

# Increasing GP registrations amongst children by linking with the Child Health Information Service (CHIS)

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## Background

Lack of access to primary care services, by not being registered with a General Practitioner (GP), is a source of health inequality (1). Unregistered children are at risk of missing healthcare activity, including routine vaccination (2). NHS England has emphasised the importance of ensuring no child misses out on vaccination invitations and has sought to explore solutions for those not registered with a GP.

NHS South, Central and West (SCW) currently provides Child Health Information Service (CHIS) coverage for 32% of the 0–19 population in England (3). Approximately 1% (n = 8,000) of 0–6-year-olds within the areas covered are not registered with a GP. SCWCHIS maintains health records for all children aged 0-19 who live in, attend school in, or are registered with a GP within one of its areas. CHIS is notified when a baby is born or moves into the area, when they register with a GP, and about their vaccinations and screening.

The aim of this pilot was to increase GP registrations amongst 0-6-year-olds resident in Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon, Wiltshire, and Gloucestershire, so that families could access childhood vaccination and other healthcare services.

## Methods

CHIS worked with NHS England South West commissioners to develop a letter reminding parents/carers of the importance of registering their child with a GP. The letter was in plain English, written at a level below the average adult reading age, and included symbols to support accessibility. It outlined how to register, emphasising the process was quick, free, and did not require a fixed address or identification.

In September 2024, the letter was sent to the households of 807 children aged 8 weeks to 6 years who were not registered with a GP and had one or more missing routine vaccinations. A second letter was sent out the following month to all households where the child was under the age of one year (n = 89).

## Results

Within two months of the initial mailout, 77 children (9.5%) were newly registered with a GP in the area and 52 (6.4%) became up-to-date with their age-appropriate vaccinations (2).

The cost of postage (the most expensive item at £0.86 per letter) for both mailouts (896 letters in total) was £770.56, which equates to just over £10 per new registration or just under £15 per child catching up with their vaccinations.

## Discussion and Conclusion

In recent years, there has been a rise in vaccine-preventable diseases such as measles, alongside widening health inequalities. It is therefore more important than ever that children are registered with a GP. CHISs are well positioned to identify non-registered cohorts and send simple and low-cost mailouts, resulting in increased registrations and an associated increase in uptake of routine childhood vaccination.

## Future work

A planned project will expand the area covered and will look to identify indicators associated with uptake e.g. ethnicity, index of multiple deprivation. Related projects will look at the optimum number of reminders for vaccination appointments, moving to digital-first invitations, and making reminders more accessible.

## References

1. Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development. Realising the Potential of Primary Health Care. May 2020. Available at: [Realising the Potential of Primary Health Care | OECD](#). Accessed 23 Apr 2025
2. NHS vaccinations and when to have them. Available at: <https://www.nhs.uk/vaccinations/nhs-vaccinations-and-when-to-have-them/>. Accessed 06 May 2025
3. About us - SCW Child Health Information Service (CHIS) <https://chis.scwcsu.nhs.uk/>. Accessed 06 May 2025

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