

Help Us, Help You

The student guide to the NHS when
away from home

Campaign Toolkit

NHS England (Midlands) – July 2023

This toolkit is for communicators in higher education or further education and student unions to help share NHS messages with their students

Background for communicators

The NHS is introducing more digital ways than ever before to access the NHS using technology young adults are more familiar with.

This toolkit contains articles, web copy and social media to explain to students how to get the best out of the NHS when they need it.

If you have any questions about this communications toolkit, please email england.midlandscomms@nhs.net

Contents

This pack covers the following advice for students:

- Healthcare away from home
 - registering with and using a GP
 - dental care and vaccinations
 - community pharmacy
 - contraception
 - being healthy
 - disability allowance
- The NHSApp – accessing health care using your smartphone, tablet or desktop.
- NHS111 – the service to use when it's urgent but not an emergency.
- Talking Therapies - If you live in England and are aged 18 or over, you can access NHS talking therapies services for anxiety and depression.

Healthcare away from home

Article and website copy

It's important to look after your health when living away from home. This includes registering with a local GP and finding your local sexual health service.



Here are our six health tips for new students.

1. Register with a local GP

If, like most students, you spend more weeks of the year at your university address than your home address, you need to register with a GP near your university as soon as possible.

That way you can receive care if you need it, and access health services quickly and easily while you're away.

This is especially important if you have an ongoing health condition, particularly one that needs medicine, such as [asthma](#), [diabetes](#) or [epilepsy](#).

You can choose to register with any local GP. The health centre attached to your university is likely to be the most convenient, and the doctors working there will be experienced in the health needs of students.

[Find your local GP surgery](#)

Other health services available

Many university health centres have good links with specialists, such as psychiatrists, sports physicians, psychotherapists, counsellors and physiotherapists.

Having trouble getting an appointment? You can also always ask your [local pharmacist](#) for medical advice and support.

They may not be at the pharmacy counter when you go in, so ask the person at the counter if you can speak to the pharmacist. There will be a separate room so you can have a conversation privately if you wish.

Getting ill during the holidays

If you become unwell or need other medical treatment when you're at home or not staying near your university GP, you can [contact your nearest practice](#) to ask for treatment.

You can receive emergency treatment for 14 days. After that you will have to register as a temporary resident or permanent patient.

[Find out how to register as a temporary resident with a GP](#)

If you have an urgent care need, use NHS111 first. This service can be found online <https://111.nhs.uk/>; on the NHSApp (downloadable from your usual app store) or by calling 111.

2. Dental care

If you need dental care while you are at university, for check-ups or to treat a problem, you can see details of local dentists at [Find a dentist - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/).

Not all dentists offer NHS work and not all NHS work is completely free. But you may be able to apply for help with health costs including prescriptions and dental care.

[Get help with dental costs](#)

3. Check your vaccinations

MenACWY vaccination

Students can have a vaccination to prevent meningitis W disease if requested.

The [MenACWY vaccine](#) protects against 4 different causes of meningitis and septicaemia: meningococcal (Men) A, C, W and Y diseases.

All 17- and 18-year-olds in school year 13 and first-time university students up to the age of 25 are eligible as part of the NHS [vaccination](#) programme.

GP practices will automatically send letters inviting 17- and 18-year-olds in school year 13 to have the MenACWY vaccine.

But if you're a student going away to university or college for the first time, contact the GP you're registered with to ask for the MenACWY vaccine, ideally before the start of the academic year.

This is because you'll be at particularly high risk in the first weeks of term, when you're likely to come into contact with many new people.

Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccination

This year there has been an increased number of measles cases in England, and it is really important that you are fully protected against this illness which can be very serious.

The [MMR vaccine](#) is part of the routine NHS childhood immunisation schedule. This means most young people who've grown up in England will have had 2 doses of it in childhood.

If you're not sure you've had two doses of the MMR vaccination, ask a GP for a catch-up vaccination.

Flu jab

Get an annual [flu vaccination](#) if you have asthma and take inhaled steroids. You should also get a flu vaccination if you have a serious long-term condition such as [kidney disease](#).

HPV vaccination

Nearly all cervical cancers are caused by the [Human Papillomavirus virus group \(HPV\)](#), as well as some mouth and throat cancers and some cancers of the anus and genital areas.

By having the HPV vaccination, you are protecting yourself and others. HPV vaccination is available to women up to the age of 25 and also to eligible GBMSM.

4. Community pharmacy services

Community pharmacies are your local retail pharmacies, who now offer a range of services for you to access.

Although they are better known for dispensing your prescription medicines and over-the-counter medicines, their role is much broader and includes services for conditions such as urinary tract infections (UTIs) and providing an ongoing supply of contraception.

[Find a pharmacy who offers extended care services](#)

5. Sexual wellbeing

Even if you do not plan to be sexually active while studying, it's good to be prepared.

Contraception and condoms are free for everyone from any GP – it does not have to be your own – or family planning clinic.

You also have the option of visiting your [local pharmacy for repeat contraception](#) after your initial consultation and prescription from your GP.

