



# Weobley & Staunton on Wye Surgeries



## PATIENT ONLINE ACCESS INFORMATION LEAFLET

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This leaflet explains:

- How to get started with GP Online Services
- How to register & what you need to do
- What proxy access means
- The processes around proxy access especially for children and young persons

## INTRODUCTION

Did you know that you don't have to wait on the phone to speak to your GP surgery? Just like online banking, you can look at your GP records on a computer, tablet or a smartphone, using a website or an app. You can choose to:

- Book and cancel appointments with your doctor online when it suits you.
- Order repeat prescriptions online. Some patients have found that they save time and money as they don't need to make a special trip to their surgery to order repeat prescriptions
- Look at your GP records online whenever you want, even from the comfort of your home, and find answers to questions you may have without ringing your doctor.

Online services are free to use and are just another way of contacting your surgery. You can still ring us or come to the surgery in person like you do now. You can also still request your full printed records from your surgery by completing a Subject Access Request.

### **What is in your record**

Your GP record is the one place where almost of your medical information is kept. This includes:

- Illnesses or diagnoses
- Operations
- Examinations and screening
- Medicines
- Allergies, for example to a medicine like penicillin or to pollen if you have hay fever
- Vaccinations and immunisations, for example tetanus and polio.
- Test results, such as blood and urine tests, peak flow readings for breathing difficulties
- X rays and scans
- Notes about your appointments with doctors and nurses at your surgery
- Letters from hospitals, community nurses, such as district nurses, podiatrists and other medical staff that look after you
- Lifestyle information, for example whether you smoke and drink alcohol or not, or how much you exercise
- Height and weight
- Contact detail

## REGISTRATION FOR ONLINE SERVICES

It is not hard to start using online services. You will be offered this if you join our practice as part of the registration processes. If you are a longstanding patient at the Practice and now wish access to your records online then you will need to complete the registration form.

Before you do sign up, you do need to consider the following before applying. Although the chances of any of these things happening are very small, you will be asked to confirm you have read and understood the following before login details are provided.

**Forgotten History** – there may be something you have forgotten about in your record that you might find upsetting

**Abnormal Results or Bad News** – You may see something that you find upsetting. This may occur before you have spoken to your doctor or while the surgery is closed and you cannot contact them.

**Choosing to Share Your Information with Someone** – It's up to you whether or not you share your information with others – perhaps family members or carers.

**Coercion** – If you think you may be pressured into revealing details from your patient record to someone else against your will, it is best that you do not register for access at this time.

**Misunderstood Information** – Your medical record is designed to be used by clinical professionals to ensure that you receive the best possible care. Some of the information within the medical record may be highly technical, written by specialists and not easily understood. If you require further clarification, you can contact the Practice for a clearer explanation.

**Information About Someone Else** – If you spot something in your record that is not about you or notice any other errors, you are advised to log out of the system immediately and contact the Practice as soon as possible.

We will need to check who you are to make sure you only see your record and not someone else's. Just like your bank or the Post Office when you pick up a parcel. Your surgery wants to protect your records from people who are not allowed to see them.

- Call into the surgery and explain that you would like to start using online services.
- We will give you an application form to fill in and sign to confirm you agree with the information on the form

## ID VERIFICATION

We will then check you are who you say you are by asking you to provide ID in person in line with the NHS Good Practice Guidance on Identity Verification. We will do this in one of three ways:

- Photo ID and proof of address, for example, a passport of driving licence and a bank statement of council tax statement (please note that one method of ID MUST be photographic)
- If you do not have any ID and are well known to the surgery a member of staff may be able to confirm your identity
- If you do not have any ID and are not well known to the surgery, you will be asked questions about the information in your GP record to confirm the record is really yours

A member of the Administration Team will then check the form and ask the doctor to review your notes to remove any third party references in line with legislative requirements before access can be switched on. This may take up to 14 days.

We will then send you a letter with your unique username and password. It will also tell you about the website where you can login and start using your online services.

## PROXY ACCESS

Did you know that you can choose to give another person access to your GP online services on your behalf? You don't need to know how to use these services or have a computer yourself to give another person access. Your surgery will give them their own login details, which will be separate from your own. Your surgery will give you details on how this can be set up.

### Who can have access?

You choose who you want to give access to. This could be your carer, partner, parent or another family member. You can also give access to more than one person. Giving access to another person is your choice. No one can go to your GP surgery and ask for access to your online services without your permission.

You also choose which online services you want each person to use. These are booking appointments, ordering repeat prescriptions and looking at your GP record. You decide whether to let them use one, two or all of the services on your behalf.

