

Getting started with GP online services

What are GP online services?

GP online services are about giving patients the ability to access their GP surgery via the internet.

If the person you care for wants to give you access to their GP information, as their carer you can help them to:

- Book and cancel appointments with their doctor.
- Order any repeat medication they might need.
- See detailed information held in their GP record, including medication, allergies, illnesses, test results, and immunisations.

You can access GP online services on a computer, tablet or smartphone, using a website or an app.

You will still be able to phone the surgery, or call in, just like you do now. This is just another option that you might find more convenient because you will be able to do these things outside of normal surgery hours.

For more information on how to start using online services, see the 'Getting started with GP online services' guide. This guide is available online at nhs.uk/GPonlineservices

Benefits for carers

There are many benefits for you as a carer, for example:

- Booking appointments at a time that suits you, at home or abroad. You do not have to ring the surgery.

- Ordering repeat prescriptions and view a list of any medication the person you care for takes. No more having to remember the names of the medication or how many you need to order.
- You can also order only what is needed, when it is needed, so that medication is not wasted or becomes out of date before it can be used.
- Checking test results, for example blood tests. This means that you will not have to call the surgery for the results and may mean that you can see the results earlier than before.
- If you and the person you care for need to remember what was discussed during their appointment, you can do this by looking at their online record afterwards. Accessing this information at any time can help you with providing care and support.
- Making sure the information the doctor has for the person you care for is correct, for example, medication or allergies.
- If both you and the person you care for use online services, you can see the same information and can make decisions, without needing to see the doctor together. This could mean they may not need to see their doctor as often.
- If a patient has more than one carer, they can choose to give any or all of them access to their online services. The patient may allow the carers to see whether an appointment has been made, or a repeat prescription has been ordered, even the last date the medication was issued. Each person

will have access to this information using their own login details.

- It gives you the freedom to access online services for the person you care for when you have the space and time to do it, rather than trying to fit everything into the hours when the surgery is open.

How you sign up

Before you are given login details, the surgery will need to check who you are and make sure the person you care for has given you permission to use online services on their behalf. This is how it works:

- The person you care for tells their GP surgery they would like you to have access to their online services. If they are not able to make decisions for themselves the GP may still allow you to have online access for them if it is in their best interests.
- The surgery will give both of you a short form to fill in and sign to confirm you both agree with this arrangement.
- The surgery will ask you both to show them some ID with your photo on it and something else with your address on it for example, your passport or driving licence and a bank statement or council tax statement. If you don't have photo ID or anything with your address on it, it doesn't mean you will not be able to use online services. Speak to the surgery staff who will be able to help.
- The surgery will then give you a registration letter with your account details for you to start using these services.

In some cases it may not be suitable for you to be given access and if this is the case, the surgery will discuss the reasons for this with you and the patient. The patient must be aware and give their permission before you are given access to their online services.

Lasting Power of Attorney for Health and Welfare or court appointed deputy

If a person is unable to make decisions for themselves, another person, usually a partner or close family member can be given legal responsibility over decisions concerning their life by the courts. This is called Lasting Power of Attorney for Health and Welfare. If you have this form of lasting power of attorney for the person you care for, you can ask their surgery for access to their online services. Their GP will make a decision about whether this is in the best interests of the patient. They will also decide which parts of online services you can access if it is granted.

For more information on Lasting Power of Attorney for Health and Welfare, contact The Office of the Public Guardian and the Court of Protection:
[www.gov.uk/power of attorney](http://www.gov.uk/power-of-attorney)
or call 0300 456 0300.

Further information

The following guides can be found at your surgery or online at nhs.uk/GPonlineservices

- Making sure you are safe online, see the – ‘Protecting your GP online records’ guide.
- If you lose or forget your login details, see the – ‘Getting started with GP online services’ guide.

Help and support

If you would like to learn how to use the internet or how to use GP online services, see the ‘Getting started with GP online services’ guide, which can be found at nhs.uk/GPonlineservices

What other carers who use online services had to say

‘As a carer it can be difficult to find time to socialise with friends but the flexibility of accessing online services means I no longer have to be anxious about completing tasks at only the opening times of the surgery. I can now work away from home and access the information anytime. I do not need to be home to do this. It’s just fantastic and now I feel that it’s no longer a chore, it’s a lifestyle.’

Keymn, Arran Way Medical Centre.

‘I have been a carer for my partner Jenny for the past 13 years; she has dementia. In June 2015, I was able to obtain, with Jenny’s consent, online access to her GP online record and this has helped me look after Jenny’s health better. For example, Jenny ‘forgets’ about GP visits. Having online access allows me to share with her (on a smartphone or notebook) what the GP said so that she is kept informed about what is happening, which as a result recognises Jenny’s dignity and benefits her health and wellbeing.’

Trevor, Regis Medical Centre.

To watch videos of Trevor and other carers telling their stories, please visit nhs.uk/GPonlineservices

www.nhs.uk/GPonlineservices