

Finding a GP

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- To ask a friend or colleague how to find a local GP
- To ask for relevant information about a local GP practice
- To make first contact with a GP practice



RESOURCES

- Copies of Resource 1
- Cards/sticky notes with the speech-bubbles from Resource 1 (Activity 1 Support)
- Role-play cards prepared from Resource 2

- Gap-fill questions to be devised by teacher (Activity 2 Support)
- Audio equipment [🔊 32–34](#)

RELATED TOPICS

Information about a GP practice (Theme 10, Topic 2)
Registering with a GP (Theme 10, Topic 3)

HEALTH SKILLS

Anyone resident in the UK is entitled to the services of a GP. Registering with a GP also ensures access to a large primary care team, including practice nurses, health visitors and administrative staff.

You have the legal right to choose a GP practice that best suits your needs. The GP practice must accept you, unless there are reasonable grounds to refuse you. These must not relate to race, gender, social class, age, religion, sexual orientation, appearance, disability or a medical condition. Since January 2015 all GP practices in England have been free to register new patients who live outside their practice boundary area, but it is for a practice to decide whether it is appropriate and practical to register individual patients in that way. If a practice refuses to register you, it must give you reasons for its decision in writing.

Related health information

www.nhs.uk – will locate local GP practices and other NHS services. Please refer to Theme 9, Theme Introduction, page 1 for information about how non-EEA residents can access NHS healthcare. Tutors may consider adding an activity around this depending on their learners.

FUNCTIONAL SKILLS

In order to make first contact with a GP and move on to registration, learners need to be able to:

- ask questions in familiar and less familiar situations
- give information in response to questions and requests
- listen and respond to requirements.

Functional Skills/Core Curriculum

Activities in this topic will contribute to learning in the following curriculum areas:

- ask questions to obtain personal or factual information **English E3.1 (ESc/E3.3b)**
- listen for detail in explanations and instructions **English E3.2 (ELr/E3.2a)**
- respond to a range of questions **English E3.4 (ELr/E3.5b).**

Engage

- Check how many of the learners are already registered with a GP and how many need to register.
- Discuss situations in which they may need to find a new GP, for example because they have moved house/area or because they are unhappy with their current doctor.
- Draw out ideas about why everyone needs a good GP or practice nurse, for example for primary care, for referral to other services, for preventative care like immunisations.
- Encourage learners to share experiences of finding a GP and talk about any difficulties they encountered.
- Talk about what they would want to know first before registering, for example whether there is a woman doctor at the practice; whether there is an appointments system.

How would you go about finding a suitable GP?

What services does a GP provide?

Enable

ACTIVITY 1

Discuss ways of finding out information about GP practices

- Ask learners to talk about what is happening in each of the pictures on Resource 1 and discuss the kind of skills needed for each situation: for example, informal speaking skills for the conversation at work (picture 1); speaking on the telephone (picture 4); computer skills (picture 2); reading (picture 3).
- Discuss the website Faris might be looking at (e.g. the NHS website) and what information it might contain.
- Discuss which method of finding a GP learners would prefer.
- Ask them to match the speech-bubbles to the two larger pictures (1 and 4).
- Discuss the different styles of speaking in the two pictures.
- Ask them to highlight the less formal words and expressions (e.g. 'Hey, Rob'; 'Yeah. My doctor's great') and the more formal (e.g. 'Is it possible for me to ...'; 'you may be able to ... I'll need some information ...').

Which method or methods are likely to find you a GP most quickly?

Support

- Reproduce the four speech-bubbles on cards or sticky notes.
- In pairs, ask learners to read them aloud and match each question to its answer.
- Then proceed to match each pair of cards to a picture.
- Practise the questions and answers as a short role-play.

ESOL

Discuss examples of formal and informal words and expressions, used face to face and on the telephone.

TIP

Help learners to prepare a list of expressions for opening and closing a telephone conversation.

ACTIVITY 2 32-33

Identify key questions to ask about a GP practice and listen for answers

- Play track 32 (the first part of Faris's conversation with Rob). Ask learners to identify Rob's advice to Faris and his reason for giving it.
- Make sure learners understand the meaning of 'full' in reference to a GP's list.

- In pairs, encourage learners to think of other information they might need from Rob and to draw up a list of questions. Collect and display suggestions.
- Play track 33 (the second part of Faris's conversation with Rob) and ask learners to check their questions against those asked by Faris. Discuss similarities and differences.
- Please Note: Audio clip 33 mentions a medical card. Medical cards are no longer issued in England. In recent years this has been replaced with an NHS Number.
- Play track 33 again. In pairs, ask learners to listen and to make a list of at least three key pieces of information that Rob gives.
- Share ideas.

What do you need to know about a particular GP before asking to register?

