

1.1.3 Home and other visits

Home and other visits need to be available to regular patients, where clinically appropriate. Practices must have a written home and other visit policy that specifies the factors that are deemed to make home or other visits safe and reasonable, who decides if a home visit is needed or warranted, geographical areas covered, types of problems that necessitate a visit, and an alternative to a home visit if one is not available when needed.

RACGP 4th Edition Standards

- 1.1.3** *Regular patients of our practice are able to obtain visits in their home, residential aged care facility, residential care facility or hospital, both within and outside normal opening hours where such visits are deemed safe and reasonable.*

Assessment methods

- Interview with GPs and staff

Surveyors will interview practice GPs, nurses and administrative staff, who should be able to describe the home and other visit policy, both within and outside normal opening hours. Staff should be able to advise situations in which a home visit is deemed appropriate, and at whose discretion this is determined.

- Document review of patient health records

The GP surveyor will look for evidence of home and other visit consultations, both within and outside normal opening hours, when reviewing active health records.

- Document review

GPA will review a written policy on home and other visits, both within and outside normal opening hours. Ideally this policy will be reviewed as part of the preliminary program.

Meeting the Standards

All staff should be familiar with the practice's home and other visit policies, be able to confidently describe how patients can access a home visit when needed, and describe what the process is from receiving the initial request, to a GP attending a home visit, to patient notes being completed and incorporated into the patient's health record. Staff should be able to describe how patients are made aware of the availability of home visits. When a home visit is provided, applicable consultation notes must be included in the patient's health record. It is essential that practices have a documented home and other visit policy, both within and outside normal opening hours, and this should be included in the practice's policies and procedures manual.

Home visits must be available to patients, both within and outside normal opening hours. Where a practice utilises an after hours service to provide after hours care, it should not always be referring patients to this after hours service to manage home visits.

Best practice

Ideally, the printed practice information sheet will advise patients of the availability of home and other visits.