

The NHS and you

Choosing the right service



There are lots of different health and care services available to you depending on your health need.

- Visit the NHS Choices website – <http://www.nhs.uk> – for more information about different health services.
- 111 is free phone number to call when it is not an emergency. It is easy to use and is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. You can call for information, help choosing the right service and to book an out of hours appointment.
- Call 999 in a medical emergency – when someone is seriously ill or injured and their life is at risk.
- Visit an A&E department (also known as emergency department or casualty) for genuine life-threatening emergencies, such as loss of consciousness, breathing difficulties or severe bleeding.

Ask your pharmacist



Your community pharmacy can support your healthcare needs.

- Your community pharmacist can help you with coughs, colds, aches and pains and other minor ailments. They can also help you with medication use reviews, emergency contraception, smoking cessation, needle exchange/ sharps returns, flu vaccinations and offer information and advice on healthy living.

Booking your GP appointment



- Everyone can register with a local GP practice. People who do not have a fixed address e.g. people who are homeless or staying with friends, and people without ID have the right to register with a GP Practice.
- It is quick and easy to register with a GP. You can visit www.nhs.uk for more information on GP registration or you can always go into a practice near your home and ask about becoming a patient.
- It's usually only possible to register with a GP near where you live.
- Most practices in Islington allow you to book appointments up to four weeks in advance, or on the day if you call your practice – check your GP practice website to see what appointments they offer and how to book.
- It is your right to ask to see a female or male GP.
- GP appointments are also available during the evenings and on weekends. These appointments might not be at your own GP practice but will be close to your home. To book these appointments you can call your GP practice or call 111.
- Please get to your appointment on time, if you are late you may not be seen or you are asked to book another appointment.

Your choice



When you visit your GP, they might tell you that you need to see another healthcare professional for specific advice or treatment, this is called a referral.

When your GP refers you, it is your right to choose where you go for treatment. Your GP will talk to you about the options and help you choose where to be referred to.

This choice is your legal right. If you are not offered a choice, ask your GP to go through your options. If you are still not offered or refused a choice, contact your local Clinical Commissioning Group for advice.

When deciding where to go for your referral, you might want to think about:

- Being close to home, friends and family
- Being seen as quickly as possible
- Transport options
- Choosing a consultant you prefer.
- Being close to work

Help with languages



- It is your right to be supported by an interpreter if English is not your first language or if you do not speak English.
- You have the right to an interpreter if you visit your GP practice, go to hospital, or use another service in your community such as physiotherapy.
- It is better to use a professional interpreter instead of family members
- All GP practices in Islington have access to free telephone and face-to-face interpreting services. Ask reception staff to book this for you.
- Ask reception staff to book face-to-face interpreting services for you.
- There is no need to book telephone interpreting, just speak to your GP at your appointment.

Maximum waiting times



- If your GP refers you for treatment, you have the right for any treatment (non-emergency) to start within 18 weeks. If this does not happen, then the NHS must take all reasonable steps to offer you a range of alternatives.
- If you visit A&E, the target time from your arrival to admission, transfer or discharge is currently four hours.
- If cancer is suspected, you have the right to be seen by a specialist within a maximum of two weeks from the moment your GP refers you.

Patient experience and feedback



- The NHS aims to provide the highest level of care, however sometimes you might want to make a comment or complain about a health service you, a friend or family member have experienced.
- There are different ways to feedback depending on which healthcare services you have used.
- Each healthcare service will work with a patient advice and liaison service, also known as a PALS team. The PALS team provides a point of contact for patients, their families and carers. They offer confidential advice and information on health-related matters as well as help with complaints, feedback or comments.

PATIENT EXPERIENCE FEEDBACK

Service area	Example services	Contact for feedback	Email address	Telephone number	Address
Primary Care Services	• GP practice, dentist surgery, pharmacy and opticians	NHS England	england.contactus@nhs.net	0300 311 2233	NHS England, PO Box 16738, Redditch, B97 9PT
Community health services	• Physiotherapy, district nursing, health visiting and urgent care centers	Whittington Health Patient Advice and Liaison team	whh-tr. WhithealthPALS@nhs.net	020 7288 5551	Magdala Avenue, London, N19 5NF
Hospital services	• A&E, maternity, radiography, mental health, ophthalmology, in patient care, hospital appointments	Camden & Islington Foundation Trust (C&I)	feedback@candi.nhs.uk	020 3317 7102	4 St Pancras Way, Kings Cross, London NW1 0PE
		Moorfields Eye Hospital	pals@moorfields.nhs.uk	020 7566 2324	162 City Rd London, EC1V 2PD
		University College Hospitals (UCLH)	PALS@uclh.nhs.uk	020 3447 3042	235 Euston Rd, Bloomsbury, London NW1 2BU
		Whittington Health	whh-tr WhithealthPALS@nhs.net	020 7288 5551	Magdala Avenue, London, N19 5NF
		Royal Free Hospital	rf.pals@nhs.net	020 7472 6446	Pond St, London, NW3 2QG
If you need support to make a complaint		POhWER	pohwer@pohwer.net	020 7359 7443	The Elfrida Society 34 Islington Park Street, London N1 1PX
If you need information about what's available		Healthwatch Islington	info@healthwatchislington.co.uk	020 7832 5814	