Support

- Play the conversations more than once, stopping frequently to ensure understanding.
- Provide gap-fill questions for learners to complete, including Faris's questions from track 33 (e.g. '..... (Can I) register over the phone?') and other useful questions learners might need to ask (e.g. 'Is the practice (open) at weekends?').

ESOL

- Replay Faris's questions and ask learners to copy the intonation, concentrating on whether the voice goes up or down at the end.
- Provide practice for learners in saying their own questions aloud, concentrating on intonation.

ACTIVITY 3

Make a telephone call to a GP practice to find out information

- Play the audio clip of the telephone conversation between Faris and the doctor's receptionist.
- Ensure understanding of expressions like 'photo ID' and 'utility bill'.
- Ask learners to make a list of:
 - a) things the receptionist asks Faris to bring
 - b) other key information the receptionist gives
 - c) key information Faris gives to the receptionist.
 (They can do this in small groups and then compare notes.)
- Set up pairs to role-play a telephone conversation using role-play cards prepared from Resource 2.
- Suggest learners introduce their own additional questions and note down useful phrases on the patient's role-play card.
- Encourage them to practise asking and answering questions before they do the actual role-play.
- Circulate during the role-play and give informal feedback on whether learners take turns, listen carefully, use correct intonation for questions, use appropriate vocabulary, etc.
- Review the role-play and make a list of useful questions and vocabulary.

What documents should you take with you when you register?

What information will the practice need from you?

TIP

Use real telephones or sit learners back to back so they can't communicate through gesture or body language.

Support

- Replay the conversation and pause as necessary to clarify.
- Play the role of the receptionist yourself and invite learners to volunteer questions one by one.
- Play the role of the patient: ask questions one by one and ask learners to volunteer answers.
- Display and discuss key questions and answers.
- Proceed with the role-play in pairs.

ESOL

- Provide further practice in intonation of questions.
- Replay the conversation so that learners can indicate where they don't understand.
- Help them to devise questions that ask for repetition or clarification, such as 'I'm sorry, could you repeat that?'; 'What did you say about my address?'

Action

- Allow time for learners to reflect on what they have learnt about finding a GP.
- Ask learners to identify a medical centre or clinic they need to register with, such as a GP practice, a dentist, an optician, a physiotherapist, a counsellor.
- Set a research task in which they find and make contact with the relevant centre.
- Ask learners to report back to the group with the details and how they were obtained.

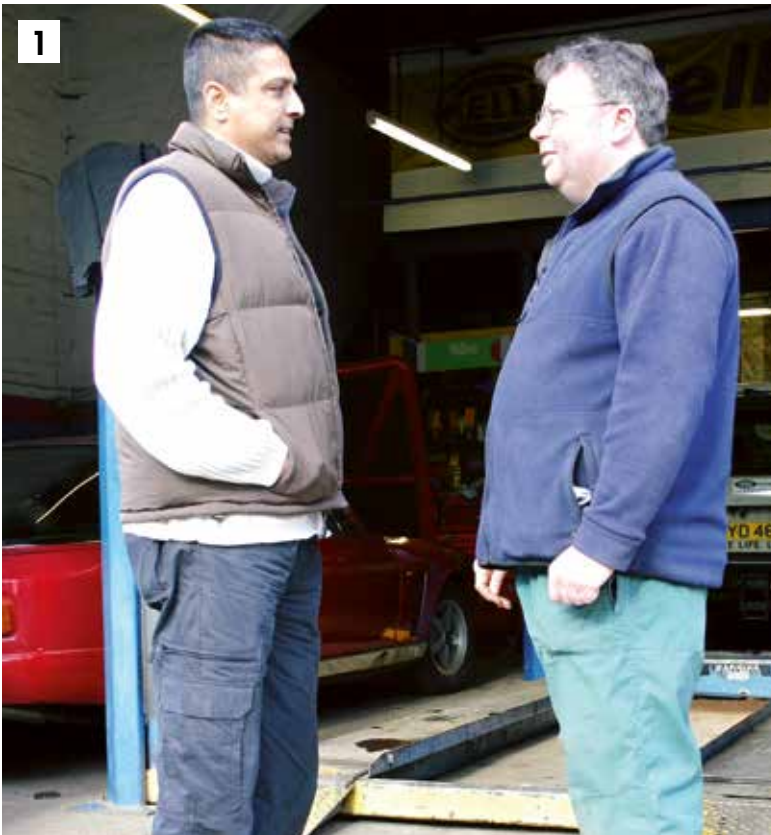
TIP

Learners may want the choice of medical centre to remain private for personal reasons. If so, ask for feedback only on methods and generic questions asked.

Finding a GP

RESOURCE 1

32-33



Hey, Rob. Do you know a good doctor?

Is it possible for me to register at your practice?

Well ... you may be able to register with us, but I'll need some information first.

Yeah. My doctor's great ... The only thing is, he might be full. Why don't you ring and check?



