

Physical access

It is important that practice principals, owners, GPs and staff consider practical ways to facilitate access to the practice and its services. Practices must make reasonable efforts to facilitate physical access to their premises and services for all patient groups, including those people with a disability or other special needs.

RACGP 4th Edition Standards

5.1.3A/ *There is wheelchair access to our practice and its facilities, or if physical access is limited, our practice provides home or other visits to patients with disabilities or special needs.*

5.1.3B/ *Our GPs and other practice staff can describe how they facilitate access to our practice for patients with disabilities or special needs.*

Assessment methods

- Tour of the practice premises

It is expected that there will be wheelchair access to the practice and to the facilities within the practice, and if this access is limited, then there will be evidence that the practice provides home or other visits to patients with disabilities or special needs. Surveyors will look for evidence of disabled access when touring the premise, such as ramps to the entrance, wide doorways and corridors, a disabled toilet, and disabled parking spaces being nearby.

- Interview with GPs and practice staff

Surveyors will interview GPs, clinical and administrative staff who should all be able to describe how the practice facilitates access to disabled patients, or patients with special needs. This discussion should include the availability of home visits to patients who cannot physically attend the practice.

Meeting the Standards

When considering what might be reasonable, practices should consider the needs of patients with restriction of movement that prevents safe access to the practice. For example, it is useful to make wheelchair access available for patients with a disability or special needs, including pathways, hallways, consultation areas and toilets that are wheelchair friendly. Wherever possible, patients with a disability need to be able to park their vehicles within a reasonable distance of the practice. Practices are encouraged to provide parking bays specifically marked for the use of patients with a disability parking entitlement. For any patients who are not able to access the practice premises because transfer to the practice is too difficult or could cause harm, the practice needs to provide home or other visits.

Best practice

Ideally, all facilities and access topics will be outlined in the practice's policies and procedures manual. It is recommended the printed patient information sheet advise patients of the practice's disabled access arrangements, including disabled parking.