safe Surgery](#) to demonstrate a commitment to equitable access to healthcare, reassuring all patients of inclusive and respectful treatment, regardless of their immigration status. This aligns with NHS guidelines.
7. GP practices should ensure consistent adherence to guidelines outlined in the Primary Medical Care Policy and Guidance Manual, which stipulate that proof of identity, address, immigration status, or NHS number should not be required for registration. Any requests for such information should clearly indicate that it is only needed if the patient wishes to access their online clinical records.
8. Practices should review these guidelines as part of their annual refresher training, to prevent any deviation from the established standards. Receptionists should undergo training to enhance their awareness and understanding of the registration process. This will ensure that they provide accurate information to patients and always maintain professionalism and consistency. This training is available online from [Doctors of the World](#).
9. GP practices should recognise the digital divide and ensure alternative registration options are readily available for patients who may not have

internet access or digital literacy skills. Both online and paper registration options should be proactively offered, to meet the diverse needs and preferences of patients, promoting accessibility and inclusivity.

10. GP practices should ensure that information provided to patients through phone enquiries, in-person interactions, and on their website is clear, accurate, and consistent. Any discrepancies or contradictions in information should be addressed promptly to avoid confusion and frustration among patients.

Healthwatch Hackney will continue to seek collaboration with all GP practices to encourage signing up as a Safe Surgery and reiterate that they should not request patients to provide proof of ID and address.

Additionally, Healthwatch Hackney will seek to work collaboratively with NHS England and the Department for Health and Social Care to ensure that the online registration form and the functionality of the GPs clinical systems are amended in line with the recommended changes.

Introduction

Access to primary care, including the ability to register with a GP, is established by statutory health policy in England, which upholds the right to health for all individuals.

According to the Primary Medical Care Policy and Guidance Manual GP practices cannot refuse an application to join its list of NHS patients on the grounds of race, gender, social class, age, religion, sexual orientation, appearance, disability or medical condition. In addition, when applying to

become a patient, there is no regulatory requirement to prove identity, address, immigration status or the provision of an NHS number to register.

In early 2021 we became aware that new patients wishing to register with a GP were asked to provide proof of ID and/or address. This poses a significant barrier to access for marginalised populations, including people fleeing domestic violence; people living on a boat; people staying long term with friends but who are not receiving bills; victims of modern slavery; those trafficked into the country; children born in the UK to undocumented parents; prison leavers; those who are homeless; people with learning disabilities. This prompted us to review the registration process of all 38 GP surgeries in Hackney and make [recommendations](#) for improvement. Two further reviews followed, in [January 2022](#) and [February 2023](#), each time showing a growing number of surgeries adopting our recommendations and eliminating barriers to registration.

A fourth review was carried out in early 2024. This report details our research approach, findings and recommendations for ensuring better access to primary health care and improved patient experience for all Hackney people wishing to register with a GP.

Methodology: what we did, why and how

This review was guided by three questions:

1. *What does the overall registration **experience** look and feel like for a new patient wanting to register with a GP in Hackney?*

This question was further detailed as follows:

- 1.1 How long did the practice take to answer the call?

- 1.2 What registration options were offered?
- 1.3 What documents, if any, did they request?
- 1.4 How was the receptionist's attitude?
2. *To what extent is the information **consistent** across phone enquiries, in person interactions and on GP practices' websites?*
3. *What questions in the online registration form might pose a **barrier** to registration for a new patient, with a particular focus on requests for proof of address and identification?*

Overall patient experience

Between January and March 2024 each practice was called twice and visited in person once by our volunteer mystery shoppers. Both calls and visits were made after 9.30 am to avoid the busiest time of day, when patients might ring to make an appointment.

We wanted to monitor whether GP practices asked for proof of ID, address, immigration status and NHS number; whether both online and paper registration options were offered; receptionist's attitude and level of confidence; how the mystery shopper felt. For phone calls, we also monitored the waiting time before a call was answered. Putting emphasis on both what was said and how allowed us to provide a well-rounded evaluation of patients' experience when trying to register with a GP.