### Why you may want to give another person access?

You may wish to allow another person to use your online services for different reasons. For example:

- You are very unwell or just need help managing your health.
- You have a long term condition, for example diabetes, heart disease, asthma or high blood pressure and would like support with checking test results, ordering repeat prescriptions and understanding your treatment.
- You are finding it more difficult to look after yourself, for example due to memory issues or speech difficulties.
- You have learning difficulties and want someone else to help you understand your health.
- You have a carer who can help you manage your health.
- You may be planning for the future or choosing someone to hold lasting power of attorney for health and social care for you.
- You are a young person and would like your parent or guardian to look after your health. Some surgeries only allow this for children under the age of 12.

- You work away from home or are just busy and need help with booking appointments or ordering repeat prescriptions.
- You are not comfortable with using computers, smart phones, or tablets and want someone else to do this for you.

Before giving another person access, you should think about what the benefits will be for you. If you cannot think of any, then you should think very carefully whether allowing them access is the right thing to do. Some of the benefits are:

- You have peace of mind that someone is supporting you with managing your health.
- The person you choose can help you make sure the information your surgery has about you is correct, for example your medication and allergies.
- You know that someone else understands your medical information and can provide information when you are unable to. This could be when you are unconscious or too unwell to speak or when you need help explaining or understanding something.
- You can benefit from the convenience of using GP online services even if you do not use a computer or do not have access to the internet.
- One member of the family can book appointments for everyone in the household and make sure the appointments fit with your family activities.

### **How it works**

The recommended and safest way to give another person access to your online services is for them to have their own username and password. If you use online services yourself, you should not share your username and password with anyone. If you share your username and password, your surgery cannot tell whether you or someone else accessed your online services. This may be a problem if someone else misuses your login details and your surgery has to look into this.

### **How to Sign Up**

The steps below show how you can give another person access:

- You contact your surgery to let them know you would like to give your chosen person access to your GP online services. You may also choose to register for online services for yourself if you do not already use them.
- Staff at your surgery will give your chosen person a short form to fill in. You will also need to sign to confirm you agree with the information on the form and attend, where possible, with the person that you would like to give access to your records, when the form is returned. You can also choose whether you only want them to book appointments or order prescriptions or use all the services on your behalf. It is up to you.
- You and your chosen person will need to show your surgery their photo ID and proof of address, for example, a passport or photo driving licence and a bank statement or council tax statement. If they don't have the required ID, speak to staff at the surgery, who may be able to help confirm their identity in another way. A clinician at your surgery will make a decision on whether to give your chosen person access to your GP online services. If your surgery decides not to give them access, they will discuss their reasons with you.
- Your surgery staff will give your chosen person their own username and password to use to login to your GP online services.

### **Things to Consider Before Giving Another Person Access**

- Is there any information in your records you would not like anyone to see or know about?
- Can you trust the person to keep your information safe and not share it with others or use it without your permission?

- Is anyone forcing you into sharing your online services with them or do you think someone could force you to share it with them? If so, we would advise that you do not give them access. If you have any concerns that someone has access to your online records without your permission, speak to your surgery and they can change your password or stop your online services.
- How long would you like your chosen person to have access for? This can be for a short time, for example when you are suffering from a certain illness and you need support with managing your health during that time. It can also be ongoing so they can help you for a long period of time. You can discuss this with your surgery.

## **Lasting Power of Attorney for Health & Welfare or Court Appointed Deputy**

When 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 Health and Welfare Lasting Power of Attorney. A person with lasting power of attorney can ask the patient's surgery for access to their online services. The GP will make a decision whether this should be allowed.

If you know that you would never want a particular person to have access to your online services if you become unable to make your own decisions, you should tell your GP and they will never share them with that person.

## **Why your surgery may refuse to give your chosen person access**

On rare occasions, your GP could refuse to allow your chosen person to use GP online services on your behalf. If this happens, your GP will discuss their reasons with you. Some of the reasons your GP could have are:

- Your GP does not think it is in your best interest for your chosen person to use these services on your behalf.
- You or your chosen people have misused online services in the past.
- Your surgery is concerned that your chosen person will not keep your information safe.
- Your surgery suspects someone is forcing you to give them permission to use your online services.
- You are not able to make decisions for yourself.

## **Why your surgery can stop the service**

- They believe your chosen person is forcing you to share your GP records with them or with another person.
- Your chosen person has misused your GP information.
- You are no longer able to understand or remember that you gave your chosen person permission to use online services on your behalf.
- You have told your surgery in the past that if you become unable to make decisions for yourself, you do not wish for your chosen person or anyone to have permission to your online services.
- You have died.

