

Patient Registration Policy

Students' Health Service

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1. Purpose

This policy sets out the criteria for new and continuing patient registration at the Students' Health Service, University of Bristol (UoB).

The practice operates an open patient list unless formally agreed otherwise with the commissioner. Applications for registration will be accepted where patients meet the eligibility criteria set out in this policy unless there are reasonable grounds to refuse in line with NHS England guidance.

This policy is applied in accordance with the [NHS England Primary medical services policy and guidance manual \(PGM\)](#), the [Equality Act 2010](#), and applicable data protection legislation. The practice will not refuse or remove patients on unlawful discriminatory grounds.

2. Definitions

Practice

The Students' Health Service is referred to as 'the practice.'

Address

Address refers to:

- Term-time address for current students and their dependants
- Current address for leavers and their dependants.

Boundaries

In-area

The in-area boundary as defined by the [Postcode checker.xlsx](#).

Out-of-area (OOA)

The out-of-area boundary as defined by the [Postcode checker.xlsx](#).

Ineligible postcode

Outside both the in-area and out-of-area boundaries as defined by the [Postcode checker.xlsx](#).

Registration types

In-area registration

Patients whose address lies within the in-area boundary.

Out-of-area (OOA) registration

Patients whose address lies outside the in-area boundary but within the out-of-area boundary.

Temporary registration

Patients who are temporarily resident within the in-area boundary and require immediately necessary treatment.

The term may be used interchangeably with:

- Temporary patient
- Temporary resident

Patient types

UoB student

A current University of Bristol student with valid student ID, studying a Bristol based course. This includes international students studying at Bristol temporarily e.g. year abroad, summer school, etc.

UoB student dependant

A child (under the age of 18) or partner of a UoB student who lives at the same address.

UoB leaver

A UoB student who has left university permanently, e.g. graduated, withdrawn, or otherwise ceased their studies, while registered as a patient at the practice.

UoB leaver dependant

A child (under the age of 18) or partner of a UoB student who lives at the same address.

3. Registration

3.1. Eligibility criteria

New patient registration at the practice is primarily intended for UoB students and their dependants, in line with the practice's service model and contractual obligations.

Patients may remain registered at the practice once they leave university, provided they continue to live within the in-area boundary and do not register with another GP practice.

	Registration type	UoB student	UoB student dependant	UoB leaver	UoB leaver dependant	Local resident
Lives within in-area boundary	In-area	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Lives outside in-area boundary in UoB accommodation	Out-of-area	Eligible postcodes	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
Lives outside in-area boundary in private accommodation	Out-of-area	Eligible postcodes	No	No	No	No
Lives outside both in-area and out-of-area boundaries	Not applicable	No	No	No	No	No

Address

Eligible postcodes

To be eligible, a postcode must meet ALL of criteria 1–3 **AND ONE** of criteria 4, 5a or 5b.

Postcodes must meet ALL the following:

1. Located within BNSSG ICB, to support established ICB referral pathways.
2. Southmead Hospital or the Bristol Royal Infirmary (BRI) is the nearest A&E department, to align with local urgent care pathways and commissioning arrangements, and to enable safe access to emergency and urgent care services.
3. Be a valid residential postcode.

AND you must meet ONE of the following:

4. Be within BS1, BS2, BS3, BS4, BS5, BS6, BS7, BS8, BS9, BS10, BS11, BS13 or BS15 postcode areas.

OR

5. Be within BS14, BS16, BS32, BS34, BS36 **AND:**

a) Within Bristol City Council

OR

b) Within South Gloucestershire City Council **AND** geographically south of the M4 and M5 **AND** geographically west of the A4174.

Ineligible postcodes

To provide a safe and accessible service to patients, the following postcodes are not eligible to register due to limitations in the practice's ability to provide safe, timely and accessible care, including access to urgent, emergency, and community services:

1. Postcodes within BS14, BS16, BS32, BS34 and BS36 that do not meet the criteria in 5a or 5b.
2. All postcodes within BS20, BS21, BS22, BS23, BS24, BS25, BS26, BS29, BS30, BS31, BS35, BS37, BS40, BS41, BS48 and BS49.

This means that students living on or near the Langford campus will need to register with a local GP practice.

Map

The map below shows the approximate:

1. In-area boundary (shaded area)
2. Out-of-area boundary (blue line)

It is provided for illustrative purposes only and cannot be used to determine the eligibility of a specific postcode.



In-area registration

To register as an in-area patient the patient must:

1. Live within the in-area boundary.
2. Be a UoB student or the partner or child (under the age of 18) of a UoB student who lives at the same address. Other dependants at the same address will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Head of Service or Deputy Head of Service.

