



TOPIC 2

GP and local primary care services

Topic introduction

Background

One of the key components of the *National Standards and Evaluation Framework* is to provide accurate information to patients, carers and families about the primary care trust's services and other health-related issues. These include what is available, who does what and how to register with a GP.¹ Most GP practices produce their own leaflets that explain what services they provide, how to register, surgery opening hours and out-of-hours arrangements.

All NHS trusts (primary care, mental health, hospital and ambulance trusts) are expected to provide Patient Advice and Liaison Services (PALS; see introduction to Topic 1).

National targets / policies

The 2006 Department of Health white paper *Our health, our care, our say* sets out a vision to provide people with good-quality social care and NHS services in the communities where they live.

*'We want people to have a real choice of the GP surgery to register with. The right of patients to choose one surgery over another will help to ensure that those surgeries are open at times that are suitable for them.'*²

GP practices have targets to achieve for patients accessing their service. This means that every patient should have the opportunity to be seen by a GP within two working days or by a primary care professional within one working day. Patients should also have the option of making appointments outside these target times.³

It is important that learners understand the importance of keeping appointments. As well as the importance to their own health, failing to attend an appointment wastes NHS time and money; learners should understand the importance of contacting the service if they are unable to attend an appointment.

1. PALS Core National Standards and Evaluation Framework (2003)

2. www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/OrganisationPolicy/Modernisation/OurHealthOurCareOurSay/fs

3. NHS Policy/Guidance: National Standards Local Action The Primary Care 24/48 Access Targets.

This topic

This topic encourages learners to make best use of their GP practice. It charts the patient's progress from registering with a GP and making an appointment to communicating with a doctor about a health concern. The themes in this topic are:

- Finding a GP
- Information about a GP practice
- Registering with a GP
- Making appointments
- Recording appointments
- Talking to your doctor
- Answering your doctor's questions
- Telling your doctor what's wrong

Further information and suggestions

- The Patients Forum is a network of national and regional organisations concerned with the healthcare interests of patients and their families and carers (www.thepatientsforum.org.uk).
- See Topic 1 for details about PALS.
- The content of this topic was based on materials developed by the CTAD (St Matthews, Leicester) pilot project. You may like to extend the use of this topic by making use of these pilot materials. In particular, the 'Virtual Doctor' interactive activity provides a different, complementary approach to the content offered in theme 8, 'Telling your doctor what's wrong'.

All the pilot materials can be accessed via the SfH materials website:
www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/embeddedlearning

Mapping to the core curriculum

Topic 2 GP and local primary care services				
Theme	Literacy	Language	Numeracy	Page references
Finding a GP		Sc/E3.3b, Lr/E3.2a, Lr/E3.5b		136–145
Information about a GP practice	Rt/E3.5, Rt/E3.6, Rt/L1.5, Rw/E3.1		MSS1/E3.3	146–154
Registering with a GP		Lr/E3.5b, Sc/E3.4b, Rw/E3.1a, Wt/E3.5a		155–163
Making appointments		Sc/L1.1a, Lr/E3.3a, Sc/E3.4b, Lr/E3.2b, Sd/E3.1f		164–174
Recording appointments	SLLr/E3.2		MSS1/E2.3, MSS1/E3.3	175–183
Talking to your doctor	SLc/L1.3, SLc/L1.4, SLLr/L1.2, SLc/L1.2, SLLr/L1.3			184–194
Answering your doctor's questions		Lr/E3.5b, Sc/E3.4b, Sc/E3.4f, Sc/E3.1a		195–206
Telling your doctor what's wrong	Sc/L1.1a, Sc/E3.4f			207–220