Guide to Accessing GP Services for Young People

13 to 16 years old



Some Background

When you are young, your parents are usually involved in your health care. They may make decisions for you, and speak to health workers on your behalf. But as you get older you have more rights. You can decide if you want your parents to be involved or not. This leaflet explains your rights once you are thought to be old enough to make your own decisions about your health care information.

Patients under the age of 16 should normally be accompanied by an adult when seeing a doctor or collecting medicines. However, under certain circumstances, patients below this age may be seen by a doctor, for example, if parents know that the child is at the surgery. Young people may also see a Doctor without parental knowledge to discuss sexual health matters, including contraception.



What does NHS England have to say?

Children and young people (CYP) up to 18 years old make up one fifth of the UK's population. Improving their health and wellbeing is an investment in future generations and the prosperity of this country. Our ambitions for improving the health and wellbeing of children and young people in England are wide ranging and you can read about our programmes by following the link opposite.

Who is this leaflet for and what's it about?

This leaflet is for you if you're under 16. It explains that anyone who looks after your health has to keep information about you private. This may be doctors, nurses, pharmacists or other health workers.

The leaflet tells you only about how things work in the health service, not other organisations such as your school or social services. If you want to talk to a health worker about something personal, they must keep this information confidential, even if you are under 16. This may be information about:

- Sex
- Relationships
- Pregnancy
- Contraception
- Drugs & Alcohol
- Feeling Down

Sometimes health workers do need to share information about you to give you good care. They may share information about you with other health workers who are looking after you – for example, health workers at another hospital or clinic if you have agreed to go there. This is to make your care safer, easier and faster.

They will only share information that is needed to give you the best care. If there are particular things that you don't want to be shared, tell your health worker. If they think you are at risk of serious harm or you are in danger, they may have to tell another adult about it to be able to help you. But even then, they should tell you they are going to do this and explain who they will tell and why.

Sometimes the law allows the health service to share information about you without you agreeing to it. This would only happen in very serious situations, for example, if you have an illness that puts other people at risk, such as meningitis.

NHS

Scan, or click on, this code to go to the webpage.

Getting Help

How do I get a doctor?

If you're over the age of 13, you can register with a GP by yourself. You can find a list of other local GP's in your area on the NHS website. If they are accepting new patients, and your address is in their practice area, they will ask you to fill in a registration form. Some GP's also ask to see a proof of identity like a passport or proof of address like a mobile phone bill.

If you're under the age of 13, your parents or carers should register you at a doctor's surgery, but it doesn't have to be same one as them or the rest of your family. If you don't want your parents to know, you can still register by yourself but you might be asked some questions to make sure you're okay.

How do I make an appointment?

You can make an appointment by calling your GP surgery and speaking to the receptionist or going there in person. The receptionist will probably ask you who the appointment is for and why. This is to make sure that you see the right person at the right time.

If it's something personal then you don't have to tell them why - just say it's for something personal. You can also ask to see a male or female doctor if this would make you feel more comfortable.

Can I see a doctor by myself?

Yes. There is no reason why you can't ask to see the doctor by yourself. They might want to find out why and might encourage you to tell your parent or carer. But they should try to understand how you feel if you don't want to.

Can I make appointments without speaking to someone?

If you're struggling with anxiety or feeling worried, try explaining this when you make the appointment to see if they can help in any way.

Also, perhaps try to take a trusted friend or family member with you for support. It can take a while to build yourself up to seeing someone, but it's so important because then you'll be able to get help to feel better.

Check out the Doc Ready website which has great tips on preparing yourself for a GP appointment.

What happens if I don't like my doctor?

Most doctors are great at their job and care about their patients a lot. But, there are times when people either don't get on with or feel uncomfortable with their doctor. You can always ask to see someone else. You may not be able to do this straight away and might have to wait for another appointment, so it's better to say as early as possible.

Doc Ready

Scan, or click on, a code to go to the webpage.

Find a GP Surgery



Confidentiality

What does confidentiality mean?

It means keeping information safe and private. The health service keeps all your health information confidential. This includes:

- anything you say
- information someone writes about you, and
- details of any treatment you have had

You can talk to health workers about anything to do with your health.

Will my parents be given information about me?

Usually, health workers are not allowed to tell your parents anything you have talked to them about, unless you have agreed to this. But the health worker may suggest that you speak to your parents or an adult you trust. A health worker may want to send out information to you. If you don't want your parents to see this, you can:

- ask them to post it to a friend's address
- say you'll pick it up, or
- ask them not to send anything.

What if my parents want to look at my health records?

Your health records include information about your health and any treatment you have had. Your records can be written on paper, held on computer or both. Usually your parents can't see your health records, unless you agree to this. If there's something in your health records that you don't want your parents to see, tell a health worker.