To ensure consistency, all volunteers used the same script:

"I would like to register, what information do you need to register me?"

If asked about proof of ID and/or address, mystery shoppers were instructed to say:

"I arrived 2 months ago and I don't have any documents".

If offered to register only online, mystery shoppers would reply:

“I don’t have access to the internet, can I have a paper form please?”

Information from the mystery shopping was logged on a collection sheet. This allowed for thoroughness and accuracy when recording our findings, minimising the risk of errors and omissions. It also made it easier to analyse the data and look for patterns.

Consistency

To check for consistency, in April 2024 our volunteers compared the findings from the mystery shopping with the information provided on the practices’ website. This data was also included in the collection sheet for ease of analysis.

Barriers posed by online “new patient registration form”

Lastly, we looked at potential barriers to registration posed by the new patient online registration form. Our volunteers filled in each practice’s online form (without submitting it at the end), looking for questions marked as compulsory that might pose a barrier to registration.

Acknowledgments

Healthwatch Hackney would like to thank our interns, Francesca Wolk and Sarah Hobbs, for their excellent contribution to this research project. Heartfelt thanks also to our volunteers Anam, Miglena and Millicent, who carried out the mystery shopping visits and phone calls.

Key findings

- 37% of GP practices (14 out of 38) proactively offered both online and paper options for registration.

- 58% of practices (22 out of 38) proactively encouraged online registration and offered a paper form only upon request.
- 68% of GP practices (26 out of 38) did not ask for proof of ID and/or address consistently in all three mystery shopping.
- 32% of GP practices (12 out of 38) asked for proof of ID and/or address in at least one of three mystery shopping.
- 2 practices are still consistently asking for proof of ID and/or address – these are The Riverside Practice and Well Street Practice.
- 39% of practices are inconsistent – the information on new patient registration provided on the phone, in person and online does not match.
- 100% of practices ask the date of entry into the country as a compulsory piece of information for registration. This is a mandatory field in the registration form for all GP practices across England and it is not in the practice’s power to change the form.
- 5 practices adopt an online registration form that includes barriers to registration, some of them significant. This is one or more of the following: immigration status (refugee, asylum seeker); whether the patient is in education; name of the education’s setting.

Detailed findings

This section presents our research findings. The goal was to understand the overall registration experience for new patients trying to register with a GP in Hackney.

These findings originate from the phone calls and visits our mystery shoppers carried out in person. They aim to answer the question: *What does the overall*

registration *experience* look and feel like for a new patient wanting to register with a GP in Hackney?

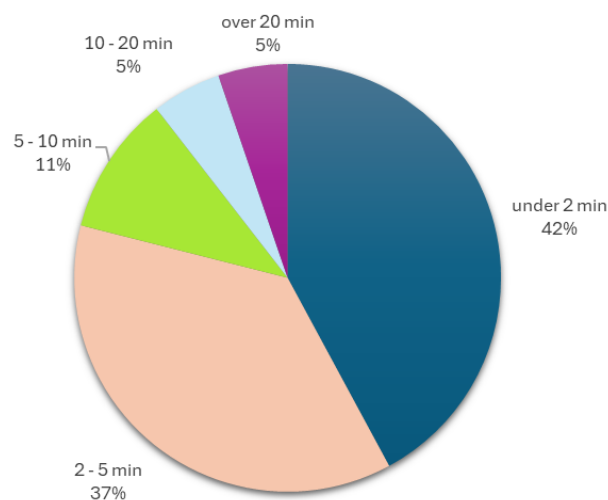


They picked up in 18 seconds flat !!!
(Mystery shopper, on the phone)

A significant portion of practices responded quickly to incoming calls, with 42% answering within less than 2 minutes, setting a benchmark for others to strive towards. 37% of practices answered within 2 to 5 minutes, suggesting a reasonably prompt service overall.