Getting tested and treated for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) is straightforward and confidential. Most infections can be cured.

[Find your local sexual health service](#)

[Find a sexual health clinic](#)

6. Rest and healthy food

You'll greatly increase your chances of keeping healthy by taking care of yourself.

Student life may not be renowned for early nights and [healthy eating](#), but getting enough sleep and eating well will mean you have a better chance of staying healthy.

You'll feel more energetic and be better equipped to cope with studying and exams.

Remember to:

- eat [5 portions of fruit and vegetables](#) a day.
- buy wholemeal bread and pasta instead of white.
- avoid eating fast food and takeaways.

Eating well does not have to cost a lot and is often cheaper than takeaways. Taking the time to cook simple meals instead of eating out or buying ready meals is also healthier.

[Read more about eating well for less](#)

6. Drinking and smoking

It's recommended to drink no more than 14 units of alcohol a week, spread across three days or more. That's around six medium (175ml) glasses of wine, or six pints of 4% beer.

There's no completely safe level of drinking but sticking within these guidelines lowers your risk of harming your health. Try using Alcohol Change UK's [unit calculator](#) to work out how many units you drink and watch our video guide to [alcohol units](#).

Stopping smoking is one of the best things you will ever do for your health. Quitting is much easier when you get the right support and there are lots of options to choose from.

[Check out advice, tools and tips to stop.](#)

Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA)

As a higher education student living in England, you can apply for a [Disabled Students' Allowance \(DSA\)](#) if you have a:

- disability
- long-term health condition
- mental health condition
- specific learning difficulty, such as [dyslexia](#)

The support you get depends on your individual needs and not on income.

ENDS

[Social media messages and images](#)

- *If you're moving away from home to study, make sure you register with a local GP* www.nhs.uk/register
- *Don't forget to register with a local GP during Freshers Week* www.nhs.uk/register



The NHSApp

Article or website copy

The NHSApp is owned and run by the NHS. It is a simple way to access a range of NHS services on your smartphone or tablet.

It keeps your data safe and secure. Once you've downloaded the App you will need to set up an NHS login and prove who you are. The app then securely connects to information from your GP surgery.



By linking to your GP record, it lets you access your medicines, order repeat prescriptions and indicate whether you wish to donate your organs. You can also use it to access the NHS111 service and it also shows your (COVID) vaccination status, sometimes called the COVID Pass. If you don't yet have it, you can download it from the App Store or Google Play.

If your device supports fingerprint detection or facial recognition, you can use it to log in to the NHSApp each time, instead of using a password and security code.

ENDS

Social media messages and image

- *The NHSApp is a simple and secure way to access a range of NHS services on your smartphone or tablet, including the NHS COVID Pass. Download it now on www.nhs.uk/nhs-app*
- *Download the NHSApp today to get your NHS COVID Pass and to access a range of other NHS services www.nhs.uk/nhs-app*
- *Have you downloaded the NHSApp? Find out about the secure NHS services you can access, including the NHS COVID Pass. Want more info? This way ↗ www.nhs.uk/nhs-app*
- *You can order repeat prescriptions through the NHSApp. Find out more about the free NHS App ↗ www.nhs.uk/nhs-app*



NHS111 online

Article or website copy

Did you know [NHS111](#) is now available online?

Use 111 online to get assessed and directed to the right place for you, like an urgent treatment centre.

NHS111 links to all our local services so should only recommend services that are right for you and open when you need them.

You can also find NHS111 online on your NHSApp. This can be downloaded from your usual app store.

If it's life-threatening you should always call 999.

ENDS

Social media messages and images

Twitter posts

- *Use 111 online to get assessed and directed to the right place for you, like an urgent treatment centre.*

111 online will not give you a diagnosis, but it will direct you to the best place to get help for your symptoms <https://111.nhs.uk>

Instagram/ Facebook posts

- *If you think you need medical help right now, 111 online can tell you what to do next.*

Use 111 online to get assessed and directed to the right place for you, like an urgent treatment centre.

111 online will not give you a diagnosis, but it will direct you to the best place to get help for your symptoms <https://111.nhs.uk>

Image for website / social media



Talking Therapies

Article or website copy

Sometimes you may not realise your mental health isn't ok. Trouble sleeping, or excessive drinking or eating can all be indicators that your mental health is struggling.

[Every Mind Matters](#) has expert advice and practical tips if you are struggling with your mental health.

[Talking therapies](#), or psychological therapies, are also effective and confidential treatments if you are experiencing anxiety, depression, and other common mental health concerns.

You can access talking therapies for free on the NHS.

You don't need to see a GP. You can refer yourself directly or a GP can refer you.

ENDS



Social media messages and image

- *If you're struggling with your mental health, you are not alone. Trouble sleeping, or excessive drinking or eating can all be indicators that your mental health may need some TLC.*

Every Mind Matters can help as well as services such as Talking Therapies.

- *Are you struggling with your mental health?*

You can access talking therapies for free on the NHS. You can refer yourself directly or a GP can refer you.

Help is available in person, by video, over the phone or as an online course.



**NHS Talking
Therapies can help**

