



Patient Online Services

The following leaflet tells you:

- What online services the practice currently offers patients
- Who can access these services
- Important considerations before requesting these services
- How to register to access online services

What are Patient Online Services?

Patient Online services have been developed to help patients take greater control of their health and wellbeing and can be more convenient for some patients to use instead of contacting the Practice. Online services include:

- ✓ Booking appointments online
- ✓ Ordering repeat prescriptions for medications taken regularly
- ✓ Viewing detailed information from medical records

Making sure everybody is included

We recognise that not everyone is as comfortable using computers as others, but may still wish to have the benefits of using the Patient Online Services.

There are lots of places where you can learn how to use the internet. A good place to start is your local library, but there are many others where you can learn for free, such as:

- **UK online centres** help people learn how to use the internet and manage their health online such as www.learnmyway.com
- **Age UK** helps older people get online. For more information please go to www.ageuk.org.uk or phone 0800 169 6565.

Is it secure?

You will be given secure login details at the point of registration. This will ensure that only you are able to access your record – unless you choose to share your details with a family member or carer. Please note that access will be linked to a unique email address so if you share an email address with someone, you may need to create a new one for your online access.

Your Responsibilities

- Keep your login details and password safe and secure.
- It will be your responsibility to keep your login details and password safe and secure. If you know or suspect that your record has been accessed by someone that you have not agreed should see it, you should change your password immediately or contact the practice.
- Keep any information you print out from your record secure. If you are at all worried about keeping printed copies safe, we recommend that they do not make copies at all

For more information about keeping your healthcare records safe and secure, you will find a helpful leaflet produced by NHS England:

www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/po-protecting-your-gp-records.pdf

Considerations before accessing online services

Before you register to access online services, there are things that should be considered first, particularly in relation to accessing medical records:

Booking appointments online:

A proportion of our appointments for GPs have been allocated for online bookings. These appointments will be released as per our usual appointment protocol, i.e. patients will be able to book up to four weeks in advance.

Nurse appointments are not currently available to book online due to various different time slots required for certain procedures.

Ordering repeat prescriptions for medications taken regularly:

This service is available to those who already have regular, repeat medication prescribed.

Patients are asked to maintain the usual notice period for prescription requests (i.e. 2 working days' notice, or 3 working days for pharmacy collection).

Viewing detailed information from medical records:

- **Access:** A GP will review your record before allowing access online. There may be circumstances where a GP may not think it is in your best interest for you to look at your records online or to share all of the information in your record. In particular, there may be circumstances where it is likely to cause serious harm to your physical or mental health, or condition, or any other person, in which case the GP would withhold that information.

If this happens, the GP will discuss their reasons for their decision with you.

- **Coercion:** If you feel you may be pressured into revealing your login details or revealing details from your medical record to someone against your will, it is best that you do not register for access at this time. If someone is pressurising you to show your record to them, you can talk to your GP about this. If you become worried about this in the future, you can have your access removed at any time.

If staff at the practice are worried that you may be coerced to reveal your data, they can withdraw access as a temporary safety measure. If this happens, please talk to a member of the practice team about reinstating that access if the safety issues have been resolved.

- **Sharing your information:** It is for you to decide whether or not you share your information with others - perhaps with family members or carers. It is your choice, but also your responsibility to keep the information safe and secure.
- **Forgotten history:** There may be something you have forgotten about in your record that you may find upsetting.
- **Abnormal tests:** If you are given access to test results, you may see something that you find upsetting, or do not understand. This may occur before you have spoken to a doctor or while the surgery is closed and you cannot contact them.
- **Information about someone else:** There may be circumstances where information relates to, or is provided by, a third person who can be identified from the information and has not consented to its disclosure. The GP will consider whether it is reasonable to disclose the information without their consent.

Sometimes, however careful we are, information can occasionally be filed in the wrong person's notes by mistake. If you spot something in the record that is not about you and you were not already aware of it, or you notice any other errors, please log out of the system immediately and contact the practice as soon as possible so we can review it.