However, 11% took between 5 to 10 minutes, and 5% exceeded the 10-minute mark, including an unfortunate 5% who endured over 20 minutes of waiting. These figures highlight areas for potential improvement in service efficiency and accessibility.

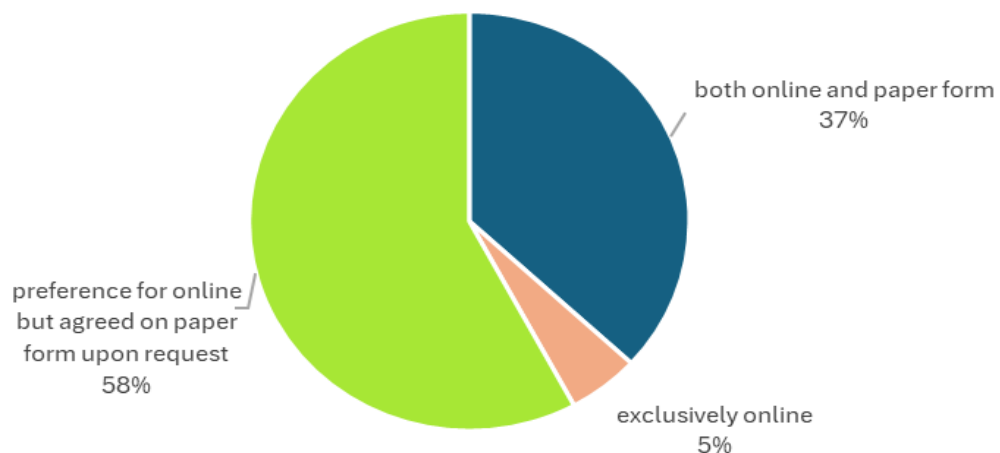
How long did it take to answer the call?



Timely response ensures that patients can access healthcare services promptly, addressing their medical needs without unnecessary delays. Conversely, long waiting times can lead to frustration and dissatisfaction among patients. A prompt response demonstrates respect for their time and contributes to a

positive patient's experience. Minimising the time spend waiting for appointments or information also improves efficiency, optimising staff productivity, and reducing unnecessary strain on services.

What registration options were offered?



Only 37% of GP practices proactively offered both online and paper options for registration. This approach acknowledges the importance of catering to the diverse needs and preferences of patients, ensuring accessibility for all, regardless of their familiarity with digital platforms and ability to access them.

58% of practices proactively encouraged online registration and offered a paper form only upon request. 5% strictly register patients online only. It is understood that this is the result of NHS' s push towards digitalisation of services, including GP registration, to improve efficiency, accuracy and speed.

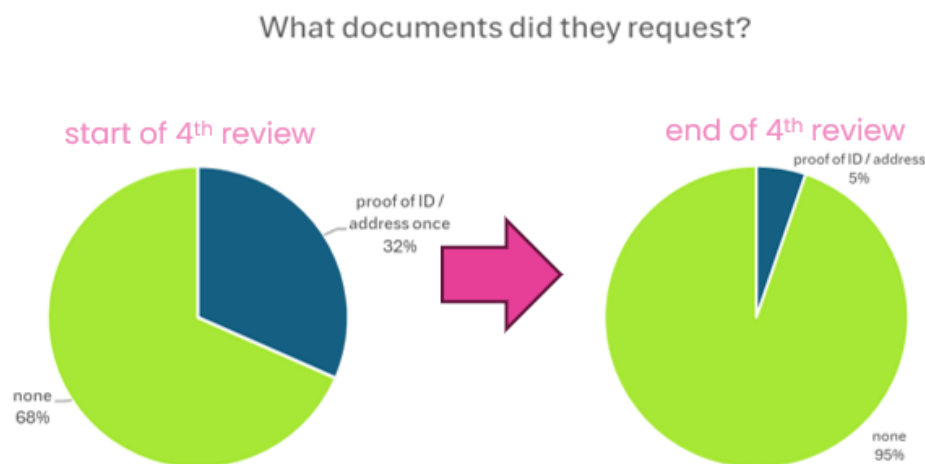


When I asked for a paper form, she told me to “go next door, they take paper registrations, we don’t”.

