WHO IS THIS GUIDE FOR?

This guide is intended for GPs, general practice staff, clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) and commissioning support units (CSUs) who are providing support to GP practices implementing Patient Online.
WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

The General Medical Services (GMS) and Personal Medical Services (PMS) contracts (2014/15) include the requirement for general practices to offer and promote to patients: online appointment booking, online ordering of repeat prescriptions and, by 31 March 2015, online access to summary information as a minimum in their patient record.
VIDEO

CLICK TO PLAY
# WHAT IS IN THE GUIDE

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SUPPORT AND RESOURCES
The guidance, practical support and tools provided in this section will help practices fulfil the requirements of the General Medical Services (GMS) and Personal Medical Services (PMS) contracts 2014/15, with respect to Patient Online services, and develop systems and processes to meet the needs of patients locally.

Both GMS and PMS contracts require GP practices to offer and promote to patients: online appointment booking, online ordering of repeat prescriptions and, by 31 March 2015, online access to summary information as a minimum in their patient record. These requirements are subject to the necessary GP systems and software being made available to practices by NHS England.

You can read/download a summary of the contract requirements here.
GUIDANCE AND PRACTICAL TOOLS

Working closely with the Patient Online team, the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) has led the development of information and resources. Designed to provide practices with the information they need to get their patients online, the resources include practical tools, checklists, forms and sample policies, such as:

- Getting started with records access - guidance for general practice
- Coercion - guidance for general practice
- Identity verification - guidance for general practice
- Proxy access - guidance for general practice
GUIDANCE AND PRACTICAL TOOLS

Practical tools on the following topics are available:

- Example form for patients to use to request access to online services
- Sample leaflet to give to patients to explain their responsibilities and some of the issues they need to consider
- Identity verification - example practice protocol

You can access the complete RCGP guidance and materials here.
MATERIALS FOR PATIENTS

You can download the following materials and templates designed to help practices promote their online services to patients. You can add your own local information to these to suit your practice.

- Leaflet
- Poster 1
- Poster 2
- Poster 3
MATERIALS FOR PATIENTS

You can download the following materials and templates designed to help practices promote their online services to patients. You can add your own local information to these to suit your practice.

- Appointment Cards
- Example of signage in practice
- Content for digital signage boards and check-in screens
- Patient FAQs
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

Practices frequently ask questions about the Patient Online programme. We have developed a list of these, with answers, which can be downloaded here.
REGIONAL AND LOCAL SUPPORT

NHS England is providing support to practices through a network of locally-based Implementation Leads and Digital Clinical Champions.

**Implementation Leads**

Implementation Leads are available to the activities and requirements for implementing Patient Online. Clinical commissioning groups (CCGs), local medical committees (LMCs), commissioning support units (CSUs), practices, and Regional and Area teams can ask them for tailored information on a range of subjects, such as:

- efficient use of online appointments
- business processes for patients to access their summary information
- business processes for ordering repeat prescription online

**Digital Clinical Champions**

Digital Clinical Champions (DCCs) are doctors and nurses from across the NHS who have experience of Patient Online services. They will focus on engagement with GP practices in designated geographical areas. DCCs are beginning to develop relationships with area teams and CCGs. This is supported by discussions with the regions about focused local promotion and support.
Find your nearest local Implementation Lead and Digital Clinical Champion [here](#).

Contact us for details on local area teams available to assist [here](#).

The Patient Online Community is our programme’s online hub. It is a private and secure online environment that allows us to communicate, collaborate and share information with our stakeholders in real-time.
LEARNING SO FAR
This section provides information about the accelerator sites which have been testing and sharing ways to improve online services for patients. It provides a summary of learning so far and a selection of case studies and sample materials. An overview of the evidence regarding the benefits of online access is also included.
ACCELERATOR SITES

A number of general practices are at the forefront of digital improvements, with widespread deployment of online systems. They demonstrate a clear commitment to adopting and adapting new technology to benefit patients and their own ways of working within the practice.

To bring together this knowledge and enhance learning across the country, the Patient Online programme is working with those sites that wish to share their expertise and learning with others. The practices vary in size and type, and are geographically spread across England in both urban and rural areas.

Working with Implementation Leads, the practices have shared their experiences in implementing the changed ways of working. Please see the selected case studies provided with this guide, and join the Patient Online Community for further information and updates.

A number of these accelerator sites have also engaged their Patient Participation Groups (PPGs) to gather their views on online services and identify their support requirements. This is reflected in the patient-facing materials provided in the support and resources section.

Click here for a map of accelerator sites and contacts
Learning is ongoing, but the following has emerged so far:

- Practices that promote and enable record access, as well as appointment booking and repeat prescription ordering online, have found a very positive response from many patients, particularly those with long term conditions who are in frequent contact with the practice.

- Practices have found that patients have managed their online services well, although there is still only a small percentage of practices offering access to summary information.