If your doctor doesn't think you can make decisions about your health care, your parents may be allowed to see your health records without you agreeing to it. But this would only happen if the doctor thought it was best for you.

What the NHS says about your health and care records.

Scan, or click on, this code to go to the webpage.

Can I see my own health records?

Yes. You should be able to see your records in a way that you can understand. Any codes or words you don't understand should be explained to you. You may want to know about treatment you've had, or check that information about you is correct.

It's your choice whether to look at your health records. To find out more about seeing your health records, ask to speak to our practice manager.

Who else can see my records?

If your parent or guardian has been given "proxy access" to your online medical records, then this access will be revoked once you reach the age of 16, and you will need to come into the surgery with photo ID if you would like access to Online Services on your own behalf.

Similarly if you have been sharing a mobile phone number or email address, then those details will be removed from your medical record once you are 13 years old. When you are 13 years old and you have your own mobile and email address please inform us and we will update your records..

Sometimes, people who inspect child protection services may ask to look at the records of young people who have been involved with these services. This is to make sure that children are protected from harm. These inspectors must keep your personal information safe and private, unless they think you are in danger.

What if I'm unhappy about how my information has been kept or used?

If you think that what you've told a health worker hasn't been kept private or that something in your health records is wrong, please tell one of the health workers who has been involved in your care, or ask your parent or another adult you trust to do this for you.

If you're still unhappy, it's okay to make a complaint. Please ask to speak to our practice manager, who will listen to your complaint and guide you through the process.

Contraception

What is contraception?

Contraceptive methods protect against pregnancy. If you use contraception correctly, you can have sex without worrying about getting pregnant or getting someone pregnant.

Most methods of contraception won't protect you against catching or passing on a sexually transmitted infection (STI). Condoms are the only method that protects against both STIs and pregnancy. Protect your own and your partner's health by using condoms as well as your chosen method of contraception.

Will they tell my parents?

Contraception services are free and confidential, including for people under 16 years old. This means the doctor or nurse won't tell your parents or anyone else, as long as they believe you're mature enough to understand the information and decisions involved.

There are strict guidelines for healthcare professionals who work with people under 16. If they believe there's a risk to your safety and welfare, they may decide to tell your parents.

Where to get free contraception

You can get free contraception and condoms from:

- some GP surgeries – talk to your GP or practice nurse
- community contraceptive clinics
- some genitourinary medicine (GUM) clinics
- sexual health clinics – these offer contraceptive and STI testing services
- some young people's services

Find your nearest sexual health service, including contraceptive clinics. Many of these places offer information, testing and treatment for STIs, including chlamydia. If you've been exposed to the risk of pregnancy, you may also be at risk of catching an STI.

There are lots of contraceptive methods to choose from. You should use a method that suits you, not just because your friends are using it. Don't be put off if the first method you use isn't quite right for you – you can try another.

What the NHS says about sexual health

Scan, or click on, this code to go to the webpage.



Other Useful Contacts

Childline

Childline is here to help anyone under 19 in the UK with any issue they're going through. Whether it's something big or small, our trained counsellors are here to support you.

Childline is free, confidential and available any time, day or night. You can talk to us:

By calling free on - 0800 1111

or contact us via our confidential email which you can sign up for when you visit our website

childline
ONLINE, ON THE PHONE, ANYTIME

Papyrus

Papyrus is a charity for the prevention of young suicide, offering confidential support and awareness training. If you are a young person at risk of suicide or are worried about a young person at risk of suicide please contact us.

By calling free on 0800 068 41 41
Email - pat@papyrus-uk.org

During weekdays we are available from 10:00 in the morning until 10:00 in the evening. At weekends and bank holidays we available from 2:00 in the afternoon until 10:00 in the evening.

PAPYRUS
PREVENTION OF YOUNG SUICIDE

Samaritans

The Samaritans provide emotional support for anyone feeling down, experiencing distress or struggling to cope. We're there for people when they need us, which could be any time of day or night.

People talk to us for as long as they like, as many times as they like. We don't rush, interrupt or push anyone out of the door. We let people lead the conversation at their own pace. There's no waiting lists, and no assessments.

Samaritans is free, confidential and available any time, day or night. You can talk to us:

By Calling free on - 116 123
Email - jo@samaritans.org

SAMARITANS

The Mix

The Mix is the UK's leading support service for young people. We are here to help you take on any challenge you're facing - from mental health to money, from homelessness to finding a job, from break-ups to drugs. Talk to us via online, social or our free, confidential helpline.

Our help is free and confidential or all young people under 25.

Call us free on 0808 808 4994

Crisis Messenger - Our crisis messenger text service provides free, 24/7 crisis support across the UK. If ou are experiencing any painful emotion or type of crisis in your life, you can text THEMIX to 85258.

THE MIX
Essential support for under 25s

Scan, or click on, any of the above codes to go to the webpage.