

Audioscript

Listening comprehension

9-11

MRS SMITH: Hello, Mrs Sutton. Come in. How are you settling in next door? Have all your things from Canada arrived yet? I thought I saw a removals van outside your house yesterday afternoon.

MRS SUTTON: Yes. They came yesterday. We spent all day yesterday arranging them. It's beginning to feel a bit more like home now.

MRS SMITH: That's good. Look, come in and sit down. Are you alright? You look a bit worried.

MRS SUTTON: Well, I am a bit. I'm sorry to bother you so early, Mrs Smith, but I wonder if you could help me. Could you tell me how I can get hold of a doctor? Our daughter, Anna, isn't very well this morning and I may have to call somebody out. She keeps being sick and I am beginning to get a bit worried. I just don't know how the health system works here in England. All I know is that it's very different from ours back in Canada.

MRS SMITH: Well, I don't know really where to start. Let me think. Well, the first thing you have to do is find a family doctor - sometimes we call them general practitioners as well - and register with him or her. If you live here, you've got to be on a doctor's list. If you're not, things can be a bit difficult. Nobody will come out to you if you're not registered. Anyway, they work in things called practices. Sort of small groups of family doctors all working together in the same building. Now what you've got to do this morning is register with one of them. There are two practices near here, so we're quite well off for doctors in this part of Manchester. There's the Dean End Health Centre about ten minutes' walk away and there's another practice in South Hay. That's about five minutes away going towards the town centre. We're registered at the Dean End one, but they're both OK. There are about six doctors in our practice and four in the other. So ours is quite big in comparison. And the building and everything's a bit more modern. South Hay is a bit old-fashioned but the doctors are OK. Their only problem is that they don't have a proper appointment system. Sometimes you have to wait for ages there to see someone. Anyway, you go to the receptionist in whichever health centre and ask her to register you with a doctor there. You have to fill in a form, but it doesn't take long. Ours is called Dr Jones and we've been going to him for years - ever since we moved here fifteen years ago. I wouldn't say he's brilliant but I suppose he's alright really. We're used to him now. They say he's very good with elderly people, but he does tend to get a bit impatient with children. Listen, the one who's supposed to be really good with small children is Dr Shaw. I've heard lots of people say that. She's young and she's got small children of her own. So you could try registering with her. And if her list is full, I heard somebody say the other day that there's a really nice young doctor at South Hay, a Dr Williams. He holds special clinics for people with back trouble. But that's not really your problem, is it?

MRS SMITH: If you want a doctor to visit you at home, you have to ask for a home visit. You're supposed to do that before 10.30 in the morning, but obviously, if it's an emergency, you can phone at any time, night or day. It might not be your doctor that comes, though. It's quite often one of the other doctors in the practice. It doesn't really seem to make much difference. Otherwise you make an appointment to see your doctor at the health centre. You usually get seen the

same day. Not always of course, but usually, as I say. They hold surgeries between 9 and 11.30 every weekday, and from 4 to 6.30 Monday to Thursday. Saturdays are only for emergencies. When the doctor sees you, he gives you a prescription. He writes what medication you need on it and you take it to a chemist's shop. There's one opposite the centre. If it's for a child under 16, you don't have to pay. So if it's for Anna. there's no problem. The same thing goes if you're unemployed or retired, or if you're pregnant. Just as well because it's not cheap. You pay the same price for each item the doctor has prescribed. At the moment it's something like £5 per item. So you pay for the medication but the consultation with the doctor doesn't cost you anything. It's completely free as long as you're a resident here. You're going to be here for three years, aren't you? So there shouldn't be any question of you paying anything to see the doctor. So that's one less problem to worry about. Look, Mrs Sutton. If you want, I'll sit with your daughter for half an hour if you want to go down to the health centre to register. It's no trouble really, don't worry.

MRS SUTTON: Are you sure you wouldn't mind? That would really help me a lot. I'll ask them if they can send someone round later to see Anna. I think I'll try the Dean End Centre.

MRS SMITH: Good idea. Don't worry about Anna.

MRS SUTTON: Right. I'll be back as soon as I can.