

Healthcare welcome pack

This document provides general information to people who have newly arrived in Wokingham and wish to know more about the local healthcare system.

March 2022

Information may not be construed as medical advice or instruction. No action or inaction should be taken based solely on the contents of this information. Readers should consult appropriate health professionals on any matter relating to their health and well-being.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

This section provides further substantive details on each topic, and signposts the reader to other websites. It may be used by a local volunteer who further support the newly arrived resident.

Contents

- Healthcare in the UK
- Going to the right places when you feel unwell:
Self-care, Pharmacists, GPs, 111, 999
- Examples of what to do
- Vaccinations
- COVID-19
- Mental wellbeing
- Useful links

Healthcare in the UK



- The **National Health Service (“NHS”)** is an important organisation that provides all-rounded healthcare to everyone in the UK.
- The NHS provides many services in different ways:
 - It can help you with physical and mental health concerns.
 - It provides emergency services, treats one-off illnesses, and helps long-term patients.
 - Some services are provided in the community; others in clinics and in hospitals.
 - Many health professionals work in the NHS to provide you with the right medical healthcare. These are not just doctors.
- Many NHS services and treatments are free.
- Most adults need to pay for items like medical prescriptions or dental care, but check if you are entitled to an exemption.
- Your medical care is confidential. In the course of treatment, you will not be asked about your immigration status.
- It is equally important that you feel able to **take care of yourself**, take responsibility for your own health, and make the right choices.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

* On the NHS:

Under the NHS, healthcare is available for everyone. The care you can get is based on your needs, not on what you can pay. It always works under a lot of pressure, so it is important for everyone to use it wisely.

* On NHS fees:

For people who are entitled to use the NHS (such as people are in the UK on a visa and have paid their immigration health surcharge), most appointments and treatments are free at the point of use. Free services on the NHS include appointments with general practitioners (GPs), emergency ambulances, accident and emergency treatments, hospital stays, and contraception. There is still a charge for NHS prescriptions, NHS dental check-ups and treatment, sight tests, glasses or contact lenses, wigs and other fabric supports (eg surgical bras, support tights and spinal supports).

Some patients do not have to pay any costs. They will have responsibility to check whether they are entitled to claim for free treatment or prescriptions. See details at <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/help-with-health-costs/when-you-need-to-pay-towards-nhs-care/>

A general guide to migrants’ entitlements in the NHS can be seen at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-entitlements-migrant-health-guide>

* On self care:

Looking after yourself means knowing how to keep fit and healthy, how to deal with medicines appropriately, manage self-treatable conditions and when to seek appropriate clinical help.

Feeling unwell?

- Be sure to go to the right places to get the help you need.
- This welcome pack will go through the different ways to care for your health in the UK.

	SELF-CARE	For basic ailments such as cuts, grazes and an upset tummy
	PHARMACY	Advice on ailments, medicines and healthier living
	NHS 111	Call 111 FREE, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, or access the service online 111.nhs.uk
	GP	Call your GP surgery or visit their website to make an appointment for an illness or injury that won't go away
	999	Life threatening emergencies only

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

A more detailed version of this chart for residents in Wokingham is at
<https://www.berkshirewestccg.nhs.uk/media/4193/berkshire-west-feeling-unwell.pdf>

Self-care and pharmacists



- Many common and minor health problems can be treated while resting at home, with medication which can be bought at a local pharmacy.
 - Examples: coughs, colds, short fever, small cuts, pains, stomach aches, sore throat, skin irritations, minor allergies, red eyes, teething.
- If you need advice such as what medicines to take or use for health problems like these, see your **local pharmacist**.
- A pharmacist is a qualified healthcare professional who can recognise many common complaints.
- A pharmacist can also tell you what you do need to do, if your problem is more serious.
- You can see a pharmacist or buy medicines for common or minor health problems at your local pharmacy or at a large supermarket.
- Pharmacies can usually be found in the local neighbourhood or in large supermarkets.
- You don't need to see a doctor for this type of advice or medicine.
- If your family doctor (GP) prescribes medicines for you, you can also collect them at pharmacies.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

* On pharmacists:

Pharmacists are experts in medicines who can help with minor health concerns.

Many pharmacies are open until late and at weekends. You do not need an appointment. You can decide each time which pharmacy to use.

You can find your nearest pharmacy at <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/pharmacy/find-a-pharmacy>

If you want to buy an over-the-counter medicine, the pharmacist and their team can help you choose.

Pharmacies also dispense NHS prescriptions and repeat prescriptions issued by doctors.

