



Strategic Command
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Dear Central European Practice patients,

RE: Updated NHS England Primary Medical Care Policy and Guidance Manual – incorporation of specific guidance for MOD patients returning from overseas postings.

Following substantial collaboration between Defence Primary Healthcare (DPHC) and the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) I am pleased to share with you the updated NHS England guidance regarding processes for civil servants and family members wishing to register with a civilian GP on returning to England following overseas posting. The full updated NHS policy can be found at this link [here](#), whilst the chapter dedicated to MOD patients is also included at Annex A.

GP Practices in England are required to de-register patients who have been overseas for three months or longer. As a result, MOD civil servants or family members of service personnel who move to Europe or Turkey for a permanent posting will subsequently become de-registered from their civilian medical centre. Where not de-registered, retention of a civilian GP in England prevents the patient from being full registered with the CEP during their time overseas, as it is only possible to be registered with a single UK registered General Practice facility at one time. Subsequently retention of a UK healthcare service that is not structured to support those living overseas equally reduces the capability of DPHC to safely and effectively support those living in overseas locations.

The updated NHS policy and guidance does not take away the requirement for GP Practices to de-register patients who have been overseas for three months. Instead it focuses on improving the conditions for re-registering with a GP Practice on return to England. Registration can be undertaken remotely and up to one month prior to return to the UK, thus allowing for a smoother and more planned transition. Equally Practices are reminded of their duties with regards to acceptance of application for registration by MOD patients, with specifics dependant on whether that person/family was previously a patient at the Practice prior to going overseas. In particular it protects those persons looking to re-register at the same Practice they were a patient of before going overseas – something which I know will be of great comfort to our patients. By having this reassurance by NHS England that our patients will be accepted back to their previous GP Practice we are thus facilitated to promote full registration with CEP during time overseas - which in turn facilitates safer, more comprehensive care for all our patients.

Please do take the time to read the updated guidance and should you have any queries about it don't hesitate to contact the Practice via our group email at UKStratcom-DMS-DPHC-EJSU-CEPGrp@mod.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely,

Major Jane Keenan
QARANC
Officer Commanding CEP

Annex A: Chapter 4.15

Annex A: Updated guidance for MOD civil servants and their family members, and the family members of service personnel, returning from overseas postings

GP practices are required to de-register patients who have been overseas for longer than 3 months. As a result, some civil servants and their family members, and the family members of service personnel (SP), can face challenges registering with GPs in England in a timely way when returning from overseas postings.

However, new regulations now in force are intended to make it easier for these individuals to register with a GP practice in England ahead of, or upon, their temporary or permanent return to the UK from an overseas posting.

SP are eligible to receive Defence Primary Healthcare (DPHC) in the UK and so are not covered by these regulations. These new regulations are relevant to family members of SP **only** if they are applying to register with a civilian GP practice following their return from overseas. These new regulations do not apply where a family member is applying to register with a DPHC Families Practice. Family members who are not able to register with a Families Practice for any reason may still be able to apply to register with a civilian GP practice in accordance with the new regulations.

1. Who can benefit from these new provisions?

- Civil servants returning to the UK temporarily (i.e. for under 3 months) or permanently (i.e. for 3 months and over) from an overseas posting.
- Former civil servants who are returning to the UK temporarily or permanently from an overseas posting for the first time since ceasing to be a civil servant.
- Certain family members of current or former civil servants, and of current or former SP, who are or were accompanying the current or former civil servant or current or former service person on an overseas posting and who are returning to the UK (temporarily or permanently). The family members covered ('relevant family members') are:
 - The children (including adopted children and step-children) of the current or former civil servant or the current or former service person, if they:
 - Are, or, at the time of leaving the UK to accompany the current or former civil servant or current or former service person on their overseas posting, were, under 21 (or under 25 if they are child of a current or former service person) **and** are, or were, wholly or mainly financially dependent on that person throughout the posting, or
 - Are, or were, irrespective of their age, wholly or mainly financially dependent on the current or former civil servant or current or former service person while accompanying them on their overseas posting for reasons related to a disability.¹
 - The spouse or civil partner of a current or former civil servant or current or former service person, or individual whose relationship with the current or former civil servant or current or

¹ As defined in Part 2 Chapter 1 Section 6 of the Equality Act 2010, available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/6> . Further information on this definition can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/definition-of-disability-under-equality-act-2010>

former service person has the characteristics of a relationship between spouses or civil partners.

