

How to Register with a GP After Leaving Prison



When you leave prison, one of the most important things you can do is register with a GP (doctor).

Your GP can help you with medication, health conditions, mental health support, and referrals to other services.

You do not need to wait — you can register with a GP as soon as you're released.

Why You Should Register with a GP

A GP (General Practitioner) helps you with:

- Ongoing health conditions (like diabetes, asthma, or mental health)
- Getting prescriptions for medication you had in prison
- Support with substance misuse, trauma, or depression
- Referrals to hospitals, dentists, or counselling
- Getting medical evidence for benefits (like PIP or Universal Credit)

Having a GP means you have a regular doctor who knows your history and can help you get stable care.

Even if you are staying at an Approved Premises which is in an area where you don't plan on staying long-term, it is still important to register with the nearest GP. You can then transfer your details to a GP closer to your more permanent address once you have moved.

You Have the Right to Register

Everyone in the UK has the right to see a GP, including:

- People just released from prison
- People without a permanent address
- People without ID or paperwork

NHS guidance says you cannot be refused a GP registration because you don't have ID or an address.

GP surgeries should still register you as a temporary or permanent patient.

If you're told "you need ID or proof of address," politely explain that NHS England allows registration without them.

Find a GP Near You

You can find a GP by:

- Visiting www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-gp
- Asking your probation officer, resettlement worker, or support charity to help you find one near your new address or hostel
- Going to a walk-in centre or NHS Health Inclusion service (many towns have these for people leaving prison or homeless)

If you're in a hostel, approved premises, or temporary accommodation, register with a GP near that location.

If you're staying at an AP, your keyworker will know where your local GP is and assist you in registering.

What You'll Need (If You Have It)

You don't need ID to register, but if you do have any of the following, it helps things go more smoothly:

- Prison release papers or licence documents
- Letter from probation officer or housing provider
- Proof of address (temporary or permanent) – the staff at your AP can provide this.
- Passport, driving licence, or birth certificate (if available)

If you have none of these, the GP should still register you — just explain your situation.

How to Register

There are two ways to register:

Option 1: In Person

1. Visit the GP surgery you've chosen.
2. Ask to register as a new patient.
3. Fill in a GMS1 form (staff can help you with this).
4. Hand it in to reception.
5. You'll be registered — they'll contact you if they need more information.

Option 2: Online

Some surgeries let you register online through their website or through NHS GP registration online. You'll fill in your details and they'll confirm your registration by phone or letter.

If you're staying at an AP, they may already have copies of the GP registration form available for you to complete. Once filled out, they might be able to send copies to the GP on your behalf.

If You Have Ongoing Medication

If you were on medication in prison:

- Bring your prison release summary (this lists your prescriptions).
- Show it to your new GP or give it to reception.
- The GP can issue you a new prescription so you don't run out.

If you don't have the papers, your probation officer or prison healthcare team can contact the GP to confirm your medication.

If You Have No Fixed Address

You can still register with a GP even without an address.

Use one of the following:

- The address of your probation office (if permitted)
- The address of your hostel or approved premises
- The GP surgery's address (some will allow this)

Tell staff you're just out of prison and don't have a permanent address yet — they're trained to help.

Getting Support to Register

If you find it hard to register on your own, you can get help from:

- Your probation officer
- A resettlement or key worker
- A local charity or re-entry organisation, such as:

Organisations That Can Help

- St Giles Trust – support for people leaving prison.
www.stgilestrust.org.uk
- Nacro – help with housing, ID, and healthcare.
www.nacro.org.uk
- The Salvation Army – helps with re-entry, housing, and health access.
www.salvationarmy.org.uk
- Groundswell – specialises in helping people who are homeless or in unstable housing to access healthcare.
www.groundswell.org.uk

After You Register

Once registered:

- You can book GP appointments online, by phone, or in person.
- Ask about referrals for mental health, counselling, or drug/alcohol support if needed.
- Your GP can help you apply for medical evidence if you're claiming PIP or Universal Credit.
- Keep your GP informed if you move address or change phone number.

If a GP Refuses to Register You

If a surgery refuses to register you without good reason, you can:

- Ask them to explain why in writing.
- Contact NHS England for help at:
0300 311 22 33
england.contactus@nhs.net
- Or get help from Citizens Advice or Groundswell.

Remember: You have the right to access NHS care.

Quick Checklist

- | Step | Task |
|------|---|
| 1 | Find a GP near your accommodation |
| 2 | Visit or apply online to register |
| 3 | Explain if you have no address or ID |
| 4 | Give your prison release or medical info |
| 5 | Get your medication and first appointment |
| 6 | Update your GP if your situation changes |

Done

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Who we are

New Connections is an organisation which provides support for prisoners and ex-offenders with addiction and mental health challenges who are preparing for Parole or release after a substantial period of imprisonment.

New Connections provides support and guidance in prison through individual and group sessions and the agreement of individual recovery plans to give the ex-offender the opportunity to recover from their addiction and change the direction of their life away from drugs and crime.

If you are interested in hearing more about our work, have any questions, or know someone who could benefit from our services, please contact us via our website.



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