

Understanding

The Out of Hours GP service

What is the Out of Hours GP service?

The Out of Hours GP service is the on-call system which takes over to provide GP cover when the Surgeries on the Island are closed and there is a need to be seen/have advice before the Surgeries are open again. These time periods are from 6pm to 8am the following morning on weeknights and from midday on Saturday until 8am Monday. We also provide cover on Bank Holidays and the Practices will open for urgent appointments on Boxing Day this year.

The service is staffed by 5 experienced GP's, employed by Sarnia Medical Services Ltd (SMSL), working on a rota basis.

Our Doctors have access to the Surgery records and a written report is sent to your Surgery.

The types of appointments available are:

- Primary Care Centre appointments based at the Princess Elizabeth Hospital near the Emergency Department (A&E)
- Telephone Consultations
- Home visits for the housebound

How do you access the service?

There is a telephone line manned by the Emergency Department Receptionists. When you telephone your usual surgery the phone call is diverted to this number. The Receptionists will take some details including the reason for the appointment. The Reception team are caring and professional and will always respect confidentiality.

Patients may be able to come in directly but at times of high demand may be advised of a general time window during which to attend. We would not expect this to be more than an hour or two later but if you are concerned that this is not early enough please let the Receptionist know. By managing the flow of patients into the service we will minimise the time you have to wait once you arrive but urgent issues can arise so we ask for your patience if there is an unavoidable delay.

Home visits take place when a patient is housebound or cannot be brought in to the Primary Care Centre. We will endeavour to provide the best

assessment possible in the home environment but our Doctors are working with what they can carry with them and caring for many frail and palliative patients overnight. If it is possible to attend the Out of Hours Service in person, we would encourage you to do so. Children should be brought to the Primary Care Centre as this is the best place to assess and monitor them if needed.

If your situation changes while you are waiting to be seen please call the telephone number again or make your way to the Emergency Department Reception (if you feel safe to drive).

If you are concerned you have a life-threatening emergency dial 999.

I rang my usual surgery on a weekday afternoon but they advised me the OOH service would be coming, not my usual GP why did that happen?

Your GP will be seeing patients in the Surgery in the afternoon so if a request for a visit comes in then, the surgery may pass this over to the OOH service if appropriate as they would be unlikely to be able to get to you in their daytime sessions. If the OOH GP is not going to be able to get to you before 7pm, you will be contacted to advise you of this. If your situation changes while you are waiting, please do ring the Service to update us. For example, if your symptoms have resolved and you no longer need to be visited tonight or if your symptoms have worsened and you are worried about waiting until we can get to you.

I came to the Emergency Department (A&E) but then I was sent to the OOH GP. Why did that happen?

The GP Out of Hours service works with the Emergency Department (A&E) to provide care to those in need. If you attend the Emergency Department you will go through triage assessment. You will be triaged by a qualified Nurse who is trained in this process. If this assessment reveals that your condition can be treated by the OOH GP, you will be booked into the OOH clinic.

Equally, if you have had contact with the OOH GP

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and it is felt that your condition requires same day investigation (such as blood tests or x-rays) or more complex treatment (such as intravenous fluids or medications) you will be referred to the Emergency Department.

Below is a brief set of examples of which is the best 'front door'. **However, the OOH service and the Emergency Department will make sure you see the right professionals for your problem regardless of who you turn to first.**

GP Out of Hours Service	Emergency Department
I've had a cough for a week and its not going away. In fact I think its getting worse	I've had a cough for a week but now I am really short of breath, getting cold sweats and feel lightheaded.
I am having a bad run of migraines and I don't know what to do.	I can't seem to lift my arm all of a sudden and I can't seem to form my words properly.
My child has had a cold and now can't seem to stop pulling at his ear. He seems to keep getting a temperature.	My child has developed a fever that won't go down with paracetamol or ibuprofen and he seems lethargic now.
I have had a painful knee for 3 months but it seems worse this week and now I can't sleep.	I fell over and my knee immediately swelled up and I can't walk properly on it.
I think my diverticulitis is playing up again. I might need antibiotics.	My stomach hurts too much to move. I can't eat or drink. Something feels wrong.
I think I might have a urine infection.	I thought I had a bit of a urine infection but now I have terrible pain, cold sweats and I keep being sick.
I've been struggling with my depression and would like some advice.	I've been struggling with my depression and I don't think I can keep myself safe.