- The former spouse or civil partner of a current or former civil servant or current or former service person, or individual whose relationship with the current or former civil servant or current or former service person had the characteristics of a relationship between spouses or civil partners;
- The widow/widower, surviving civil partner, or surviving partner of a civil servant or service person, if the civil servant or service person passed away while on their overseas posting.
- These categories include those who become family members of a current or former civil servant or current or former service person during an overseas posting and who are coming to the UK for the first time with the current or former civil servant or current or former service person, having not previously resided in the UK. Such family members include (but are not limited to), a child born, or adopted, during an overseas posting who remains with their civil service or service person parent throughout that posting, or a person who marries a civil servant or service person during their overseas posting and accompanies that person on their posting from that time.

If you are still registered with a practice in England (e.g. because you left the UK less than 3 months ago) the new provisions made in relation to permanent registration will not apply to you.

2. Permanently registering with your former practice in England before or upon returning from overseas

If you are a current or former civil servant returning to the UK for 3 months or longer from an overseas posting, or you are a relevant family member returning to the UK for 3 months or longer having accompanied a civil servant or former civil servant on such a posting, you can apply to register with the current or former civil servant's previous GP practice² in England up to, but not more than, 1 month³ before your anticipated return date. You may also make this application up to 3 months⁴ after your return (however, we would encourage you to register with a GP provider as soon as practicable within this timeframe to ensure you are registered with a GP, in case you come to need their support).

If you are a family member of a current or former service person who is or was on an overseas posting and are returning to the UK for 3 months or longer having accompanied that person on an overseas posting, you can apply to register with your previous GP practice in England up to 1 month before your anticipated return date. You may also make this application up to 3 months after your return (however, we would encourage you to register with a GP provider as soon as practicable within this timeframe to ensure you are registered with a GP, in case you come to need their support).

This practice must register you, even if its patient list is closed, if you make the application within that timeframe, unless reasonable grounds apply (e.g. if you are going to live at an address in the UK which is outside of the practice area, and the practice is not currently accepting patients from out of

² The "previous GP practice" is: (a) if you are a civil servant or former civil servant, or a relevant family member of a current or former service person, the practice that you were registered with immediately before going on your overseas posting, or the first of consecutive overseas postings, or, if there has been a practice merger, the practice that has taken over from that practice; (b) if you are a family member of a current or former civil servant ("C"), the practice that C was registered with immediately before going on their overseas posting, or the first of consecutive postings, or, if there has been a practice merger, the practice that has taken over from that practice.

³ For example, if your anticipated return date is 1 January 2022, you could apply from 1 December 2021 onwards.

⁴ For example, if you returned on 1 January 2022, you could apply up to (and including) 31 March 2022.

their area). If you have not applied to register with a practice within 3 months of your return to the UK, the [usual rules](#) regarding GP registration apply.

An appropriate adult may make an application on behalf of a child who is under 16 or any relevant family member who lacks capacity to do so.

If the practice accepts your application, it is responsible for your treatment from the date of your arrival in the UK (including if your actual arrival date is earlier than your anticipated arrival date) or, if later, the date on which it accepts the application.