Out-of-area registration

To register as an out-of-area patient, the patient must:

1. Live within the out-of-area boundary as defined by the [Postcode checker.xlsx](#)
2. Be a UoB student enrolled on a Bristol-based course with face-to-face teaching.
3. Understand and agree that General Practitioner (GP) home visits are not available to out-of-area patients.

If a patient requires urgent care and cannot attend the practice, they will be directed to either:

- Register as a temporary patient or resident at a nearer GP surgery to request a home visit.
- Attend a local urgent treatment centre or Accident and Emergency (A&E) department in Bristol.
- Call NHS 111 to direct them to a local urgent treatment centre if they are not in Bristol.

UoB leavers and dependants

UoB leavers and their dependants can remain registered after leaving UoB if they:

1. Live within the in-area boundary.
2. Have not registered at another GP practice after leaving.

The following additional provisions apply:

- UoB leavers and their existing dependants cannot register for the first time, or re-register at a later date, unless they have remained continuously registered with the practice since leaving UoB and continue to live within the in-area boundary.
- New dependants under the age of 18 of a registered leaver (for example, a child born, adopted, or fostered after leaving UoB) can register as a new patient after the leaver has left UoB. Other new dependants at the same address will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Head of Service or Deputy Head of Service.
- In exceptional circumstances, where a UoB leaver is unable to confirm a fixed onward address or is experiencing vulnerability that may affect their ability to register with another GP practice, flexibility may be applied in line with the practice's approach to [Transitional and vulnerable patient registration](#).

Students on placement

UoB students on placement may remain registered if their residential address meets the eligibility criteria for in-area or out-of-area registration.

Temporary registration

Policy context

[NHS guidance](#) advises that if students spend more weeks of the year at their university address than elsewhere, they need to register with a GP practice near their university as soon as possible.

Temporary registration is intended for patients who are temporarily resident within the in-area boundary and require immediately necessary treatment. For longer stays, this may include short-term follow-up required to complete a single episode of care. The practice will not provide ongoing, routine, or long-term condition management.

Students who remain registered with a GP practice near their home address are expected to access routine and ongoing medical care from their registered practice.

Approach

The practice will consider requests for temporary registration in line with [NHS England Primary medical services policy and guidance manual \(PGM\)](#) and [British Medical Association Guidance on patient registration for GP practices](#).

Applications will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, considering clinical appropriateness, patient safety, and practice capacity. The practice reserves the right to decline requests where there are reasonable grounds to do so.

All appointment requests for temporary patients will be triaged in the same way as for permanently registered patients. Where a patient's needs extend beyond immediately necessary treatment, they will be directed to their registered GP practice.

Eligibility

UoB students and their visiting family or friends may receive immediately necessary treatment for up to 14 days where all of the following criteria are met:

1. They are either:
 - a. A UoB student living within the in-area boundary, or
 - b. A family member or friend temporarily residing with a registered patient who lives within the in-area boundary.
2. Their clinical need requires assessment or treatment that cannot reasonably be delayed or managed by their registered practice, including via remote consultation.

Registration

For operational purposes, all temporary patients are registered as temporary residents, with duration recorded as either:

- Short stay (up to 14 days): for immediately necessary treatment.
- Long stay (up to 3 months): for immediately necessary treatment and associated short-term follow-up.

After 14 days, patients must apply to either continue as a temporary resident or, if eligible, register as a permanent patient. Continuation of temporary registration beyond 14 days (up to a maximum of three months) is subject to approval from the Head of Service or Deputy Head of Service.

Exclusions

Temporary registration will not normally be offered to:

- UoB students who remain registered with their home GP and require ongoing or routine care.
- Individuals living outside the in-area boundary.
- UoB leavers or those no longer eligible under the practice registration criteria.
- UoB staff or their visitors.
- Local residents without a connection to the university.
- Visitors residing locally for longer than three months.
- Individuals repeatedly requesting temporary registration which indicates a need for ongoing care by a registered GP practice.

Where temporary registration is declined

The practice will provide immediately necessary treatment in accordance with contractual obligations. Patients will be advised, as appropriate, to:

- Contact their registered GP practice.
- Use community pharmacy services.
- Contact NHS 111
- Attend urgent treatment centres or A&E

3.2. Support

The practice recognises that some patients may face barriers to registration. Reasonable adjustments will be made where possible to support patients during the registration process, particularly for vulnerable or disadvantaged groups.