- This service should be available for any patients who wish it, but not required to be used by every patient as some patients don’t want to use electronic systems. Some patients are concerned that those who do not have Smartphones, PCs, laptops, tablets and internet connection will miss out on booking appointments.
Practices who offer a higher proportion of their appointments online find the systems work more easily and effectively.

Online services are an extra option for those who wish to use them and will not replace other ways of contacting your practice, such as by phone or in person. By freeing up phone lines and reducing the need for people to visit in person, it is hoped that patients who do not have a computer will find it easier to contact their practice.

Patients have said they found access to their summary information (e.g. allergies) helpful when completing the forms provided by the health service.

When the development of online patient access is linked to another GP system function, such as Electronic Prescription Service (EPS), the process becomes more streamlined and hugely benefits the patients.

Most practices find shared examples from other practices their most useful resources.

The practices that use a wide range of promotional tools, including waiting room TV, the website, prescription notes, newsletters, and business cards for patients, are successfully increasing the number of patients who sign up for online services.

Some GP system suppliers’ software is not available or does not work appropriately, which has slowed progress for those practices.
ACCELERATOR CASE STUDIES

The following case studies share the learning and perspectives of patients, GPs and practice staff who have experience of using online patient services including record access, appointment booking and repeat prescription ordering.

How online appointment booking has improved my health.

How online appointment booking changed my relationship with my health.

Providing patients with online access to their record: a practice manager’s view.
ACCELERATOR CASE STUDIES

Online appointment booking reduces pressure on reception staff.

A GP says that online records access builds trust and patients feel more in control of their health.
PATIENT ONLINE: THE KEY BENEFITS

The evidence for the benefits of online interactions between patients and their general practices continues to grow.

Sources for this include published articles, reports and the evidence review that underpinned the Department of Health's information strategy, *The Power of Information*, published in May 2012. Further evidence has been gathered from across the country, including from the Patient Online accelerator sites. The key benefits identified to date are summarised below:

**Improved access to care services**

- Expanded health knowledge for patients
- Increased information sharing
- Reduced administrative workload for practice staff
- Increased patient satisfaction
- Improved communication between patients and practices
- Increased operational efficiencies for practices
- Reduction of DNAs for practices
- Reduced travel for patients
- Increased ability of patients to make more informed decisions

Online access helps to improve access to care services, making them more convenient, with streamlined transfers between different points of care. In turn, this contributes to improvements in levels of patient satisfaction and more efficient delivery of services, supporting better use of clinical time.
PATIENT ONLINE: THE KEY BENEFITS
(CONTINUED)

Better information can empower patients and carers, leading to increased health knowledge and health literacy. In turn, this can improve levels of patient satisfaction and wellbeing. Accessing online records means that patients can review up-to-date and relevant information pre- or post-consultation (including out of hours). This increases meaningful interaction and more shared decision-making between patients and their health professionals and encourages patient ownership of their own health and care.
PATIENT ONLINE: THE KEY BENEFITS

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**Increased information sharing**

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Online services, information sharing and transactions support increased patient safety, including fewer mistakes, duplications, complaints and erroneous drug doses.
The use of online services can support improved business processes, helping to reduce the administrative workload of practice staff. Time released by such efficiencies will be available to support increased productivity and improvements to other aspects of care services, such as better quality reception services and a better experience for patients, particularly those who still prefer to or need to use the phone.
Online appointment booking can improve and speed up access to clinical expertise, leading to higher levels of patient satisfaction and enhanced health and wellbeing.

**PATIENT ONLINE: THE KEY BENEFITS (CONTINUED)**

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Online appointment booking can improve and speed up access to clinical expertise, leading to higher levels of patient satisfaction and enhanced health and wellbeing.
Online booking services can improve communication between patients and their practices, leading to higher levels of convenience and patient satisfaction.
An increase in the number of patients booking, cancelling and amending appointments online can reduce phone calls to practices. Benefits for patients and staff include increased patient satisfaction and greater operational efficiencies for the practice.

### Key benefits

- Improved access to care service
- Expanded health knowledge for patients
- Increased information sharing
- Reduced administrative workload for practice staff
- Increased patient satisfaction
- Improved communication between patients and practices
- Increased operational efficiencies for practices
- Reduction of DNAs for practices
- Reduced travel for patients
- Increased ability of patients to make more informed decisions
The use of online booking services can decrease waiting times for appointments by reducing the number of people who do not turn up for their appointment.

**PATIENT ONLINE: THE KEY BENEFITS (CONTINUED)**

- Improved access to care service
- Expanded health knowledge for patients
- Increased information sharing
- Reduced administrative workload for practice staff
- Increased patient satisfaction
- Improved communication between patients and practices
- Increased operational efficiencies for practices
- **Reduction of DNAs for practices**
- Reduced travel for patients
- Increased ability of patients to make more informed decisions
Increased use of online repeat prescription services can lead to reduced travel time for patients, more convenience and higher levels of patient satisfaction. Additionally, it can result in a decrease in the quantity of drugs required to be held in stock, reducing cost outlay for pharmacies.
Patients’ satisfaction and wellbeing is increased by their ability to make more informed decisions about their health and care, facilitated by access to personal health records.