A. If you wish to make an application *before* you return to the UK

To make an application before you return to the UK, you should send to the practice by email or post:

- Confirmation that you are seeking registration under the GP contract provisions for crown servants and their relevant family members returning from overseas postings.
- A printed, completed and signed GMS1 application form (available [here](#)) for each applicant. This should be scanned if sent by email. You should enter your 'home address' as the address where you expect to be resident in the UK for 3 months or longer when you come to the UK.
- Your anticipated date of arrival in the UK.
- Proof of your status as a current or former civil servant on, or previously on, the overseas posting from which you intend to return to the UK, or, where relevant, proof of your family member's status as a current or former civil servant or current or former service person on, or previously on, the overseas posting on which you are or were accompanying them and from which you are now returning to the UK. This proof should be provided on request by your, or your family member's, employer (please provide as much notice for this request as possible).

The practice should be able to locate proof of your, or your family member's, previous registration with that practice (e.g. on clinical record systems). If the practice cannot locate this, and you are not able to provide any proof of previous registration with that practice, the practice may still choose to register you. For example, a practice may accept proof that you (or, if relevant, the current or former civil servant who you are a relevant family member of) previously lived in that practice's area, as sufficient to accept your application.

If you are applying before your return to the UK (for example because you would like to have an appointment soon after your return), please apply as early as possible in the one month before your return, to allow the practice as much time as possible to process your registration. Once your practice has confirmed your registration, you may ask them (even if you are still overseas) to book you an appointment to take place once you have returned to the UK. **You must not attend an appointment (e.g. a telephone or video appointment) with your practice in England while you are still overseas.**

B. If you wish to make an application *after* you return to the UK

To make an application once you have returned to the UK, you should email, send by post or bring to the GP practice:

- Confirmation that you are seeking registration under the GP contract provisions for crown servants and their relevant family members returning from overseas postings.
- A completed and signed GMS1 application form (available [here](#)) for each applicant.
- Proof of your status as a current or former civil servant on, or previously on, the overseas posting from which you intend to return to the UK, or, where relevant, proof of your family

member's status as a current or former civil servant or current or former service person on, or previously on, the overseas posting on which you are or were accompanying them and from which you are now returning to the UK. This proof should be provided on request by your, or your family member's, employer (please provide as much notice for this request as possible).

The practice should be able to locate proof of your, or your family member's, previous registration with that practice (e.g. on clinical record systems). If the practice cannot locate this, and you are not able to provide any proof of previous registration with that practice, the practice may still choose to register you. For example, a practice may accept proof that you (or, if relevant, the current or former civil servant who you are a relevant family member of) previously lived in that practice's area, as sufficient to accept your application.

3. Temporarily registering with your former practice in England before or upon returning from overseas

If you are a current or former civil servant returning to the UK for less than 3 months from an overseas posting, or a relevant family member of a current or former civil servant returning to the UK for less than 3 months having accompanied such a person on an overseas posting, you can apply up to one month before your anticipated return date, to register as a temporary patient with the current or former civil servant's previous GP practice in England.

If you are a family member of a current or former service person who is or was on an overseas posting and you are returning to the UK for less than 3 months having accompanied that person on that posting, you can apply to register with your previous GP practice in England as a temporary patient up to one month before your anticipated return date.

Normally the practice must, even if its practice list is closed, take responsibility for providing primary medical services to you as a temporary resident for up to 3 months from the date of your return to the UK or, if you make an application after your return, from the date on which it accepts that application (if it is satisfied that you will not be receiving primary medical services under any other arrangement whilst in the UK). However, the practice may refuse an application if it has reasonable grounds for doing so.

An appropriate adult may make an application on behalf of a child who is under 16 or family member who lacks the necessary capacity to do so.

If the practice accepts your application, it is responsible for your treatment for up to 3 months from the date of your arrival in the UK (including if your actual arrival date is earlier than your anticipated arrival date) or, if later, the date on which it accepts the application.

If you subsequently decide to stay in England for longer than 3 months, you will need to apply to permanently register with that practice, or another practice.

