

Elsenham Surgery

Home Visit Policy

Review 2021

Introduction:

Although a traditional part of general practice, home visits are time consuming. Please remember that several patients can be seen in the practice in the time that it takes to make one home visit.

In addition: At the surgery Doctors have equipment to make thorough assessments for patients, for example ECG machines, nebulisers, pulse oximeter, nurses can do blood tests and dressings as required. A Doctor does not carry these with him/her. **Consultations outside of the surgery carry a higher risk of medical errors.**

Home Visits are reserved for the following groups of patients:

Terminally ill

Housebound;

Definition of housebound - Confined to one room of house by nature of illness often with carers attending numerous times throughout the day.

Patients who are severely ill in bed.

Please request visits before **11am** whenever possible as this allows the Duty Doctor to assess the request for necessity and urgency so that it can be appropriately managed. In some situations the Duty Doctor may arrange assessment by another member of the community team (District nurse/neighbourhood team)

The following ARE NOT valid reasons to perform a home visit:

Transport issues for the patient:

It is not the GP practice responsibility to arrange transport, or to perform home visits because the patient has difficulty arranging transport. In these circumstances patients should seek transport help from relatives, friends, or taxi firms. A patient may not be well enough to travel by bus or walk but travel by car can be arranged via friend, relatives or taxi firms. It is not the Doctor's duty to arrange such transport

Childcare issues for a patient

If a patient has difficulty arranging for someone to care for their children whilst attending appointments, the patients are welcome to bring their children to the surgery.

Poor mobility Senior Citizens –Poor mobility, joint pain, poor memory or tiredness.

The general rule is that if a patient is fit enough to visit an optician, dentist, friend, relative, do own shopping or hair dresser, they can come to surgery. Whilst it is understood that having poor mobility is inconvenient and unpleasant, GP surgeries are designed to cater for patients with restricted mobility. If patients are able to attend appointments at other healthcare settings, then they should also be expected to attend appointments in GP surgeries.

An unwell child

It is in the best interest of the child to attend the surgery where they can be properly assessed and treated. The clinician can make a more informed clinical judgment when seeing the child in surgery.

Conditions that do not require routine home visits:

Young children – Fevers, coughs and colds, wheezing, difficulty breathing, earache, rashes, diarrhoea and vomiting, tummy pains and most other problems.

Conditions that do not require routine home visits

Older Children and Adults – Fevers, coughs and colds, "flu", sore throats, back pain, tummy pain, minor breathlessness and other minor illnesses.

If a parent believes that the child is too unwell to travel to surgery, and is a medical emergency then it would be advisable for them to seek help from the emergency services by calling 999.

An Unwell Child Continued:

In certain circumstances where the responsible adult is unwilling to bring a child to the surgery a home visit may be undertaken to minimise any potential risk to the child if the doctor judges it necessary.

Residents of care home

Care home residents are no different to patients in their own homes. The need to visit should be based upon clinical need, not the availability of transport or staff to attend the surgery. It is the responsibility of care facilities to make transport available for residents so that they can get to medical and non-medical appointments. Routine visit requests for care homes can be requested however will be deferred until appropriate clinical resource available

.

Home Visit Co-ordinator

Take the patient's name, date of birth, address, telephone number.

Who is requesting visit?

Reason for Visit

Confirm Place of Visit

Explain the doctor will decide whether a visit is indicated. They will review reason and ring patient. Patient must remain contactable by phone (preferably a land line or if not a mobile with good reception, an answer phone should not be used).

Home Visit Flow Diagram