More details on pharmacies and their services are at <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/prescriptions-and-pharmacies/pharmacies/how-your-pharmacy-can-help/>

NHS 111



- **NHS 111** is for these situations:
 - When you quickly need advice or **urgent** medical treatment (i.e. you cannot wait for an appointment to see your doctor), but the condition is **not life-threatening**, or
 - When you are **not sure** who to call for medical help, or
 - For help and advice about health matters when the local pharmacy or family doctor (GP) surgery is closed.
- Call the number 111 for free on any phone, or visit <https://111.nhs.uk>.
- When you call 111, you will speak to a fully-trained adviser. They can:
 - Decide what medical help you need.
 - Advise where you need to go or what you need to do.
 - If possible, they can book an appointment for you for urgent care.
 - If NHS 111 thinks you need emergency help, they can send an ambulance.
- You can ask for an **interpreter** when you call 111.



SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

By calling 111 or using 111 Online, you will answer questions about your symptoms. Depending on the situation you can find out what local service can help you; get connected to a nurse, emergency dentist, pharmacist or GP; get a face-to-face appointment if you need one; be given an arrival time if you need to go to A&E or an urgent treatment centre, which might mean you spend less time waiting; be told how to get any medicine you need; and get self-care advice.

If you cannot get through to an operator on 111 immediately, you may be able to book a callback.

For anyone aged 5 or over, you can use 111 Online or call 111. For children under 5, call 111.

GPs



- The **General Practitioner (GP)** is your community medical doctor. They are the first doctor you will usually visit if your illness does not get better on its own.
- GPs work at a **practice** or a **surgery**. They work with other health professionals, such as nurses, physiotherapists, pharmacists, and psychologists.
- You will need to register at a GP surgery to get their services. After you have registered with your new GP, you might be asked to have a health check – they may also advise on screening programmes that are available. It is important that you attend health checks or screening appointments even if you are well.
- You will usually need to make an appointment to see a GP. Your appointment might not be on the same day as you request it.
- It is important to go to GP appointments **on time**. If you cannot attend your session, contact the surgery to change your appointment.
- Many GP surgeries now offer appointments that are not face-to-face. Check their website or call them.
- Get prepared for your appointment. Write down your questions about your health condition beforehand.
- If you do not speak English, or need help with interpretation, you can bring someone with you who speaks English. Or you can request an interpreter for appointments booked in advance.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

* On registering with GPs:

GP surgeries are usually the first contact if you have a health problem. They can treat many conditions and give health advice. They can also refer you to other NHS services.

Anyone in England can register with a GP surgery. It's free to register. You do not need proof of address, immigration status, or identity documents, but sometimes GPs ask for this to make the registration process easier.

Most people register with a GP surgery that is in the area they live, also called the GP's catchment area. If you do not live in the catchment area or the GP already has too many patients, they can refuse to register you.

Find a local GP at <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-gp>

If you have problems finding or registering with a local GP, you can contact NHS England Customer Service Centre on 0300 311 22 33, or get help from local organisations such as your local Healthwatch.

If you move, you should register with a new local GP.

* On GP appointments:

If you are unable to keep your appointment, you should cancel it well in advance, so that it may be offered to someone else. If you are late, the GP may not see you. The result is you will not be able to get the help you need, as well as a waste of everyone's time and resources.

If you repeatedly fail to attend appointments, your GP may remove your registration from their surgery.

There are a few things you can prepare in advance that will help you to get the most out of time with the health professional. Make notes of things you want to discuss or to tell your doctor, such as a list of medicines you use. Do not be afraid to ask questions, and let the health professional explain it to you until you are sure you understand it. If you like, take someone with you as support.

For some example questions that you can ask your doctor, see <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/gps/what-to-ask-your-doctor/>

Minor injuries / Urgent cases



- If you have a more serious or **urgent** injury that is **not life-threatening**, you may need to go to an **urgent treatment centre ("UTC")** or a minor injuries unit.
- UTCs do not operate around the clock, and do not always accept walk-ins. So it is best to **call 111** first, and they can book you in at a UTC.
- Conditions that can be treated at a UTC include:
 - Allergic reactions
 - Bites, bruises and stings
 - Broken limbs or fractures
 - Burns and scalds
 - Deep cuts and bruises
 - Falls where there isn't loss of consciousness
 - Foreign objects in eyes or ears
 - Infected wounds
 - Skin infections and rashes
 - Sprains and strains



SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

Find your nearest UTC at <https://www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/other-services/Urgent%20Care/LocationSearch/1824>