This includes the use of interpreting services and accommodating accessibility needs in line with the Accessible Information Standard. Individual circumstances, including safeguarding considerations, will be taken into account when assessing eligibility and registration decisions.

Transitional and vulnerable patient registration

The practice recognises that some patients may have complex or transitional circumstances that affect their ability to meet standard registration criteria or access alternative GP services.

This may include (but is not limited to):

- UoB students living out of the area who experience vulnerabilities related to immigration or residency status (e.g. visa uncertainty, statelessness, or similar circumstances), and who may benefit from continuity of care through the practice due to established links with UoB.
- UoB leavers who are unable to confirm an onward address at the point of leaving the university, including those without a fixed or stable residence.

In these situations, the practice will consider requests for continued registration, or support with onward registration, on a case-by-case basis. Consideration will include:

- The patient's clinical needs and continuity of care
- Safeguarding considerations and vulnerability
- The patient's ability to access alternative primary care services.
- The practice's capacity to provide safe and appropriate care.

Where appropriate, the practice may:

- Allow a patient to remain registered on a temporary basis while their circumstances stabilise, or
- Provide additional support to help the patient register with a more appropriate local GP practice.

Any arrangements will be clearly documented, time-limited where appropriate, and subject to regular review to ensure they remain in the patient's best interests and consistent with NHS guidance.

3.3. Documentation

The practice may request confirmation of address where necessary to ensure safe and appropriate care, but lack of documentary proof will not in itself prevent registration.

Patients are not required to provide proof of identity, address, immigration status, or an NHS number to register. While documentation may be requested to support administrative processes, a lack of documentation will not in itself be a reason to refuse registration.

4. Deduction

The practice may deduct a patient from the practice list if they no longer meet the eligibility criteria for registration. This usually happens when a patient's address or student status changes.

All decisions on patient deduction will be made in line with this policy and Section 3.2.7 of the [NHS England Primary medical services policy and guidance manual \(PGM\)](#).

4.1. Notice period

UoB leavers and their dependants

UoB leavers and their dependants will normally be given 2 weeks' notice by text message to tell the practice their plans once the student's UoB registration is due to end.

The UoB leaver will be asked to confirm whether they:

1. Are leaving UoB and will live within the in-area boundary once they leave.
2. Are leaving UoB and will live outside the in-area boundary once they leave.
3. Will be continuing their studies at UoB.

If a patient does not respond within 2 weeks or is not eligible to remain registered based on the information provided, the practice will begin the process of deducting patients who are not confirmed as eligible from the practice list.

Other patients

Patients who are not UoB leavers or their dependants will normally be given at least 1 month's notice by text message and/or email. The notice will include the reason for the deduction and advise the patient to register with another GP practice.

The practice may give less than the standard notice period in exceptional circumstances, including:

- Patient or staff safety concerns (e.g. abusive or violent behaviour)
- Safeguarding issues.
- Immediate loss of eligibility (e.g. moved out of area).
- Failure to respond to repeated contact attempts.
- False or misleading registration information.

4.2. All patients

Patients may be removed from the practice list where:

- The patient no longer meets the eligibility criteria set out in this policy.
- It is identified that incorrect, misleading, or fraudulent information has been provided in relation to eligibility, including address.
- They fail to provide or confirm a valid residential address when reasonably requested to support safe and appropriate care.
- The address provided is non-residential, large-user, organisational, or otherwise invalid for registration.
- They do not have a fixed address and appropriate arrangements for safe and ongoing care cannot be established.

Note: Where a patient does not have a fixed address but is engaged with the practice and transitional arrangements for safe and ongoing care can be established, the practice may defer deduction in line with the practice's approach to [Transitional and vulnerable patient registration](#).

4.3. Out-of-area patients

In addition to the criteria set out in [4.2. All patients](#), an out-of-area patient may be removed from the practice list if:

- They attend another care provider for immediately necessary treatment at least four times in any 12-month period.
- They receive a home visit from another care provider on more than two occasions in any 12-month period.

- They have (or develop) complex long-term conditions that mean they need a package of home-based care or community-based support which would be difficult for the practice to coordinate remotely.

In these situations, the practice will review whether it is clinically appropriate for them to register with a practice closer to home.

4.4. UoB students

In addition to the criteria set out in [4.2. All patients](#), a current student will be deducted if:

- They do not live within the in-area boundary and leave their studies permanently e.g. graduate, withdraw, etc.

4.5. UoB students' dependants

In addition to the criteria set out in [4.2. All patients](#), a UoB students' dependant will be deducted if:

- They do not live at the same address as the UoB student they are dependent on.
- They are registered at an out-of-area address.
- Their linked UoB student is no longer a registered patient or no longer meets the eligibility criteria.