34



Receptionist

Information for the conversation:

- Doctor: Dr James (his list isn't full)
- Document checklist – things to bring:
 - NHS number
 - photo ID and proof of address
 - letters from Home Office
- Surgery opening hours:
 - 8:00–11:00 am
 - 3:30–6:00 pm

Some phrases to help you:

- Do you live near us?
- How long have you been in the UK?
- You'll need to fill in a form.
- Is it only you, or do you want to register your family?
- Can you bring ...?

Patient notes

Questions I want to ask the receptionist:

Information I may need to give:

ACTIVITY 1 / Resource 1

Picture 1

Faris: Hey, Rob. Do you know a good doctor?

Rob: Yeah. My doctor's great ... The only thing is, he might be full. Why don't you ring and check?

Picture 4

Faris: Is it possible for me to register at your practice?

Receptionist: Well ... you may be able to register with us, but I'll need some information first.

ACTIVITY 2 / Resource 1

Key information:

You can't register over the phone.

You need to take your NHS number.

You get a NHS number when you register with a new doctor.

If you lose your NHS number, ask the receptionist what to do.

You must make an appointment to see the doctor.

There are two women doctors at the practice.

The practice opens every morning at 8:30.

ACTIVITY 3 / Resource 1

- a) Things the receptionist asks Faris to take into the practice:
- NHS number
 - Proof of address (e.g. utility bill)
 - Photo ID (e.g. passport)
 - Proof of residency (e.g. benefit documents)
 - Home Office documents (e.g. refugee or asylum seeker)
- b) Other key information the receptionist gives:
- Practice opening hours
 - Temporary patient arrangements
 - Need to complete a form

- c) Key information Faris gives to the receptionist:
- Where he lives
 - Number in family
 - Ages of children
 - When he intends to visit the practice
 - Doesn't have a NHS number
 - Not new in the UK

ACTIVITY 2



Extract 1

Rob: Morning, Faris. You're in early!

Faris: Morning, Rob ... Yes, I am early this morning ... Hey, Rob. Do you know a good doctor?

Rob: Why? Do you need one?

Faris: Yes, I do ... well, we all do ... me, my wife and my kids. You see, we moved last month and now our old doctor's too far away. Do you know one?

Rob: Yeah. My doctor's great. Dr Shah. You live near here now so he'll be the right one for you. He's just up the road – it's the Greenwell Practice, in Greenwell Gardens. The only thing is, he might be full. Why don't you ring and check?

Faris: Oh ... yes, I'll do that. Thanks.



Extract 1

Please Note: Audio clip 24 mentions a medical card. Medical cards are no longer issued in England. In recent years this has been replaced with an NHS Number. Extract 2

Faris: Can I register over the phone?

Rob: No ... I don't think so. For a start, they need to see your medical card.

Faris: Don't know if I've got one.

Rob: You must have ... it's a card ... you get a new one when you register with a new doctor.

Faris: I don't know where it is. What if I've lost it?

Rob: Just tell them that. They'll tell you what to do. And what to bring.

Faris: Do you have to make an appointment to see your doctor?
Or can you just walk in?

Rob: You have to make an appointment. But they always see you quickly.

Faris: Oh, and do they have a female doctor? My wife prefers to see a woman.

Rob: Oh, yes. She can see one of two women doctors. They're both nice ...
Go on ... you can ring them now. The practice is open every morning from 8:30. You can ring from the office if you like. I'll give you the number.

Faris: Brilliant. Thanks, Rob.

ACTIVITY 3



Receptionist: Greenwell Practice. Can I help you?

Receptionist: Greenwell Practice. Can I help you?

Faris: Yes. I'd like to register with a doctor, please. Is it possible for me to register at your practice?

Receptionist: Well ... you may be able to register with us, but I'll need some information first. Do you live in the area?

Faris: I live in Seacourt Way, just round the corner from you.

Receptionist: Oh ... that's fine, then. Is this just for yourself or do you want to register your family?

Faris: Yes ... I want to register my whole family. I have a wife and three children.

Receptionist: How old are your children?

Faris: Er ... they're eight, four and three.

Receptionist: That should be fine. Would you like to come into the practice?

Faris: Yes. When can I come?

Receptionist: Well, we're open Monday to Friday from 8:30 to 11 and all weekday afternoons except Thursday from 4 to 6:30.

Faris: Oh ... I'll come in this afternoon, then.

Receptionist: Good. Oh, and can you bring some proof of your identity with you, something with your name and date of birth on, like a passport or driving license. We'll also need something with your proof of address on, like a water, phone or gas bill.

Faris: I'm not sure that I've got all that ...

Receptionist: Well, bring what you have. If there's a problem, we may be able to take you on as a temporary patient for three months while we sort you out. Oh, and when you come in we'll ask you to complete a form ...