

Alliance Federation SOP

For Home Visiting

The purpose of this document is for the following reasons:

1. To ensure patient safety
2. To ensure clarity to service users (patients and allied health professionals)
3. To ensure consistency to the patients of Warrington Alliance Federation

Many patients believe there is an automatic right to a home visit from a GP between 8am and 6.30pm, but this is not the case:

- *For the avoidance of doubt, it is the GP who decides if a home visit is warranted and not the patient and nor an allied health professional (Schedule 6, Regulation 26 Part 1 of GMS Contract Regulations 2004).*
- *Equivalently important, there is nothing in the Regulation to prevent the GP from completely overriding the request for a home visit and advise the patient to attend A&E, without first seeing them. This is providing “the medical condition of the patient makes the course of action appropriate”.*
- *Furthermore, and again for the avoidance of doubt, it is not the role of 111 to decide whether a GP visit is required, but to recommend that the patient contacts their own GP service.*

Doctors will always encourage people to come into the surgery because this is where the best care can be provided. Specialist equipment is there, tests can be carried out more easily and drugs issued if necessary.

- *Again, for the avoidance of doubt, it is not a doctor’s job to arrange transport to the practice. This is in line with local and national current guidance from various health care providers (Warrington GP Out of Hours) and GP professional bodies (Local Medical Committees).*

Nationally and in line with guidance endorsed by the Royal College of GPs, a home visit occurs for the following three reasons:

- *The patient is terminally ill*
- *The patient is housebound*
- *The patient has a severe learning or physical disability*

In the time it takes to see one person at home, your GP can see between four and six patients at the surgery.

For this reason and to ensure patient safety, if you request a home visit, your GP may call you back to find out more about your problem before deciding to come out to see and assess you.

This call back is known as a Direct Clinical Assessment (DCA) and usually occurs within four hours of the home visit request.

This call back (i.e. DCA) also satisfies the standards as set out by The Royal College of GPs.

In practical terms, the practice expects home visits to be requested before 10am during the working week.

If your GP cannot, for any reason, undertake this home visit then he may advise you during his call back (i.e. DCA) to call 111 for an alternative service provision (see below) or advise you to directly attend A&E.

If you are seen in the out of hours period (i.e. after 6.30pm or during the weekend), your doctor will be informed of any consultation that you have had with the doctor who saw you. This will ensure that your doctor is fully updated with any medical input which you have received to ensure and uphold patient safety.

References:

- *GMS Contract Regulations 2004;*
- *Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Trust (Warrington Division) Adult Services Home Visiting Standard Operating Procedure 2012;*
- *South Staffordshire Local Medical Committee General Practitioner Visiting Guidelines 2012;*

Warrington Out of Hours GP Healthcare Service

Please Ring 111

Mon - Fri - 6.30pm - 8.00am

Weekends and public holidays - 24 hours

The emergency GP out of hours service in Warrington provides healthcare services for patients who feel their illness cannot wait until their GP surgery re-opens and their illness is not a 999 emergency.

Patients are assessed via telephone to signpost to the available options:

- Telephone advice from a nurse or a GP
- Appointment with an emergency out of hours service GP
- A home visit by a GP
- Access to other care e.g. district nurses, mental health services or social care.

Information regarding patients who have accessed the service is then forwarded electronically the next day to the relevant GP.

Where are appointments held?

Warrington Hospital

Lovely Lane

Warrington

WA5 1QG

Home visits will only be made when this is agreed to be the best way to meet your healthcare needs.

Additional information

- This is not a walk in service. You must telephone to make an appointment, if necessary
- This is an emergency service so it will not provide some services normally available through your GP practice. These include routine prescription collection, test results or appointment booking
- Your local pharmacy can also offer you a wide range of services, including advice and medicines to relieve symptoms of minor ailments and a prescription and delivery service.

NHS 111

NHS 111 is a new service that has been introduced to make it easier for you to access local NHS healthcare services. You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is a fast and easy way to get the right help, whatever the time. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

When should you use it?

You should use the NHS 111 service if you urgently need medical help or advice but it is not a life threatening situation. For less urgent health needs, you should contact your GP or local pharmacist in the usual way.

How does it work?

The NHS 111 service is staffed by a team of fully trained advisors, supported by experienced nurses, who will ask you questions to assess your symptoms. They will then give you the healthcare advice you need or direct you straightaway to the local service that can help you best.

More information about the NHS 111 service can be found at the national NHS website