4.6. UoB leavers

In addition to the criteria set out in [4.2. All patients](#), a UoB leaver will be deducted if:

- They move outside the in-area boundary.
- They are registered at an out-of-area address.
- Their registered address is a UoB student-only residence.

4.7. UoB leavers' dependants

In addition to the criteria set out in [4.2. All patients](#), a UoB leavers' dependant will be deducted if:

- They do not live at the same address as the UoB leaver they are dependent on.
- Their linked UoB leaver is no longer a registered patient or no longer meets the eligibility criteria.
- They move outside the in-area boundary.
- They are registered at an out-of-area address.
- Their registered address is a UoB student-only residence.

5. Refusal to register

The practice may refuse to register a patient where there are reasonable grounds, including:

- The eligibility criteria set out in this policy are not met.
- The patient is already registered with a Special Allocation Scheme provider.
- The practice list size has reached the limit of its workforce and capacity to provide safe care to patients, as set out in the [British Medical Association's safe working in general practice toolkit](#).
- The practice has paused out-of-area registrations until capacity or patient safety concerns have been addressed.
- An out-of-area patient's clinical needs would be better met by a GP practice closer to where they live. Any refusal will be clinically justified and documented, and may apply in specific circumstances (for example, complex long-term conditions), in accordance with the [British Medical Association's guidance on Out-of-area GP registrations and patient choice](#).

All decisions to refuse registration will be made in line with this policy and Section 3.2.4 of the [NHS England » Primary medical services policy and guidance manual \(PGM\)](#). Refusal to register will not be based on protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010.

A record of all refusals will be maintained, including the reason for refusal, and may be made available to commissioners on request.

Where a patient is not registered, the practice will provide immediately necessary or urgent treatment in accordance with the [British Medical Association Guidance on patient registration for GP practices](#).

6. Registration review

There may be situations where another practice is better equipped to provide ongoing care for UoB leavers and their dependants, particularly for patients with more complex or long-term health conditions. This is because the service is designed to meet the needs of a specific patient group, and other practices may have access to services and funding that the practice does not.

Any review of a patient's ongoing registration will be undertaken on an individual basis, considering the practice's ability to provide safe, appropriate, and effective care.

This may include patients with transitional housing situations, uncertain residency status, or other complex circumstances affecting their ability to register elsewhere. In such cases, the practice will aim to balance continuity of care with the need to support appropriate long-term registration.

Where it is identified that a patient may be better supported by another practice, the practice will discuss this with the patient (and parent or carer where appropriate). The practice will explain the services available elsewhere and how these may better meet their needs. Patients will be supported to make an informed choice about their ongoing registration.

Where appropriate, and with the patient's agreement, the practice will support a transfer to another provider and aim to facilitate a safe and smooth transition of care.

Any decision to remove a patient from the list will only be made where it is appropriate to do so under NHS contractual requirements. Such decisions will be taken on a case-by-case basis, in accordance with relevant regulations, and with due regard to patient safety, fairness, and continuity of care.

7. Policy application

7.1. Patients registered on or after 13 August 2026

This policy applies to all new patient registrations from 13 August 2026.

7.2. Patients registered before 13 August 2026

No longer eligible

The practice will consider application of the policy on a case-by-case basis for patients registered before 13 August 2026 who no longer meet the eligibility criteria. See [Registration Review](#).

Newly eligible

Before 13 August 2026, students who moved outside the in-area boundary were required to register with another GP practice. Under the new policy, current students can stay registered as out-of-area patients, provided they meet the eligibility criteria. This means some students who would previously have been removed from the list when moving address may now re-register as out-of-area patients.

Therefore, from 1 May 2026, where a current student informs the practice that they are moving outside the in-area boundary, a decision on whether to remove them will be deferred until the new policy comes into effect.

From 13 August 2026, the practice will review their eligibility and either re-register them as an out-of-area patient or give notice of deduction if they do not meet the new criteria.

8. Right to challenge a decision

There is no formal right of appeal against a GP practice decision to deduct or refuse to register a patient. However, patients may request further information and ask the practice to review a decision if they believe relevant information has not been considered.

Patients can also [make a complaint to the practice](#) or the [Integrated Care Board \(ICB\)](#) if they are not happy with the practice's decision to deduct or refuse registration.

9. Governance

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required due to changes in NHS guidance, contractual requirements, or service delivery.

The document owner is responsible for ensuring it remains up to date and is approved through appropriate governance processes within the practice.

Document information

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