For examples of conditions treated at UTC, see <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/urgent-and-emergency-care-services/when-to-visit-an-urgent-treatment-centre-walk-in-or-minor-injury-unit/>

For the services of UTCs in Berkshire, see <https://www.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services/physical-and-community-healthcare/urgent-treatment-centre/>

999 / Life-threatening emergencies



- If you have a **life-threatening emergency**, call **999**.
- They can arrange an ambulance to take you to the **Accident and Emergency Department ("A&E")** of a nearby hospital.
- If you are not sure, you can also **call 111**. They can also advise you and book you in at A&E if needed.
- If you need to go to A&E, go on your own, unless you require a carer or are a parent with a child.
- You should call 999 in situations such as:
 - heart attack
 - stroke
 - loss of consciousness
 - a sudden confused state
 - fits that are not stopping
 - chest pain or breathing difficulties
 - severe bleeding that cannot be stopped
 - severe allergic reactions
 - severe burns or scalds
 - someone has seriously injured themselves or taken an overdose

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

Find your nearest A&E at <https://www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/other-services/Accident%20and%20emergency%20services/LocationSearch/428>

For examples of conditions treated at A&E, and the process of what happens after you arrive, see <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/urgent-and-emergency-care-services/when-to-go-to-ae/>

For the services of UTCs at Royal Berkshire Hospital, see <https://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/our-services/emergency-department-a-e/>

My child has a fever.



IS IT A LIFE-THREATENING EMERGENCY?

For example: My child has a fit or seizure.
They seem confused or are losing consciousness.
They find it hard to breathe.

**CALL 999 or
go to A&E**

IS IT MORE SERIOUS OR URGENT?

For example: The fever has lasted for 5 days or more.
They seem dehydrated and are refusing to eat.
I used over-the-counter medicine but the fever is not coming down.

**Use NHS 111
or contact GP**

I AM UNSURE or I NEED MORE HELP

**Use NHS 111
or ask a
PHARMACIST**

I CAN CARE FOR MY CHILD

SELF CARE

For more information: See <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/fever-in-children/>

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

The NHS website (<https://www.nhs.uk>) has a section called “Health A to Z” which gives advice on a variety of health conditions.

This information is also available on the NHS mobile app.

NHS 111 (<https://111.nhs.uk> , or 111 by phone) also acts as a triage service to gives an assessment of different conditions, directing the individual to the right care.

This information is only of a general nature and should not be used as a substitute for a consultation with a medical professional.

I closed my finger in a door.



IS IT A LIFE-THREATENING EMERGENCY?

For example: There is bleeding that does not stop.
The finger is pointing at an odd angle.
The bone is sticking out of the finger.

**CALL 999 or
go to A&E**

IS IT MORE SERIOUS OR URGENT?

For example:
It is severely painful, swollen or bruised.
It is stiff or difficult to move.

**Use NHS 111
or go to UTC**

I AM UNSURE or I NEED MORE HELP

For example:
After the immediate pain had gone, my injury is not getting better.

**Use NHS 111
or see a GP**

I CAN CARE FOR MY INJURY

**Ask a
PHARMACIST
or SELF CARE**

For more information: See <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/broken-finger/>

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

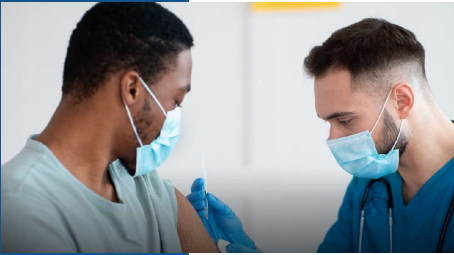
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Vaccinations



- Many routine vaccinations are offered on the NHS.
- Vaccines are safe and effective. It is important that you get the right vaccines on time, for the best protection for yourself and your loved ones.
- Babies, toddlers and schoolchildren will be given vaccinations via their GPs or at schools when they become eligible.
- Some vaccines are only available for certain groups of people who need extra protection.
- You can discuss more details with a pharmacist or your GP.
- The **seasonal influenza vaccine** (or the “flu jab”) is offered every year to help protect people at risk of flu and its complications. It is suitable for children and adults. Some people can have it for free on the NHS.
- The **COVID-19 vaccine** is another important vaccine. Most adults should get two doses and a booster. It is free on the NHS for everyone living in the UK.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

* On vaccines in general:

For more information on vaccines available on the NHS, including different vaccines for different people, see <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/>

In the UK, the NHS routine vaccination schedule protects you against a number of diseases, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-complete-routine-immunisation-schedule>