(Mystery shopper, in-person visit)

These findings suggest that a significant portion of practices may not be fully considering the needs of patients who do not have the knowledge or confidence to enquire about alternative registration methods. In addition, it fails to recognise that not all patients may have the motivation, ability or willingness to engage with digital technologies. This is of particular importance in Hackney, where the digital exclusion risk index shows that 53% of residents aged 65 and over lack internet access, along with 34% of individuals with long-term illnesses or disabilities, and another 34% of residents receiving benefits.

Failure to provide alternative registration options may exclude certain demographics from accessing essential healthcare services, worsening existing health inequalities. Practices should strive to strike a balance between embracing digital innovation and maintaining accessibility and inclusivity in their service delivery.



The mystery shopping phase of the review took three months (January to March 2024). At the start, when we made the first batch of phone calls, we found that only 68% of practices did not ask for proof of ID and/or address. This is a worsening from the previous review (February 2023), where the percentage of practices who were compliant stood at 85%. By the end of our

review 3 months later, we found that only 2 practices were still asking proof of ID and/or address – The Riverside Practice and Well Street Surgery.

Whilst this improvement is good news, it is likely because Healthwatch sent reminders to practices about the guidelines, which made them more aware of mystery shoppers checking upon them. This highlights how the scrutiny on GP registrations is still needed.



She told me I could register online without any documents or using a paper form and bring in proof of ID and address.

(Mystery shopper, on the phone)



She picked up my anxiety about not having documents and she was reassuring and compassionate– she told me, “don’t worry, we don’t want to see any papers”.

(Mystery shopper, on the phone)



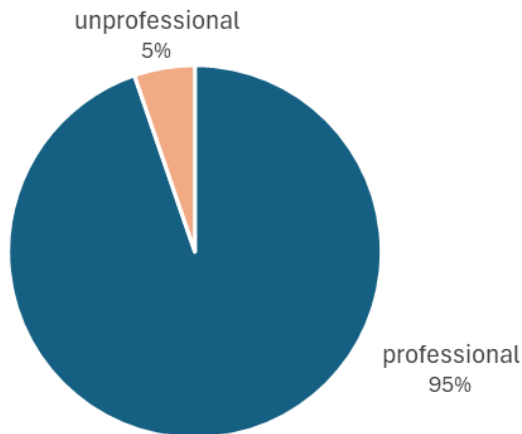
She told me I must record the exact date I entered the UK. She said it was very important and my application would be refused without this information.

(Mystery shopper, on the phone)

95% of receptionists were found to have a professional and positive attitude, both on the phone and in person. Our mystery shoppers described receptionists as "kind", "nice", "approaching", "confident" and "helpful". They felt seen, listened to and treated with dignity and respect.

Unfortunately, 5% were found to be unprofessional, which can negatively impact the patient's perception of the practice and undermine their experience.

How was the receptionist's attitude?



The receptionist was nice and warm - she even laughed with me when I told her I forgot my postcode as I have just moved in.

(Mystery shopper, in person)