### PATIENT ONLINE: THE KEY BENEFITS (CONTINUED)

- Improved access to care service
- Expanded health knowledge for patients
- Increased information sharing
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- Increased ability of patients to make more informed decisions
ABOUT THE PATIENT ONLINE PROGRAMME
The NHS’s ambition is to embrace technology as part of its drive to offer modern, convenient and responsive services to patients, their families and carers. GP practices are leading the way.

The government has committed to enabling patients to book appointments, order repeat prescriptions and view their own health records within their general practice online by March 2015.

Patient Online is NHS England’s programme designed to support GP practices to offer and promote online services to patients.
WHY IS PATIENT ONLINE IMPORTANT?

Patient Online will enhance the quality of care practices by offering online services, increasing choice and convenience for patients.

Digital technology has the power to change the relationship between patients and their GP practices in the same way that it has changed our relationships in other areas of life, such as managing our finances or shopping.

Patients have been telling us that they want to be offered more choice and control in how they access GP services. Increasingly, they also want to be informed and involved in decisions about their own care and treatment.

The evidence for the benefits of online interactions between patients and their general practices continues to grow. Sources for this include the evidence review underpinning the Department of Health’s information strategy, The Power of Information (May 2012). Further evidence will be gathered from across the country, including from the Patient Online accelerator sites.

Most importantly, the evidence shows that patients who are informed and involved in their own care have better outcomes. There are also efficiency gains for GPs and their practices.
WHAT DOES PATIENT ONLINE MEAN FOR GP PRACTICES?

Today, the majority of practices already offer appointment booking and ordering of repeat prescriptions online.

This year, practices will increasingly expand online services to include access to information in patients’ GP records. By April 2015, all practices will offer these services.

Online services will be offered in addition to the traditional telephone and face-to-face means of interacting with a GP practice. Patients will be able to choose the route they prefer.

General Medical Services (GMS) and Personal Medical Services (PMS) contracts for 2014/15 already include the requirement for general practices to offer and promote to patients:

- online appointment booking;
- repeat prescriptions; and
- access to summary information (as a minimum) in their patient record.
FURTHER READING AND INFORMATION

The power of information: putting all of us in control of the health and care information we need
Department of Health, 2012

The Government’s ten-year framework for transforming information for health and care

GP Systems of Choice (GPSoC)
The scheme through which the NHS funds the provision of GP clinical IT systems in England

NHS Mandate
The government set out its commitment to enabling patients to view their online health record by March 2015 in the NHS Mandate

Patient Online: The Road Map
RCGP, 2013
The programme of work described in the Road Map established what could realistically be offered now and what might be offered in the future

Contracts at a glance

Full details of the 2014/15 GMS contract

Full details of the 2014/15 PMS contract

GMS guidance and audit requirements
1. Acronyms and Abbreviations

CCGs Clinical commissioning groups
CSUs Commissioning support units
EPS Electronic Prescription Service
EMIS GP practice IT system provider
FAQs Frequently asked questions
GP General practitioner
GMS General Medical Services
GPSoC GP Systems of Choice
In Practice Systems GP practice IT system provider
LMCs Local medical committees
Microtest GP practice IT system provider
NHS National Health Service
PC Personal computer
PMS Personal Medical Services
PPGs Patient participation groups
RCGP Royal College of General Practitioners
TPP GP practice IT system provider
2. Terminology

**Accelerator site(s)**
GP practices experienced in offering online services to patients. NHS England is working with them to learn from their experiences and use them as exemplars for national roll-out of the Patient Online programme.

**Case study (-ies)**
Descriptive research using direct observations, interviews and protocols that looks at how practices and patients use online services.

**Clinical system supplier(s)**
IT providers (such as EMIS, Microtest, TPP SystmOne, INPS) who are providing the IT systems that GP practices use and are making necessary developments to their systems to meet the needs of the Patient Online programme.

**Coercion**
Act of governing the actions of another by force or by threat, in order to overwhelm and compel that individual to act against their will.

**Digital Clinical Champion(s)**
Health professionals providing clinical advice and guidance to aid national implementation of the Patient Online programme.

**Identity management** (also referred to as ID Verification)
The process of checking that a patient wishing to register for online services is who they say they are.

**Implementation Lead**
NHS England staff with experience of change management appointed to provide support to health bodies/organisations (e.g. CCGs, CSUs) to influence national uptake of the patient online service.

**Summary Information**
Summary in patients’ medical records (e.g. allergies, adverse reactions and medications) as outlined on the GMS Contract.

**Proxy access**
Access to a patient record, with the patient’s consent, by somebody other than the patient (e.g. patient’s parent or carer).
CONTACT US

Please get in touch

NHS England is committed to working and engaging with GPs, general practice staff, clinical commissioning groups and commissioning support units. Ensuring that your views are heard at all levels and across all parts of the healthcare system is essential for creating and delivering better health and care services.

We’d like to hear your feedback or answer questions you may have about Patient Online.

Please email: england.patient-online@nhs.net