- **Misunderstood information:** Your medical record is designed to be used by clinical professionals and therefore some information may be highly technical, written by specialists and not easily understood. If you require further clarification, please contact the practice for a clearer explanation.

Can I access online services on someone's behalf?

Proxy Access:

Patients may choose to share their login details informally with family, friends and carers, however, this is not recommended by the Practice. Formal proxy access is a better option. Patients who choose to share their login details informally should be aware that there will be no audit trail of access to their record by their proxy. It will not be clear who has been accessing the record online. The proxy will have the same access to the record as the patient.

Formal proxy access can be given either with the patient's express consent or, in cases where the patient lacks capacity to make this decision the GP may authorise proxy access for the best interests of the patient. This will be decided on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the GP.

People aged 16 or above are assumed to be competent unless there is an indication that they are not. For patients under 16, please read the *Children's Access to Online Services* section on the next page of this leaflet.

Legitimate reasons for the practice to authorise proxy access without a patient's consent include:

The patient has been assessed as lacking capacity to make a decision on granting proxy access and...

- has registered the applicant as a lasting power of attorney for health and welfare with the Office of the Public Guardian; or
- the applicant is acting as a Court Appointed Deputy on behalf of the patient; or
- in accordance with the Mental Capacity Act 2005 code of practice, the GP considers it in the patient's best interests to grant the requested access

The GP will review requests for Proxy access on an individual basis. Proxy access will not be granted / will be withdrawn if:

- The patient has previously expressed a wish that if they lose capacity, proxy access should not be granted to the individual;
- It is not in the best interest of the patient;
- A GP or other health professional suspects that the patient is vulnerable to or already subject to coercion;
- The practice staff believe that there is a risk to the security of the patient's record by the person being considered for proxy access and record their concern; or
- The patient withdraws their consent to allowing proxy access to the Patient Online Services

Children's Access to Online Services:

- **Under 11 years:** Until a child's 11th birthday, the usual position would be for the parents of the child to control access to the child's record and online services (see *Proxy Access for Children* below).
- **11-16 years:** Due to potential confidentiality issues for patients, the Practice does not currently allow access to online services for children aged between 11 and 16 years. If Proxy Access has been provided prior to the child's 11th Birthday, access will be automatically revoked from when they turn 11 years old.

- **Over 16 years:** Once a child reaches the age of 16, they are assumed to be competent unless there is an indication that they are not. Therefore, they may request access to the online services for their own use or, if they are not competent, proxy access may be given in accordance to the terms previously mentioned in the *Proxy Access* section of this leaflet.
- **Proxy Access for Children:** Proxy access for children aged less than 11 years may be requested by the child's parent(s)/guardian(s). Access will be granted at the discretion of the GP. Once the child turns 11, access to online services will automatically be revoked.

How can I register for online services?

Please complete the form enclosed in your registration pack and return with your registration forms.

There is a separate registration form for Proxy Access and these should be requested from our reception team. If Proxy Access is being requested, photo ID will be required by both the patient (unless patient lacks capacity) and the individuals requesting proxy access.

If you do not have any ID and are well known to the practice, 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 practice, we may ask you questions about the information in your GP record to confirm the record is really yours.

Once we have received the registration form, your request will be reviewed by the GP and if access to these services has been authorised, we will send you an email with your unique activation codes and instructions on how to set up your online service account.

If access to these services is denied, you will be informed of this, as well as the reason for the decision.

How can I cancel my online services?

If you no longer wish to use the Online Services, or no longer wish to allow proxy access to these services on your behalf, please contact the practice who will be able to withdraw your, or your nominated representatives, access to these services.

Need further information about Online Services?

A short online course on how to use Patient Online Services is available at: www.learnmyway.com/what-next/health.

For further information about Patient Online Services you may find the following websites useful:

- NHS Choices (www.nhs.uk) and search for Patient Online
- NHS England (www.england.nhs.uk) and search Patient Online

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