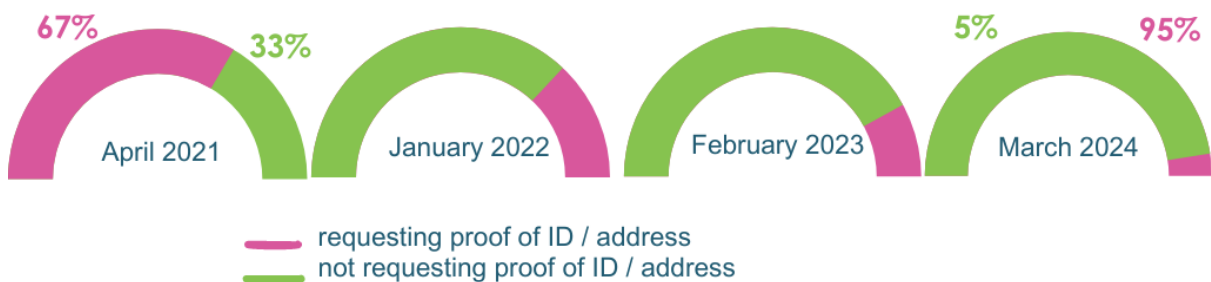


The receptionist became annoyed when I asked for a paper form.

(Mystery shopper, in person)

Comparison with previous reviews

Over multiple reviews, we have observed a significant improvement in GP practices' adherence to guidelines on proof of ID and address.



In the first review, 67% of practices were found to be asking for such documents, creating a barrier to patients' registration and a roll-on effect in terms of widening health inequalities, worse health outcomes and higher NHS cost in the long-term, for example due to high use of A&E.

In the second and third review, there was a notable shift, with 18 and 6 practices respectively still asking for proof of ID and/or address.

Finally, in the fourth review, the most recent one, only 2 practices were still asking for documents, suggesting that the majority is now adhering to the guidelines and does not require additional papers from patients.

Findings on consistency

Overall, our findings indicate a positive trend towards greater compliance with guidelines regarding proof of ID and/or address among GP practices over successive reviews. This demonstrates the effectiveness of ongoing monitoring and intervention.

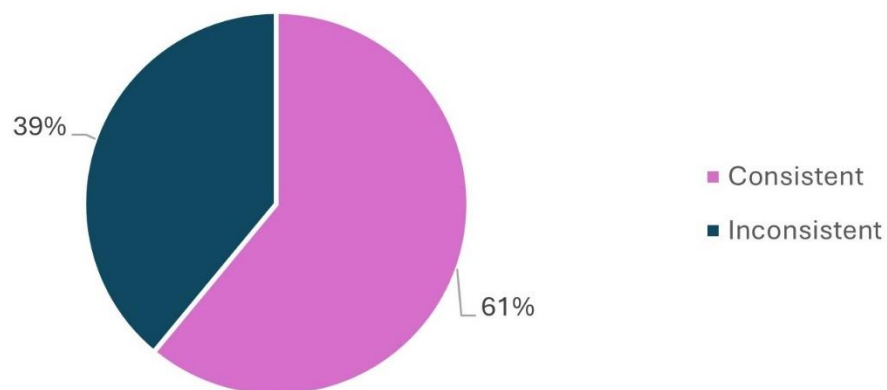
However, when we compared findings from the mystery shopping with information on the practices' websites, we identified significant inconsistencies, continuing a trend already spotted in the previous review.

The findings on consistency relate to the second question: *To what extent is the information **consistent** across phone enquiries, in person interactions and online GP practices' websites?*

Conflicting information leads to frustration and confusion, unnecessarily complicating and delaying the registration process. Conversely, consistency instills trust and confidence in the patient regarding the information provided. When they receive consistent guidance regardless of the channel they use, patients are more likely to feel assured about the accuracy and reliability of the information. Additionally, consistency aids clarity and understanding. This is of

particular importance in Hackney, where the 2022 Census recorded 89 different languages spoken in the Borough.

Consistency across phone, in person and online



Inconsistency presented in several ways. On some occasions, different receptionists at the same GP surgery gave different answers on registration options or need for documents. We also found that receptionists at some practices have poor awareness and understanding of their own registration process. They were not confident about the information they provided and had to go back and forth, seeking advice from a colleague, thus highlighting a training need.