Travel vaccines are additional vaccinations that are necessary or recommended for people who are travelling overseas. This may not be free or available on the NHS. See details at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/travel-vaccinations/>

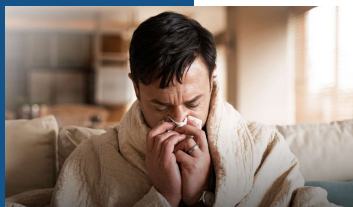
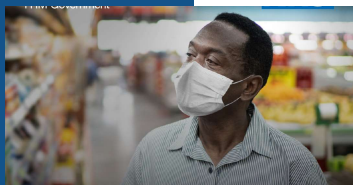
* On the COVID-19 vaccine:

For more information on COVID-19 vaccine, see <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/coronavirus-vaccine/>

In the UK, you cannot usually choose which COVID-19 vaccine to get.

School-age children can get their COVID-19 vaccine at school. Others can book their COVID-19 vaccination appointments online for an appointment at a vaccination centre or pharmacy. You may also be able to use a nearby walk-in COVID-19 vaccination site to get vaccinated without needing an appointment.

With these arrangements in place, there is usually no need to ask your GP to get the COVID-19 vaccine.



- COVID-19 spreads easily through the air from person to person. Most people develop mild symptoms after being infected. Some people display no symptoms after being infected, while others have a higher risk of getting seriously ill.
- We should be careful and considerate of others to minimise the spread of COVID-19. Everyone is encouraged to follow public health advice.
- Get the **COVID-19 vaccine**.
- Be familiar with the main symptoms of COVID-19.
- Find out about the COVID-19 tests that are available.
- If you test positive for COVID-19, you should stay at home and avoid contact with other people, so the disease does not spread. Be prepared to care for yourself.
- In your daily activities, use face coverings in crowded or enclosed areas.
- Maintain good personal hygiene. Clean your hands regularly. Cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze.
- Keep your living environment clean. Let fresh air into indoor spaces when you can.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

* On COVID-19 rules:

For the prevailing rules, guidance and advice on COVID-19 in the UK, see –

- Central Government's website at <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus> or
- the NHS website at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

The rules can be complex and may change from time to time. It is important to stay informed to prevent the transmission of the virus, which will protect yourself, your friends and family, vulnerable people in your community and the NHS.

On 21 February 2022, the Government published its plan for living with COVID-19, details are at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-living-with-covid-19>

There is more specific guidance tailored for asylum seekers staying in accommodation arranged by the Home Office at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-providers-of-accommodation-for-asylum-seekers/covid-19-guidance-for-providers-of-accommodation-for-asylum-seekers>

* On services for Wokingham residents:

See Wokingham Borough Council's website for local information on COVID-19:
<https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/covid-19/>

Mental wellbeing



- Mental health is important just like physical health.
- You can support your mental health by helping yourself:
 - Connect with other people: local community groups, faith groups
 - Be physically active
 - Learn new skills
 - Practise mindfulness
- You might want to seek help if you are:
 - Worrying more than usual
 - Finding it hard to enjoy your life
 - Having thoughts and feelings that are difficult to cope with, which have an impact on your day-to-day life
- Find out about the resources available to support you:
 - Your GP surgery
 - Wokingham Borough Council's webpage on Mental Health: <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/health/health-services-and-advice/emotional-and-mental-health/>
 - The NHS's webpage on Mental Health: <https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/>



SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

* On mental health and wellbeing:

No one is alone. People should not be afraid to reach out for help if they are worried about themselves or a loved one. There are many ways to access support.

If you are concerned that someone's safety or life is in imminent danger, call 999 straight away.

If you need immediate mental health support call the Samaritans on 116 123 or visit the Samaritans website.

The NHS website on mental health (<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/>) contains a wealth of information such as where to get urgent help, information about common feelings or mental health conditions, what types of therapy and treatments are available, advice for life situations and events (such as pregnancy or bullying at work), and some self-help tips. It also contains specific tips for young people.

* On services in Wokingham:

Advice on local support services are available at <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/health/health-services-and-advice/emotional-and-mental-health/>

For mental health and wellbeing support related to the COVID-19 pandemic, please visit <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/health/health-services-and-advice/coping-during-coronavirus/>

Useful websites

National Health Service

www.nhs.uk



NHS 111

www.nhs.uk/111



Wokingham Borough Council

www.wokingham.gov.uk



Citizen's Advice Wokingham – One Front Door:

A single point of contact for residents needing help & support

www.citizensadvicewokingham.org.uk/onefrontdoor/



Thank you