

Housebound Patient Policy

1.1 Objective

To provide comprehensive and compassionate medical care to patients who are housebound.

We have developed a '**definition of housebound**' in collaboration with other GPs and community teams to encourage people, who are able, to attend clinics for their appointments.

Home visits are reserved for patients who are defined as housebound and who have been assessed as needing a visit for their medical concerns.



Home visit policy v1
2025.docx

This policy should be read in conjunction with the home visiting policy

2.1 Definition of Housebound

Our agreed definition of housebound guidelines aims to ensure that GP clinical teams, Community Nursing teams are providing routine clinical appointments in the home setting only when it is appropriate. It is acknowledged that an individual's needs may change and therefore eligibility for a home visit may be reassessed if deemed clinically necessary.

A housebound patient is someone who, due to their long term illness, is unable to leave their home without considerable assistance. If a patient can leave their home with assistance from a family member, carer or friend or can attend via taxi or other public transport, then there is a reasonable expectation that they are able to attend the GP Practice. The Central Surgery recognises that patients may become temporarily incapacitated due to short-term medical circumstances. In such cases, each situation will be assessed on an individual basis by a qualified clinician. Temporary housebound status will be granted only where clinically appropriate and will be subject to ongoing review.

An individual will not be eligible for a home visit if they are able to leave their home environment on their own or with assistance to visit public or social recreational services (including shopping and hairdressers) or attend hospital appointments without the need for stretcher ambulance transport.

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A patient's eligibility for home visits will be individually determined by The Central Surgery Clinical team, based on the above definition, and patients assessed as not meeting the criteria to be considered as housebound will be expected to attend a clinic or surgery setting. Individual circumstances will be monitored and where an individual and/or health care professional assesses that the patient's needs have changed, the patient's housebound status will be reviewed.

3.1 Identification of Housebound Patients

The Clinical Team at The Central Surgery is responsible for determining whether a patient is housebound in accordance with clinical best practices and organisational procedures. Identification may take place during routine clinical assessments or upon patient self-reporting. In cases of self-reporting, the patient's status will be evaluated by a qualified clinician to determine whether they meet the criteria for being housebound.

4.1 Principles for housebound visits

- The final decision to determine whether a patient requires a home visit rests with the assessing clinician.
- Each patient's eligibility for home visits will be individually determined.
- Patients assessed as not meeting the criteria for housebound will be expected to attend a clinic or surgery setting (this may include an Urgent Care Centre or a local clinic).
- The assessment for housebound will ensure a holistic approach including assessment of the patients' needs.
- Individual circumstances will be monitored and where an individual and/or Health Care Professional assesses that the patient's needs have changed due to either an acute onset of illness or gradual deterioration in their conditions, the patient's housebound status will be reviewed.

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5.1 Requests for home visits

Clinicians at The Central Surgery Oadby will assess and consider how they respond to visit requests in a timely manner. This is likely to involve telephone triage in advance to obtain further information to make an informed decision about whether a visit is appropriate and whether any emergency care is required, for example, a patient with chest pain should be redirected to 999 emergency response, and would not be appropriate to wait for a home visit. Sometimes a video call may be arranged if deemed appropriate. Home visits may be provided by an external NHS Home Visiting Service where appropriate.

6.1 Transport

The Central Surgery recognises that one of the most common reasons for home visit requests is a patient's lack of access to transport, rather than a clinical need.

In line with guidance from **NHS England**, it is not the responsibility of GP practices to arrange transport for patients, nor to conduct home visits solely on the basis of transport difficulties. Home visits are reserved for patients who are **medically housebound** or whose condition **clinically prevents** them from attending the surgery.

Patients who are otherwise mobile but face transport challenges will be encouraged to seek alternative arrangements, such as assistance from relatives, neighbours, or friends, or by using a taxi or other forms of public transport.

7.1 Out of area Registrations

The Central Surgery is not obligated to accept registration requests from patients residing outside of the designated practice catchment area. However, where an agreement is made with an individual patient to remain registered despite living outside this area, the Practice may continue to provide care at its discretion.

It is important to note that in such cases, the Practice is not required to provide home visits. For further details, please refer to our **Out-of-Area Registration Policy**.

Home visits will be arranged by The Central Surgery only when a clinician or the Practice has assessed that a home visit is clinically appropriate.

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In such cases, the visit may be undertaken by the **Acute/Home Visiting Service**—an NHS-contracted service commissioned by Primary Care to support GP practices in delivering appropriate home visits. If the patient is not suitable for referral to this service but has still been assessed as requiring a home visit, a clinician from the Practice will arrange to carry out the visit at an appropriate time, taking into account their clinical commitments.

Please note that in line with most other GP surgeries The Central Surgery is unable to provide **urgent** home visits. If urgent medical attention is required, the clinician will provide guidance on the most appropriate course of action, which may include contacting emergency services or seeking care through alternative urgent care providers.