# Policy Name: New Patient Registration

## Policy Number: 17

**Introduction**

Patient registration is determined by the provisions of the practice GMS contract and terms of service.

Where a practice has an “open list” it is required to accept the registration of a new patient unless it has fair and reasonable grounds for not doing so. Where a list is open, the practice is also obliged to accept allocations by the Primary Care Organisation (PCO) to its list. The Chorley Surgery operates an ‘open list’.

**Patient Choice of GP Practices**

From January 5 2015, all GP practices in England are free to register new patients who live outside their practice boundary area. This means patients are able to register practices in more convenient locations, such as a practice near their work or closer to their children’s school. This will provide them with greater choice and aims to improve the quality of access to GP services.

These new arrangements are voluntary for GP practices. If the practice has no capacity at the time, or feels it is not clinically appropriate or practical for patients to be registered so far away from their home address, they can still refuse registration. The Chorley Surgery would explain their reason for refusing registration to patients.

**New Patient Acceptance/Refusal**

New patients should submit a New Patient Registration/Health Questionnaire, online at [Register with a GP surgery (gp-registration.nhs.uk)](https://gp-registration.nhs.uk/P81038/gpregistration/landing) or via the forms obtained from Reception. The Chorley Surgery will accept patients onto its list while it remains ‘open’. If the list is closed, the practice will only accept registrations from immediate family members of patients who are already registered and only if such relatives reside permanently at the registered patients address. Proof of residence may be required; however there is no contractual obligation to request this.

Patients will not be unreasonably refused registration and ‘unreasonable’ includes refusal based on:

* Medical condition
* Race
* Gender or sexual orientation
* Disability
* Age
* Religious group or religious beliefs
* Political beliefs
* Appearance or life style
* Homelessness

Homeless patients are entitled to register with a GP using a temporary address which may be a friend's address or a day centre. The practice may also use the practice address to register them if they wish. If possible, practices should try to ensure they have a way of contacting the patient if they need to (for example with test results).

The majority of patients will not find it difficult to produce ID / residence documentation. However, there will be some patients who do live in the practice area but are legitimately unable to produce any of the listed documentation. Examples of this may be:

* People fleeing domestic violence staying with friends or family
* People living on a boat, in unstable accommodation or street homeless
* People staying long term with friends but who aren’t receiving bills
* People working in exploitative situations whose employer has taken their documents
* People who have submitted their documents to the Home Office as part of an application
* People trafficked into the country who have had their documents taken on arrival
* Children born in the UK to parents without documentation

Reasonable exceptions therefore need to be considered and the individual registered with sensitivity to their situation. It is important that these people have equitable access to primary care services

As there is no requirement under the regulations to produce identity or residence information, the patient MUST be registered on application unless the practice has reasonable grounds to decline. Registration and appointments should not be withheld because a patient does not have the necessary proof of residence or personal identification.

**Inability by a patient to provide identification or proof of address would not be considered reasonable grounds to refuse to register a patient.**

The practice will however refuse registration if the list is officially closed.

The practice will normally refuse registration (subject to a partner’s discussion and agreement) if:

* The patient has been previously removed from the list
* The patient has a known history of violence

The reason for refusal will be in writing and recorded in a permanent record for that purpose. This excludes temporary residents, where no record is necessary.

The permanent record will consist of the original GMS1 registration form endorsed with the reason for refusal, together with a copy of the refusal letter, filed in surname order. Where a GMS1 has not been completed, a ‘dummy’ GMS1 will be prepared and filed.

The record is subject to inspection by the CCG and NHS England who may require the practice to justify a refusal to register.

There is no longer a residency condition to apply to the registration of Foreign Visitors by virtue of their foreign visitor status and this is at GP discretion, however they will be required to satisfy all other residency requirement’s which apply to normal patient registration eligibility.