The receptionist refused to give me forms to register stating that it is online registration only and I need passport and proof of address. Contrary to what she said, her supervisor gave me paper forms and said I could register without any documents. (Mystery shopping, in person)



First she said I needed an ID but checked with a colleague when I said I'd arrived two months ago and had no documents. After several consultations, she told me I could not register. It took her 8 minutes to tell me I can't register without proof of ID and address. (Mystery shopping, on the phone)

On other occasions we found that the receptionists were consistent in their answers; however, these were different from the information on GP practice's website. For example a practice's website states:

"We do not discriminate on grounds of race, gender, social class, age, religion, sexual orientation or disability. You will not be asked for proof of address, immigration status or identity. Proof of identity is needed if you want to have online access to your records."

However, the receptionist asked for proof of ID and address on all three mystery shopping occasions.



When asked what documents were needed, the receptionist asked for proof of ID and proof of address. When I said I had lost my passport, he suggested I provide my birth certificate. (Mystery shopping, in person)

Finally, we found some instances where the information on the website seems to contradict itself. For example, one practice's website states:

"Anyone can register without needing proof of ID, address or immigration status. We may ask to see proof of ID and/or address to ensure we register you with the correct details - however, we will always register you even if you do not have these documents".

However, further down, it is read:

"If you are a recent arrival to the UK we may need to see your passport and the visa. If you are an asylum seeker we may request to see official documentation".

This information is unclear and confusing, leaving the patient to wonder whether documents are needed or not. Additionally, while the intention may be to ensure accurate registration details, the language used, particularly in

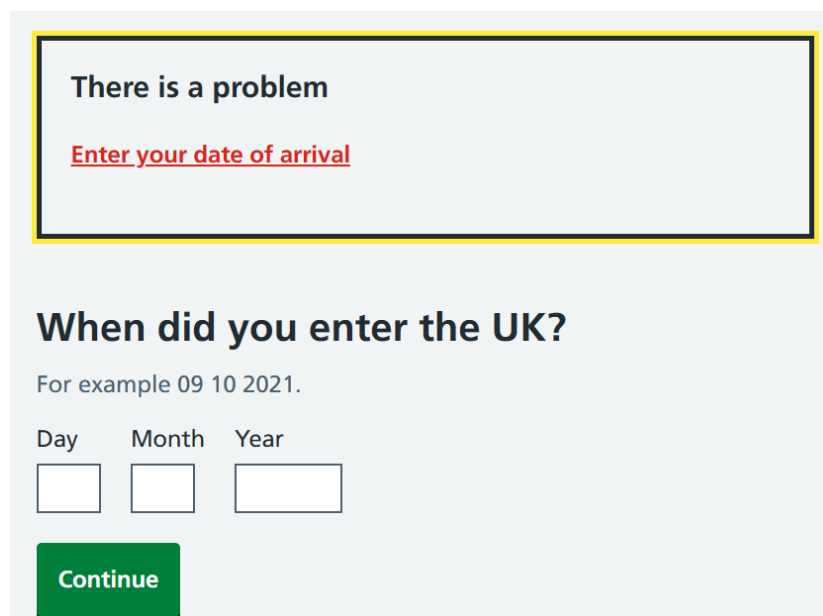
requesting official documentation from asylum seekers, raises significant concerns, given the vulnerability of these individuals. Such language not only contributes to confusion among prospective patients but also risks echoing the hostile environment rhetoric perpetuated by certain government policies.

Findings on barriers posed by online “new patient registration form”

This section reports the findings related to our third question: *What questions in the online registration form might pose a barrier to registration for a new patient, with a particular focus on requests for proof of address and identification?*

Date of entry into the country

A review of each practice’s website revealed that all online registration forms ask migrants to provide their date of entry to the country. In all cases, this is a mandatory field in the registration form for all practices in England and it is not in the practice’s power to change the form. It is understood that this information is requested to ensure patients are registered correctly.



