

# A Guide to Choosing Your NHS GP Practice

In England, you have the right to choose any NHS GP practice to register with.

It doesn't have to be the practice nearest to you, although this may make the most practical sense for many people. You might be choosing to register with a practice that's closer to work, or close to your child's school.

A practice cannot refuse to accept you unless there are reasonable grounds, for example:

- It has no capacity to take on new patients
- It may not be accepting patients that do not live within its practice boundary
- In your particular circumstances, it may not be appropriate for you to register with a practice that's a long way from where you live - this might be the case if you require home visits.

If they refuse to accept you, they must provide you with a written reason for doing so. It's the practice's responsibility to make a clinical judgement at the point of registration as to whether it's appropriate to accept you - it's important to note that the scheme allowing out of area patients to register is voluntary for GP practices.

Using Health Compare, you can compare some key metrics which will help you decide which practice is best for you, the list includes both main and branch practices (a branch practice is linked to a main practice and shares the same GPs but may not be open as

often as the main branch). Branch practices tend to be in more rural areas, where there may not be enough patients or GPs available to justify a new or stand alone practice.

The metrics we've included are:

- User rating
- Friends and family rating
- Appointment performance (the ability to see a GP same day or next day as a percentage of patients)
- Best practice performance from the quality and outcomes framework (QOF). This indicates how well the practice performs when managing patients with long term conditions.

In addition, where available we also show website and telephone details, as well as the GPs that work within that practice. We also include details of the nearest pharmacy, which is useful if you need to get regular prescriptions, and will also soon be including online pharmacies.

## How to Change Your GP Practice

You are not under any obligation to disclose why you want to change practice, although the GP practices often do seek this feedback, for their ongoing learning.

All you need to do is complete a registration form with your chosen new practice and your new NHS GP will request your medical records from your previous GP. However, there may be some things you want to consider before selecting your new GP practice. Health Compare has pulled together some key information to help you choose well.

Here are some key data we make available to you to help you select the right GP practice for you or your family:

- The CQC reviews and rates all settings of care, rated from outstanding to inadequate. We sort our list by distance (from your postcode) and quality (highest first)
- GP's Within the Practice: we list the initial and surname of all the GPs within the practice
- GP/Patient Ratio: the number of patients registered and the number of GPs in the practice

Don't necessarily be put off by a large number of patients registered at a practice. Large practices may offer additional services that are useful for you, for example they may have an on-site pharmacy, or offer walk-in services that aren't available in smaller practices.

- User Rating: the overall experience score of patients registered with the practice
- Friends and Family Rating: the percentage of patients who would recommend the practice to their friends or family
- Appointment Performance: the percentage of patients who responded that they were able to see a GP "same day/next day" when they completed the practice survey; this tells you how easy it may be to get an appointment
- Best Practice Quality Outcomes Framework (QOF): the percentage achievement of national QOF requirements. This percentage indicates how well a practice does at managing patients with long term conditions such as asthma or diabetes.

## Health Compare

At Health Compare we have collated key information on GP practices to help you make an informed decision and the right choice of GP practice for you. Choose well.