

Using the NHS

The National Health Service (NHS) is the UK's public healthcare system. The NHS is free to use for all UK residents, and for asylum seekers, refugees, people who have temporary leave to remain, some refused asylum seekers, and victims of trafficking.

This free NHS care includes seeing a doctor, having tests, hospital treatment, and getting emergency care. The only health care that has a charge is dental care and medicines, but people on low incomes can get help with these costs.

For people who are not normally a resident in the UK, including those on certain visas, hospital care will also have a cost.

GP practice

A GP practice (sometimes called a GP surgery) is usually the first place to go with a health problem in the UK. Hospitals should only be used for planned appointments, or in emergency situations.

The team at a GP practice includes doctors (known as General Practitioners or GPs), nurses, and other healthcare experts.

A GP practice can treat lots of general medical problems, and help you to manage any long-term conditions too.

If you need any tests or specialist treatment, they can arrange for you to go to a hospital to see a specialist too.

How do I join a GP practice?

Anyone can join a GP practice – just find one near to where you live and get in touch to ask about registering.

You can find a GP practice at:

www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-gp

If you need help with this, call Healthwatch on **0300 77 77 007** or email: enquiries@healthwatchliverpool.co.uk or the Social Inclusion Team on **0151 296 7433** or email: siteam@merseycare.nhs.uk

The NHS logo, consisting of the letters 'NHS' in white on a blue background, is positioned within a blue hexagonal shape. This hexagon is part of a larger decorative graphic of overlapping hexagons in shades of blue and orange at the bottom of the page.

How can I get help from my GP practice?

GP practices in Liverpool can be contacted Monday to Friday, between 8am and 6.30pm (except on bank holidays).

To request an appointment with a doctor or nurse, most GP practices require their patients to call at 8am when the surgery first opens.

When you call your GP practice, the team will ask you some questions to help them decide how best to help you. An appointment may either be face to face, or over the phone.

Most GP practices also have eConsult - a form on their website for help with less urgent problems. Just fill it in, and someone will be in touch.

For get help when your GP practice is closed, you can call **111** or go to: **111.nhs.uk** at any time.



Pharmacy

A pharmacy (also known as a chemist) is staffed by trained health professionals who are experts in medicines.

When a doctor or nurse at your GP practice gives you a prescription for medicines, you collect them from a pharmacy.

They can also offer you lots of advice on the best ways to treat everyday health problems or minor injuries.

How can I get help from a pharmacy?

There are over 100 pharmacies in Liverpool. Many are open from early until late, and on weekends too.

You can use any pharmacy. No appointment is needed - just drop in to get advice.

Find your nearest pharmacy and opening times at: www.nhs.uk



NHS Walk-In Centre

NHS walk-in centres provide free advice and treatment for minor injuries and illnesses. For example:

- infections and rashes
- coughs
- flu-like symptoms
- earache
- sore throats
- cuts, bruises and strains
- minor burns
- stomach aches

How can I get help from a walk-in centre?

All walk-in centres in Liverpool are open between 8am and 8pm, seven days a week (including bank holidays). You do not need an appointment – just walk in and wait to be seen.

Find your nearest walk-in centre at:

www.merseyscare.nhs.uk/walkincentres

Worried about your child?

Alder Hey Children's Hospital has an online symptom checker to help parents find information on common symptoms in children, and where and when to seek help for your child.

Go to www.alderhey.nhs.uk to try it.



NHS 111

NHS 111 is a non-emergency health advice line that can help if you have an urgent medical problem, but it isn't life-threatening.

Their team of trained health professionals are always on hand to offer health advice or direct you to the right local health service if you're not sure where to go.

How does NHS 111 work?

You will be asked some simple questions about your symptoms online or over the phone. Depending on the situation, you will:

- be told what local service can help you
- be given an appointment with a GP if your practice is closed
- be given an appointment at a hospital A&E department if needed
- be told how to get any medicine you need
- get advice on how to treat the condition yourself at home.

To get help from NHS 111, you can go to: 111.nhs.uk or call **111**. The service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.



Hospital Accident & Emergency (A&E)

A hospital accident and emergency department (A&E) is for life-threatening emergencies. For example:

- loss of consciousness
- heart attack
- stroke
- breathing difficulties
- severe bleeding that cannot be stopped
- severe burns or scalds
- major injuries such as in a road traffic accident

How can I get help in an emergency?

If someone's life is in danger, you should call 999 for an ambulance or go straight to your nearest hospital A&E department.

There are adult A&E departments at the Royal Liverpool University Hospital and at Aintree University Hospital for adults.

There is also an A&E department for children aged 16 and under at Alder Hey Children's Hospital.

All A&E departments are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.



Dentist

Dentists provide regular check-ups and treatment to help keep your mouth, teeth and gums healthy and free of pain.

How do I get help from a dentist?

You do not need to register with a dentist before you can get emergency dental care.

If you are in pain and need help fast, you can call the Dental Helpline on **0161 476 9651** (Monday to Friday between 8am - 6pm) or you can call NHS 111 at any time.

Will I have to pay for my dental care?

Most people will have to pay for NHS dental treatment. You do not have to pay for NHS dental services if you are:

- under 18
- under 19 and in full-time education
- pregnant or have had a baby in the last 12 months
- being treated in an NHS hospital by the hospital dentist
- receiving low-income benefits



Feeling worried, anxious, or low?

As well as looking after your physical health, the NHS can also help you to find support for dealing with emotional problems. For example, if you are feeling:

- worried or anxious
- sad or low in mood
- stressed out by your problems
- unable to sleep
- that you can't cope

How can I get help?

If you need support and advice for emotional problems, contact your GP practice.

If you or someone you know is struggling to cope and needs help urgently, you can call a free emergency support line at any time:

- For adults - call 0800 145 6570
- For children - call 0808 196 3550

Sexual Health

Sexual health clinics offer fast and easy access to advice and support for sexual health problems. For example, if you need:

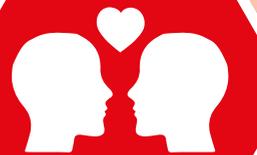
- contraception or emergency contraception
- testing and treatment for infections
- pregnancy testing
- advice about problems with sex
- HIV support

All advice and treatment given is free of cost, and completely confidential.

How can I get help?

Axess is a service that provides sexual health clinics in Liverpool, including one based at the Royal Liverpool Hospital. It also offers advice and testing services online.

For more information or to book an appointment now, go to www.axess.clinic



Need help communicating?

If you need help to communicate when using any NHS healthcare services, you can ask for an interpreter at any time.

All NHS services must provide you with one – please just ask a member of staff.

If you find it difficult to get this help, please email: involvement@liverpoolccg.nhs.uk

Do you need this in a different format or language?

If you need this information in another language or format, please email: communications@liverpoolccg.nhs.uk or call (0151) 247 6406 or text 07920 206 386.