A. If you wish to apply for temporary registration *before* you return to the UK

To make an application before you return to the UK, you should send to the practice by email or post:

- Confirmation that you are seeking registration under the GP contract provisions for crown servants and their relevant family members returning from overseas postings.
- A printed, completed and signed GMS3 form (available [here](#)) for each applicant. This should be scanned if sent by email. You should enter your 'home address' as the address where you expect to be resident in the UK for up to 3 months when you come to the UK.
- Your anticipated date of arrival in the UK.
- Proof of your status as a current or former civil servant on, or previously on, the overseas posting from which you intend to return to the UK, or, where relevant, proof of your family member's status as a current or former civil servant or current or former service person on, or

previously on, the overseas posting on which you are or were accompanying them and from which you are now returning to the UK. This proof should be provided on request by your, or your family member's, employer (please provide as much notice for this request as possible). The practice should be able to locate proof of your, or your family member's, previous registration with that practice (e.g. on clinical record systems). If the practice cannot locate this, and you are not able to provide any proof of previous registration with that practice, the practice may still choose to register you. For example, a practice may accept proof that you (or, if relevant, the current or former civil servant who you are a relevant family member of) previously lived in that practice's area, as sufficient to accept your application.

If you are applying before your return to the UK (for example because you would like to have an appointment soon after your return), please apply as early as possible in the one month before your return, to allow the practice as much time as possible to process your registration. Once your practice has confirmed your registration, you may ask them (even if you are still overseas) to book you an appointment to take place once you have returned to the UK. **You must not attend an appointment (e.g. a telephone or video appointment) with your practice in England while you are still overseas.**

B. If you wish to apply for temporary registration after you return to the UK

To make an application once you have returned to the UK, you should email, send by post or bring to the GP practice:

- Confirmation that you are seeking registration under the GP contract provisions for crown servants and their relevant family members returning from overseas postings.
- A completed and signed GMS3 application form (available [here](#)) for each applicant.
- Proof of your status as a current or former civil servant on, or previously on, the overseas posting from which you intend to return to the UK, or, where relevant, proof of your family member's status as a current or former civil servant or current or former service person on, or previously on, the overseas posting on which you are or were accompanying them and from which you are now returning to the UK. This proof should be provided on request by your, or your family member's, employer (please provide as much notice for this request as possible).

The practice should be able to locate proof of your, or your family member's, previous registration with that practice (e.g. on clinical record systems). If the practice cannot locate this, and you are not able to provide any proof of previous registration with that practice, the practice may still choose to register you. For example, a practice may accept proof that you (or, if relevant, the current or former civil servant who you are a relevant family member of) previously lived in that practice's area, as sufficient to accept your application.

4. Permanently registering with a new practice in England before returning from overseas

If you are a current or former civil servant returning to the UK for 3 months or over from an overseas posting, or a relevant family member who is returning to the UK for 3 months or more having accompanied a current or former civil servant or a current or former service person on an overseas posting, and you would like to register with a **different practice** in England (i.e. not the previous GP practice as explained in sections 2 and 3; for example, because you are going to live in a different part of England), or a **new practice** if you were previously registered with a DPHC Families Practice and are not now able to register with a Families practice, you may apply, up to 1 month (but no less than 24 hours) before your anticipated date of arrival in the UK, to register with that practice.

The practice must register you if they have an open patient list, except where reasonable grounds apply (e.g. if the place where you are going to live in the UK is outside of the practice area, and the practice is not currently accepting patients from out of their area). You may wish to contact the practice before making an application to check if they have an open patient list. If they have a closed

list, the practice may register you if one of your immediate family members⁵ is already a registered patient. If one of your immediate family members is not already a registered patient, you may wish to contact other practices in that area to check if they an open patient list instead – see [here](#) for more information.

(The [usual rules](#) regarding GP registration apply if, once you have arrived in the UK, you would like to apply to register with a practice in England.)