## **How you can stop the service**

You can choose to take away access to your GP online services from your chosen person at any time. To end the service, you need to let your surgery know you would like them to switch off online access for your chosen person and give them the reason. Your surgery will then stop the

service and your chosen person will not be able to use their login details to look at your information.

### **Why you may want to stop access**

Some of the reasons you can choose to end the service are:

- You only needed your chosen person to support you for a short time, for example when you were suffering from a certain illness and you needed help with managing your health during that time.
- You want to give this responsibility to another person, for example, if you have a new carer or personal assistant.
- Your relationship with your chosen person has broken down.
- Your chosen person has misused information in your GP records, for example, they have collected medication in your name or they have shared your private information with someone without your permission.

## **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSON'S ACCESS**

Before a child develops the capacity to make an informed choice about their healthcare or who might have proxy access to their records, the usual position would be for the parents of the child to control access to their child's record and online services.

It is difficult to say at what age the child will become competent to make autonomous decisions regarding their healthcare as between the ages of 11-16 this varies from person to person. In accordance with Article 8 of the General Data Protection Regulations and Part 2, Chapter 2, paragraph 9 of the Data Protection Act 2018, from the age of 13, young people are able to provide their own consent and will be able to register for online services. The procedure for access is the same as per other patients.

People aged 16 or above are assumed to be competent to make an independent and informed decision about whether to ask for someone to have proxy access to their GP online services and record, unless there is an indication that they are not.

### **Approaching a Child's 11<sup>th</sup> Birthday – the first milestone**

Access to the detailed care record should be switched off automatically when the child reaches the age of 11. This avoids the possibility of:

- Sudden withdrawal of proxy access by the Practice alerting the parents to the possibility that the child or young person has been to the Practice about something that they wish to remain private, an example may be family planning advice, or
- The young person being deterred from coming to the Practice for help

Both the child and the proxy will be contacted in writing around the child's 11<sup>th</sup> birthday to remind them that their access on behalf of their child is coming to an end. Subsequent proxy access will need to be authorised by the patient (subject to a competency test). In addition, parental proxy access may be reinstated if, after discussion with the parent(s) requesting access, the child's GP believes that proxy access would be in the child's best interest.

## **Between the 11<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Birthdays**

Decisions made at the first milestone can be reconsidered and changed later. Each case must be considered individually with the best interests of the child being paramount. For example, parents with online access on behalf of children and young people with long term conditions that require regular monitoring and medication may have a good case for continued access after their 11<sup>th</sup> birthday but this must be balanced against the risks that may arise as the young person becomes competent to make their own decisions about their healthcare.

The young person may decide, once they are mature enough to act autonomously. The competent young person may decide to:

- Stop their parent's proxy access to their online services, where the parents still have access after the 11th birthday
- Allow their parents to have access to their online services, or to allow limited proxy access to specific services, such as appointment booking or repeat prescription requests, but not to the medical records
- Request access to their online services where nobody currently has access
- Switch off all online access until such time as the young person chooses to request access

## **Approaching a Young Person's 16<sup>th</sup> Birthday – the second milestone**

Once a young person turns 16, the previous competence assessment by default is no longer applicable as they are assumed to have capacity unless there is an indication to the contrary.

Where parents still have access to their child's online services when the child reaches their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday, the parents' access should usually be withdrawn. Both the patient and the proxy will receive notification in writing that this access has been switched off.

When a young person is not competent to make a decision about access after their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday, for example, the child has a severe learning disability, and it would be in the child's best interest for the parents to retain access, they may do so.

Parents may also continue to have proxy access with the consent of the patient after their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday. In this situation where the 16 year old is competent they will be offered the opportunity to register for online services, following the usual protocols for identity verification, as a marker of their new autonomy.

Where a person has already been given control over access to their online services before their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday, and their parents do not, there is no need to make any changes unless the young person wishes to do so.

## **NURSING HOME ACCESS**

Patients do not need to have previously been registered for online access. A nursing home staff member could potentially manage all patients at the nursing home with one login and be able to switch between patients. Clinicians need to consider the balance of benefit and risk to patient before granting access, discuss this with the patient to gain consent or record the legal justification if patient lacks capacity. If patient lacks capacity proxy access could be granted following discussion with the patient's family, care home staff and if the GP feels it is in the best interests of



the patient. The login details should not be shared with other staff members and should only be granted to those with legitimate reason for access. It should be clear in the patient record the name of the staff member who has proxy access rights and new consent must be obtained if proxy access is given to any new member of staff and revoked whenever a person leaves the organisation/nursing home.

