

You and Your General Practice

This guide tells you what to expect from your general practice (GP) and how you can help them, so you get the best from the Health Service provided to you on the Isle of Man.

More details can be found through the links below.

When and how can you contact your general practice?

Your general practice is open from **8.00am to 6.00pm, Monday to Friday**. Throughout these hours you, or your carer on your behalf, can:

- Visit the practice
- Call them
- Go online using the practice's website or the **NHS App**.

You can choose the way you contact your practice based on what is best for you. Some practices may ask that you contact them via phone or in person for urgent queries.

What if the practice is closed?

If you need urgent help for your physical or mental health when the general practice is closed, and you cannot wait until they open, the Manx Emergency Doctors Service (MEDS) is available for patients to contact as follows

- Monday to Friday: 6pm to Midnight (telephone line closes 11:45pm or earlier, if there are multiple patients still requiring clinical advice prior to service closure)
- Weekends: 24 hour cover
- Public Holidays: 24 hour cover

Please call 01624 650355 or visit here for more details.

<https://www.gov.im/categories/health-and-wellbeing/doctors/manx-emergency-doctor-service/>

The MEDS telephone number is also on the answer machine at each [GP practice](#).

What if it's an emergency?

If it's a serious or life-threatening emergency, go straight to **A&E** (Accident and Emergency) or call **999**.

What happens when you contact your practice to request an appointment?

Whether you make your request by phone, on-line or visiting your practice, you may be asked to give your practice some details so that they can assess what is best for you based on your clinical need. The practice team will consider your request for an appointment or medical advice and your appointment will be made with the most relevant clinician, this may be a Nurse, a Doctor, a Pharmacist, a Paramedic or another healthcare professional such as a physio, and they will tell you what will happen next.

This could be:

- An appointment that day or a subsequent day
- A phone call that day or a subsequent day
- A text message responding to your query
- Advice to go to a pharmacy or another NHS service.

Your practice will decide what is best for you based on your clinical need.

Who might help you?

You might be offered a face-to-face appointment or a phone call with a GP or other member of the practice staff, like a nurse or pharmacist.

If you have a carer, they can speak for you with your consent.

You can ask to see a preferred healthcare professional, and the practice will try to meet your request, although you might have to wait longer for that person to be available.

It can be helpful to see the same healthcare professional, particularly if you have a long-term health condition.

From what age can you see a GP on your own?

If you are **16 or older**, you can make and go to appointments by yourself.

If you are **under 16**, you can still ask to see a GP without your parent or guardian. The GP will decide if that's appropriate for you.

What if you need extra help?

If you do not speak English, you can ask for interpretation services in your preferred language when you make an appointment.

If you need extra help like longer appointments, a quiet space, wheelchair access, or information in a different format, please tell your practice and they will try to help. (This is known as reasonable adjustments)

How do you choose a general practice?

You can:

- Call or visit a local practice
- Use <https://manngis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=4de29b6b62064784aa42110611b48ff0> to identify which GP Practice you can register with.

If you want to change to a new general practice you can do so at any point, but you must live in that GP practices boundary area.

If you move home, you may be asked to register at an alternative GP Practice, that offers services to where you are now resident.

Do you need ID or proof of address?

Currently all GP Practices require Identification and they will normally also ask for proof of address, this is to ensure that you are entitled to free NHS care.

You can still register with a practice if you are homeless, your practice will assist you with this.

Can a practice say no to registering you?

They must write to you within **14 days** if they say no and explain why. A practice can only say no for a good reason, for example if you live outside of their boundary area, which would restrict their ability to provide home visits if you required them or their patient list may be closed. For example, they **cannot** say no for reasons such as not having a permanent address, or for reasons connected with other characteristics protected under equalities legislation.

Can you choose which hospital or clinic you are referred to?

If your GP needs to refer you for a physical or mental health condition, they will do so to an on Island service in the first instance. For certain medical conditions you may need to see an off Island service to ensure you receive the right level of care, this will be explained to you by the service involved.

The Isle of Man has established connections with a number of UK Hospitals, you will be referred to the most appropriate location to care for your needs.

If you are new to the IOM

If you have the right to work and live here and intend to be ordinarily resident, then you can register with a GP. The service is free to use.

If you are **visiting** from another country, have a visitor's visa or awaiting a full visa, then you can still register with a GP practice, but you would have to pay as a private patient.

If you are ordinarily resident in the UK and visiting the Isle of Man

If you are away from your normal residency in the UK for more than 24 hours (but less than 6 months), you can register as a **temporary patient** near where you're staying. Your care will be free under the reciprocal agreement the Isle of Man holds with the UK.

This service provides urgent medical care, ordinarily for things that occur whilst on holiday, that cannot wait until you return home.

Do general practices charge for anything?

NHS GP services are **free**, but not all services GP Practices provide are free. Sometimes, if you ask the GP to undertake private work (like writing a letter for insurance, or providing travel vaccinations), they will charge a fee. Each GP Practice are individual businesses, so charges may vary from practice to practice.

How should everyone be treated?

The practice should treat everyone fairly, kindly and respectfully. Likewise, you should also treat staff with respect. The practice can remove patients from their list if they are violent or abusive to staff.

To learn more about your rights, you can read the National Health and Care Service Charter (IOM). <https://www.gov.im/media/1363832/national-health-and-care-service-charter-march-2018.pdf>

How can you help your general practice?

1. **Be prepared:** Before an appointment, think about writing down your symptoms, what you are worried about and what you want to talk about.
2. **Be on time:** Being late for an appointment or being unavailable for a timed call-back can affect other patients.
3. **Cancel if needed:** If you can't go to your appointment, tell the practice as soon as you can, so that they can offer it to someone else.
4. **Use the NHS App or website:** If you're confident using smart phones or computers, you can book or cancel appointments, order repeat prescriptions, and see your test results online.
5. **Turn on notifications:** If you use the NHS App, turn on notifications so the practice can contact you more easily. Please keep an eye out for messages.
6. **Order repeat medicines on time:** Make sure you ask for repeat prescriptions on time, so you don't run out, and only order what you need. Most practices require at least 48 to 72 hours to process requests
7. **Join the Patient Participation Group:** Your practice may operate a Patient Participation Group who will have a group of patients who can offer feedback on the services it delivers. Your GP practice website will indicate if there is a group at you practice and also explain how you can join.

How can you give feedback or raise concerns?

If you want to give feedback (positive / negative), raise a concern or wish to make a formal complaint, ask to speak to the practice manager. If you don't feel comfortable doing this, please consider the following alternative options:-

- To provide feedback anonymously about your GP Practice, please do so by using the [Friends and Family link](#) and you will be able to give valuable feedback about the service you have received.
- For a concern – please contact the Manx Care Advice and Liaison Service (MCALS) on 01624 642642 or via Email: mcals@gov.im you can also find additional information here [Link to their website](#)
- To make a complaint to Manx Care about a GP Practice please contact

Care Quality and Safety Team

First Floor, Reayrt Noa
Noble's Hospital
Strang
Isle of Man
IM4 4RJ

Email: manxcarecomplaints@gov.im

Telephone: 01624 650500

Whoever you contact their job is to make sure NHS leaders and other decision-makers hear your voice and use your feedback to improve care.

Should you ever be dissatisfied with a response received to a complaint you have raised, the Health and Social Care Ombudsman Body (HSCOB) is an independent and impartial organisation that can be contacted to have your complaint independently reviewed, and any information you share with them is confidential.

Please refer to the *Complaint Regulations 2022* for detail on the regulations.

<https://www.gov.im/media/1377349/national-health-service-complaints-regulations-2022.pdf>