



## PMG Policy: Housebound patients

### Background

Priory Medical Groups agreed definition of housebound guidelines aims to ensure that clinical teams are providing routine clinical appointments in the home setting only when it is appropriate and necessary. Home visits can only be provided to those patients who are truly housebound. This is not based on age alone, lack of transport or for convenience. It is acknowledged that an individual's needs may change and therefore eligibility for a home visit should be reassessed on a regular basis.

We would encourage people, who are able, to attend the surgery for their appointments and to limit the use of home visits for those that genuinely need them. Home visits take much more time than if the patient can make it into their local GP surgery and this impacts on the number of in-surgery appointments we are able to offer.

There are downsides to receiving care at home, for example the environment makes examining patients harder, eg poor lighting, beds instead of examination couches. If able to come into the surgery, patients also have better access to tests and procedures. For those needing an intimate examination we will be able to offer chaperones and use appropriate couches, other team members are there to provide support if needed.

### Definition of Housebound

A patient will be deemed to be housebound when they are unable to leave their home environment through physical and/or psychological illness.

An individual will not be eligible for a home visit if they are able to leave their home environment on their own or with minimal assistance to visit public or social recreational public services (including shopping or the hairdressers/optician and hospital appointments).

Wherever possible patients are encouraged to attend the surgery for their care.

- Ultimate responsibility 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 surgery setting.
- The assessment for housebound will ensure a holistic approach including assessment of the patients' physical, social and psychological 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, or reversal of temporary condition the patient's housebound status will be reviewed.
- Some procedures are safer/more appropriate to be completed in the surgery where possible, e.g. vaginal pessaries or joint injections

## What housebound services do we offer?

### Clinician home visits

- Every day our clinical team complete visits for both routine/ongoing or urgent symptoms. Routine visits are generally done between 12-2pm on weekdays.
- If you or your relative is housebound and would like to request medical care, please phone us on 01904 404100 or discuss with a patient care navigator (receptionist) on site.
- Requests for home visits received before midday will generally be assessed on the same day. Visits requested after this time will be triaged and if deemed urgent will be actioned by the on-call team that day.
- Clinicians will generally phone the patient/relative before a visit is arranged to discuss the symptoms and ensure a home visit is the appropriate/safest outcome. It may be that we ask the Frailty Hub, Ambulance service or District nurses to assess the patient if appropriate.
- We cannot guarantee which GP/clinician will visit as this depends on staffing and capacity each day
- Let us know if you have a key code or any specific instructions to find/enter the property

### Care home team

- We have defined GP/nursing sessions each week to visit our designated care homes.

### Seasonal vaccinations

- We are able to offer some vaccinations in the home, sometimes this is arranged by community pharmacies or other services depending on commissioning and funding.
- If you are able to attend your local community pharmacy for a flu/covid vaccination, we ask that you do this.
- Housebound vaccination programs are complex, where possible, we have added a code to relevant patients records to ensure that housebound patients are included in housebound vaccination invites and sessions.
- We try to keep this list up to date but if you think your relative/neighbour is housebound and hasn't been contacted, please contact the surgery.

### Referral to District Nurses (DNs)

- District nurses are able to offer housebound patients a number of services: e.g. blood taking, giving injections, support with catheters, suture removal etc.
- We can only refer to the DN team if a patient is genuinely housebound.
- If you are able to leave the house to attend the surgery or hospital appointments, they ask that you do not request a DN visit at home.

We know it can be expensive or difficult relying on public transport/taxis. It is important we are fair and transparent and offer the same service for all our patients.

The practice is flexible if you rely on relatives, carers or friends to bring you at a specific site on a particular day/time.