All of Guernsey's residents and visitors will be able to access medical help 24 hours a day should they need it. Whether this is provided in the Emergency Department or by our GP's, your safety and health are our priority.

Out of Hours GP consultation fees

Consultation Type	Total
Primary Care Centre consultation - all times, except below	£150
11pm-8am Monday-Sunday (inc Bank Holidays)	£175
At all times, Under 18	£25
Doctor home visit - all times, except below	£205
11pm-8am Monday-Sunday (inc Bank Holidays)	£262
At all times, Under 18	£25
Telephone consultation - all times, except below	£69
11pm-8am Monday-Sunday (inc Bank Holidays)	£80
At all times, Under 18	£25

Out of Hours Complaints Procedure

We hope that most problems can be sorted out easily and quickly, often at the time they arise and with the person concerned. If your problem cannot be sorted out in this way and you wish to make a complaint, we would like you to let us know as soon as possible. This is because the sooner we know about a problem, the easier it will be for us to establish what happened. We hope that if you have a problem, you will use our complaints procedure, as we believe this will give us the best chance of putting right whatever has gone wrong and an opportunity to improve our practice.

SMSL encourages complainants to put their complaints in writing, but we will always be more than happy to meet with you and discuss your concerns. By putting the complaint in writing, this helps us gain a clear understanding of the specific issues a patient may wish to raise and also to enable SMSL to investigate thoroughly and be able to respond appropriately.

Please write to your registered practice, addressing your letter as follows:

- Practice Manager, Rohais Health Centre, Rohais, St Peter Port, Guernsey, GY1 1FF
- Practice Manager, Queens Road Medical Centre, St Peter Port, Guernsey, GY1 1RH
- Practice Manager, IslandHealth, Grandes Maisons Road, St Sampsons, Guernsey, GY2 4JS

If for any reason you do not feel able to complain to, or register concerns with the doctor or a member of the SMSL staff, you are at liberty to take your complaint to the Responsible Officer for Guernsey.

The Responsible Officer is an experienced doctor who is trained in investigating and dealing with complaints about doctors and healthcare organisations and has a duty to ensure that complaints are fully investigated, and concerns addressed. He is also completely independent of all Practices and healthcare organisations in Guernsey. His contact details are Dr Peter Rabey, Responsible Officer, c/o the Office of the Committee for Health & Social Care, Le Vauquiedor, St Andrews, Guernsey, GY6 8TW or e-mail Peter.Rabey@gov.gg

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Alternatively, assistance is available from the Citizens Advice Bureau, Bridge Avenue, The Bridge, St Sampsons, Guernsey, GY2 4QS or Telephone (01481) 242266.

What we will do

We will acknowledge your complaint within three working days and aim to have investigated your complaint within ten working days of the date when you raised it with us. We should then be in a position to offer you an explanation in writing, or offer you a face-to-face meeting.

When we look into your complaint, we shall:

- find out what happened and what went wrong;
- make it possible for you to discuss the problem with those concerned, if you would like this;
- make sure you receive an apology, where this is appropriate;
- identify what we can do to make sure the problem doesn't happen again.

Complaining on behalf of someone else

Please note that we keep strictly to the rules of medical confidentiality. If you are complaining on behalf of someone else, we have to know that you have his or her permission to do so. A note signed by the person concerned will be needed to authorise you to complain on their behalf.

What happens if you remain dissatisfied at the end of the process?

If you remain dissatisfied, the matter will initially be escalated to the Responsible Officer for Guernsey who would, in the first instance, determine whether he/she can resolve the matter. Alternatively, he/she may determine that more complex matters should be passed on to an independent organisation in the UK who will be requested to undertake a thorough investigation.