## LEVELS OF ACCESS FOR PATIENTS

There are different levels of access available to patients and their proxy. All requests for online access will be dealt with on a patient by patient basis and the suggested access will be granted within the agreed timescales. All patients must be deemed competent to be granted access to their medical record, however, some elements may be marked as sensitive/confidential and will not be shared via online services.

The Practice will not automatically grant access to full medical records to those patients currently with access to appointments, repeat prescriptions and summary information. Patients wanting access to their Detailed Coded Information MUST complete and submit an updated Access Request form. This will be considered within the Practice and granted if deemed appropriate within the aim of 14 days, although this is a guide only and in some circumstances may take longer.

At any point the Practice can revoke online access to patients if the functionality is abused. This will be dealt with internally following practice protocols.

**Appointments** - The Practice will allow a patient to pre-book up to two appointments in advance (regardless of how these appointments are made, online appointments cannot be made if the patient has reached two appointments in advance) and this is inclusive of all appointments. Whilst the Practice endeavours to allow patients to be able to see the doctor of their choice, this may not always be possible, eg. If a doctor is on leave.

**Abuse Of The Appointment Booking Services** - Inappropriate use of the booking service by patients may lead to revocation of online services. Examples of inappropriate use are:

- Booking appointments and not using them more than twice a year
- Booking appointments for other family members using the patient's name
- Consistently booking inappropriate appointments with the doctor

There is a process in place for any patient abusing the online appointment booking services as follows:

- Practice will issue an initial warning letter
- If the action continues then the Practice will suspend access for two calendar months
- The Practice will then reinstate the functionality to the patient
- If the abuse continues the Practice will inform the patient that their ability to book/cancel online appointments will be removed on a permanent basis

**Repeat Prescriptions** - Repeat prescriptions can be requested via the online service however patients may need to be reminded that it is sometimes necessary to order medications in especially for them. Whilst every effort is made to meet the expected turnaround time of 48 hours, on occasions this will not be possible. Medications can only be ordered if they appear on the repeat list which is provided to patients on the tear-off portion of the last prescription issued. The

request must match the repeat list exactly and must be due. Other items ordered or requested using this facility will not be actioned and no contact made with the patient.

**Consultations** - Access will be given to all coded consultations with additional access to free text information in the near future. Any sensitive consultation, eg. a Domestic abuse consultation, will be highlighted as confidential and will therefore be removed from online viewing. It must be made clear to patients that anything they say in relation to this during a consultation will not be viewable online. Any consultations of a sensitive nature may be highlighted as confidential.

**Investigations** - Patients will be able to review their investigations once these have been seen by a doctor and actioned appropriately.

**Demographics** - Patients will be able to alter their own demographic details. This will however be subject to validation after submission. Patients moving outside the Practice areas will be removed from the Practice list in the usual way.

## PROTECTING YOUR RECORDS

Your surgery has a responsibility to look after your GP records. You must also take care online and make sure that your personal information is not seen by anyone who should not see it.

### Keeping your Username and Password Safe

You should not share your login details with others. To protect your information from other people:

- You should keep your password secret and it is best not to write it down. If you must write it down, keep a reminder of the password, not the password itself. This should be kept in a secure place.
- If you think someone has seen your password, you should change it as soon as possible. You may want to call your surgery if you are not able to change it right away, for example, when you do not have access to the internet.
- You should not share your username or password. No one should force you to show them your login details, you have the right to say no. If someone forces you, tell your surgery as soon as possible.

### Using a Shared Computer

You need to take extra care when using a shared computer to look at your GP records online. This could be at the library, at work, at university or at home. To protect your personal information from others when using a shared computer, you should:

- Look around to see if other people can see what is on the computer screen. Remember, your GP records contain your personal information.
- Keep your username and password secret. Just like your bank account PIN, you would not want others to know how to get into your GP records.
- Make sure you log out when you finish looking at your records, so that no one else can see your personal information or change your password without your knowledge.

### Incorrect Information in Your Records

On rare occasions, information in your GP records might be incorrect.

If you find any incorrect information, you should let your surgery know as soon as possible.

If you see information about anyone else in your records, log out immediately and let your surgery know as soon as possible.

## IF YOU FORGET YOUR LOGIN DETAILS

If you lose or forget your login details, go to the website and click the 'forgotten details' button, then follow the instructions. If this does not work, please contact your surgery.

## THINGS TO REMEMBER

- No one should force you to share your username, password or GP records. You have the right to say no. If someone asks to see your records and you don't want them to, tell your surgery as soon as you can.
- You can choose to stop using online services at any time by telling your surgery.
- If you change surgeries, you will need to register again for online services at your new surgery.