The screenshot shows a light blue background with a yellow border around the error message box. The error message reads "There is a problem" in bold black text, followed by the instruction "Enter your date of arrival" in red text. Below this, the question "When did you enter the UK?" is displayed in bold black text, with the example "For example 09 10 2021." in smaller grey text. The date entry section consists of three input fields labeled "Day", "Month", and "Year". The "Day" field contains the number "09", the "Month" field contains "10", and the "Year" field contains "2021". A green "Continue" button is located at the bottom of the form.

Some practices explain that this is needed to assist with locating previous medical records, however, it is not clear how this is relevant, when the patient has previously declared that it is their first registration in the UK. Other practices do not provide any additional explanation. Also, some allow for flexibility, conceding that if the exact date is not remembered an approximate one is acceptable.

Immigration status: refugee or asylum seeker?

We have found that 5 practices ask their prospective patients to disclose their immigration status, notably whether they are refugees or asylum seekers.

It is understood that NEL ICB offers an incentive scheme where practices receive additional payment for registering patients housed in Home Office contingency hotels and offer them an enhanced health check. This is justified by the desire to ensure refugees and asylum seekers receive specific support and fair and equal access to healthcare. However, this is not explained to prospective patients. Instead, the only practice elaborating on the reasons why this information is requested states that while primary healthcare is available to everyone, eligibility for free secondary healthcare is contingent on residency status and certain exemptions. They use the same wording that appears in the registration form:

“Anybody in England can register with a GP surgery and receive free primary medical care. To get free secondary NHS healthcare in England, such as a referral to hospital, you need to be "ordinarily resident" in the UK. This may require you to have indefinite leave to remain in the UK or status under the EU Settlement Scheme. You may be exempt from paying for most secondary NHS healthcare, for instance if you have paid the Immigration Health Surcharge or you are a refugee, asylum seeker or victim of modern slavery. Some hospital

care, such as treatment for infectious diseases or types of violence, is free for all.”

In practice, linking access to healthcare services with immigration status contradicts the fundamental principle of healthcare as a human right. There is an extensive literature showing how such practices effectively exclude vulnerable populations, including refugees and asylum seekers, from accessing essential healthcare services, perpetuating health inequities.

Requesting date of entry and immigration status are significant barriers to registration for several reasons. Migrants, especially those with uncertain or irregular immigration status, may fear that this information could be shared with the Home Office or used against them in the future for immigration enforcement actions or to put at risk their immigration status. This fear may deter them from seeking necessary healthcare services, even if they are entitled to access them. Additionally, those who have recently arrived or are in the process of obtaining official documentation, may face challenges in accurately recalling or providing the date of entry into the country, as well as explaining their immigration status. These requirements may create additional stress and anxiety for individuals who do not have easy access to their immigration documents. Last, but not least, requesting specific immigration-related information as a condition of registration may contribute to stigmatisation and discrimination, reinforce negative stereotypes or perceptions and further marginalise those unable to provide such information.

Information about patients' education

Of the 5 practices asking for immigration status, 3 also ask information about the patients' education and name of educational institution.

It is understood that this information is requested to ensure that those in full time education enjoy free prescriptions and other welfare benefits they are entitled to. Additionally, when a child is being registered, it could be beneficial for the practice to have the child's school contact details. For example, it would facilitate cooperation with social services to discharge responsibilities on safeguarding and ensure an integrated, multi-agency approach. However, this is not explained in the registration form.

Step 2 of 3 - Personal Details

There is a problem
You need to select an option

Do you go to any of the following for your education?
This will help the GP understand what other services you have access to.
You need to select an option

School
 Nursery
 Home schooled
 None of the above

Enter details of where you go for your education
School details:
Name of school
Name of school must be between 1 and 35 characters

Postcode
Enter the postcode

Telephone number
Enter a telephone number

Continue

Healthwatch Hackney believes that patients may feel uncomfortable or unwilling to disclose personal information about their education, especially if they fail to see the relevance to their healthcare. They may also feel discriminated or stereotyped based on socioeconomic status, academic achievement, or their educational background. Research by Doctors of the World and Refugee Council suggests that this is the case notably for patients who are refugee, asylum seeker or undocumented migrants.