To make an application before you return to the UK, you should send to the practice by email or post:

- Confirmation that you are seeking registration under the GP contract provisions for crown servants and their relevant family members returning from overseas postings.
- A printed, completed and signed GMS1 application form (available [here](#)) for each applicant. This should be scanned if sent by email. You should enter your 'home address' as the address where you expect to be resident in the UK for 3 months or longer when you come to the UK.
- Your anticipated date of arrival in the UK.
- Proof of your status as a current or former civil servant on, or previously on, the overseas posting from which you intend to return to the UK, or, where relevant, proof of your family member's status as a current or former civil servant or current or former service person on, or previously on, the overseas posting on which you are or were accompanying them and from which you are now returning to the UK. This proof should be provided on request by your, or your family member's, employer (please provide as much notice for this request as possible).

An appropriate adult may make an application on behalf of a child who is under 16 or a relevant family who lacks capacity to make such an application.

If you would like to have an appointment soon after your return, please apply as early as possible in the one month before your return, to allow the practice as much time as possible to process your registration. Once your practice has confirmed your registration, you may ask them (even if you are still overseas) to book you an appointment **to take place once you have returned to the UK. You must not attend an appointment (e.g. a telephone or video appointment) with your practice in England while you are still overseas.**

If the practice accepts your application, it is responsible for your treatment from the date of your arrival in the UK (including if your actual arrival date is earlier than your anticipated arrival date), or, if later, the date on which it accepts the application.

5. Temporarily registering with a new practice in England before returning from overseas

If you are a current or former civil servant returning to the UK for less than 3 months from an overseas posting, or a relevant family member who is returning to the UK for less than 3 months having accompanied a current or former civil servant or a current or former service person on such a posting, and you would like to register as a temporary patient with a **different practice** in England (i.e. not the previous GP practice as explained in sections 2 and 3; for example, because you are going to reside temporarily in a different part of England) or a **new practice** you if were previously registered with a DPHC Families Practice and are not now able to register with a Families practice, you may apply, up to one month before your anticipated date of arrival in the UK, to register as a temporary patient with that practice.

⁵ The following individuals are defined as 'immediate family members': the registered patient's spouse or civil partner, or a person whose relationship with the registered patient has the characteristics of a relationship between spouses; the registered patient's parent or step-parent; the registered patient's child, or the child to whom they are a guardian or carer; and the grandparent of the registered patient.

Provided the practice has an open patient list, the practice must take you on as a temporary patient for up to 3 months after your return to the UK, except where reasonable grounds apply. You may wish to contact the practice before making an application to check if they have an open patient list. If their practice list is closed you may wish to contact other practices in that area to check if they have an open patient list instead.

To make an application before you return to the UK, you should send to the practice by email or post:

- Confirmation that you are seeking registration under the GP contract provisions for crown servants and their relevant family members returning from overseas postings.
- A printed, completed and signed GMS3 form (available [here](#)) for each applicant. This should be scanned if sent by email.
- Your anticipated date of arrival in the UK.
- Proof of your status as a current or former civil servant on, or previously on, the overseas posting from which you intend to return to the UK, or, where relevant, proof of your family member's status as a current or former civil servant or current or former service person on, or previously on, the overseas posting on which you are or were accompanying them and from which you are now returning to the UK. This proof should be provided on request by your, or your family member's, employer (please provide as much notice for this request as possible).

An appropriate adult may make an application on behalf of a child who is under 16 or a relevant family who lacks capacity to make such an application.

If you would like to have an appointment soon after your return, please apply as early as possible in the one month before your return, to allow the practice as much time as possible to process your registration. Once your practice has confirmed your registration, you may ask them (even if you are still overseas) to book you an appointment **to take place once you have returned to the UK. You must not attend an appointment (e.g. a telephone or video appointment) with your practice in England while you are still overseas.**

If the practice accepts your application, it is responsible for your treatment for up to 3 months from the date of your arrival in the UK (including if your actual arrival date is earlier than your anticipated arrival date), or, if later, the date on which it accepts the application.

If you subsequently decide to stay in England for longer than 3 months, you will need to apply to permanently register with that practice, or another practice.

Further information

If you have problems registering with a GP practice:

- Call the NHS England Customer Contact Centre on 0300 311 22 33.

Contact your local [Healthwatch](#)