These are all barriers to access as patients may feel intimidated or excluded if they perceive that their educational background is being scrutinised as part of the registration process.

Recommendations

Our recommendations aim to address the barriers and challenges we identified in the GP registration process, ensuring equitable access to primary healthcare services for all prospective patients in Hackney.

Recommendation to NHS England and the Department of Health and Social Care

Review the patient registration form GMS1, all existing guidelines on patient registration and remove the question about date of entry into the country. Ensure that this feeds into the functionality of GP clinical systems.

Recommendation to NEL ICB

Building on the substantial work that has already taken place, NEL ICB Primary Care Commissioning and the Local Medical Committee in conjunction with the Local Training Hub should continue supporting practices with best practice training and take individual practice-level action where required.

Questions on whether a patient is a refugee or asylum seeker should not be mandatory.

Recommendations to GP Practices

1. GP Practices should review their patient registration form to ensure that only relevant, essential information is collected from patients wishing to register. Sensitive questions about patients' personal circumstances

should be addressed during private health check appointments, not at the point of registration. This approach allows GPs to gather necessary information in a respectful and confidential manner, ensuring a more humane treatment. By doing so, patients are more likely to feel comfortable and supported, which can lead to a stronger patient-provider relationship and better health outcomes.

2. The question about the date of entry into the country should be optional. A softer tone is recommended, "**Please provide the date you came to live in England**".
3. The question about immigration status (refugee or asylum seeker) should be optional. An asterisk should be added to the question to explain why it is asked. The following explanation is recommended: "**We are asking this question to ensure you receive an enhanced health check and any additional specialized support you might need**".
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5. The question about the educational institution attended is not necessary and should be removed, unless the individual registered is a child.
6. GP practices should sign up as a **Safe Surgery** to demonstrate a commitment to equitable access to healthcare, reassuring all patients of inclusive and respectful treatment, regardless of their immigration status. This aligns with NHS guidelines.

7. GP practices should ensure consistent adherence to guidelines outlined in the Primary Medical Care Policy and Guidance Manual, which stipulate that proof of identity, address, immigration status, or NHS number should not be required for registration. Any requests for such information should clearly indicate that it is only needed if the patient wishes to access their online clinical records.
8. Practices should review these guidelines as part of their annual refresher training, to prevent any deviation from the established standards. Receptionists should undergo training to enhance their awareness and understanding of the registration process. This will ensure that they provide accurate information to patients and always maintain professionalism and consistency. This training is available online from [Doctors of the World](#).
9. GP practices should recognise the digital divide and ensure alternative registration options are readily available for patients who may not have internet access or digital literacy skills. Both online and paper registration options should be proactively offered, to meet the diverse needs and preferences of patients, promoting accessibility and inclusivity.
10. GP practices should ensure that information provided to patients through phone enquiries, in-person interactions, and on their website is clear, accurate, and consistent. Any discrepancies or contradictions in information should be addressed promptly to avoid confusion and frustration among patients.

Healthwatch Hackney will continue to seek collaboration with all GP practices to encourage signing up as a Safe Surgery, reiterate that they should not

request patients to provide proof of ID and address, and ensure that the online registration form is amended in line with the recommended changes.

Final word by the Primary Care Delivery Manager, Thomas Clark

I would like to thank Healthwatch Hackney for their 4th review of GP registration processes in City and Hackney. Through this and previous reviews there has clearly been significant progress with removing barriers to GP registration for City and Hackney residents. Additionally, I feel that local GP practices deserve recognition for their engagement with the review and willingness to act on Healthwatch's feedback. I hope that the ICB primary care team, Healthwatch and local practices can maintain a collaborative dialogue to ensure that local GP services remain accessible for all. The primary care team will certainly continue to monitor the situation and encourage all practices to sign up to Safe Surgeries.

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