# **Accelerated Access to Medical Records**

# **Support Pack**

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**Resources to support staff with providing record access to patients**

Patients with online accounts such as through the NHS App will be able to read new entries, including free text, in their health record. This applies to patients whose practices use the TPP and EMIS systems. Arrangements with practices which use Vision as the clinical system are under discussion. The GPIT system configuration is being changed so that existing online users have access to their future, or prospective, health information entered after this change is made. New online users will also receive this level of access by default. General practice will be able to customise or remove access for individuals if this is deemed inappropriate.

The change supports NHS Long Term Plan commitments to provide patients with digital access to their health records. It means GPs will need to consider the potential impact of each entry, including documents and test results, as they add them to a patient’s record. Patients will not see personal information – such as test results – until they have been checked and filed, giving clinicians the chance to contact and speak to patients first.

We also aim to enable patients to request their historic coded records in 2023 through the NHS App.

Research shows that increasing numbers of patients want easy access to health information about them, including 80% of the 28 million NHS App users. Better access supports patients as partners in managing their health and can help reduce queries to general practice such as on negative test results and referral letters.

The change also supports existing [GMS contract](https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/update-to-the-gp-contract-agreement-v2-updated.pdf) requirements to promote and offer online patient access to all future information, unless exceptional circumstances apply.

This change will apply to the NHS App and all other [approved patient facing services apps](https://digital.nhs.uk/services/gp-it-futures-systems/im1-pairing-integration) that provide record access, for example Evergreen, Airmid, SystmOnline and Patient Access.

Further information and resources can be found by registering with NHS Futures Platform:  [FutureNHS Collaboration Platform](https://future.nhs.uk/)

## What General Practice should know

* Patients whose GP practices use the TPP or EMIS system will see new entries in their GP record.
* We are giving patients with an online account access to their future, or prospective, full GP health record including free text, letters, and documents.
* Be aware and mindful that patients will be able to see new records after the change.
* Know how to manage this as a change to your workflow. Ensure sensitive information is redacted (make invisible from patient view) as it is entered onto the clinical system, or in rare circumstances know when it may be inappropriate to give a patient access to their record.
* Patients will see new information once it is entered, or filed, onto their record in the clinical system.
* This change will not give new access to historic, or past, health record information unless this is individually authorised by their GP practice.
* Patients will not have access to view administrative tasks or communications between practice staff.

# Resources available

A [GP readiness checklist](https://digital.nhs.uk/services/nhs-app/nhs-app-guidance-for-gp-practices/guidance-on-nhs-app-features/accelerating-patient-access-to-their-record/gp-practice-readiness-checklist) is available to general practice staff, which includes a list of essential actions to undertake prior to launching prospective record access. There are also a number of resources available to support preparing for the change.

These include:

* [Set up an NHS App test patient](https://digital.nhs.uk/services/nhs-app/nhs-app-guidance-for-gp-practices/set-up-a-test-patient)
* [NHSE Live webinars](https://www.events.england.nhs.uk/getting-ready-for-all-patients-to-have-access-to-their-future-data)
* [Wessex LMC: Online access to medical records - safeguarding](https://www.wessexlmcs.com/onlineaccesstomedicalrecordssafeguarding)
* [NHS App guidance for GP practices](https://digital.nhs.uk/services/nhs-app/nhs-app-guidance-for-gp-practices/accelerating-patient-access-to-their-record)
* an updated [RCGP GP online services toolkit](https://elearning.rcgp.org.uk/mod/book/view.php?id=13455)
* a suite of concise [‘how to’ videos](https://digital.nhs.uk/services/nhs-app/nhs-app-guidance-for-gp-practices/guidance-on-nhs-app-features/accelerating-patient-access-to-their-record/resources-to-support-staff-with-providing-online-services)
* suggested[learnings from early adopter sites](https://digital.nhs.uk/services/nhs-app/nhs-app-guidance-for-gp-practices/guidance-on-nhs-app-features/accelerating-patient-access-to-their-record/learning-from-early-adopter-sites)
* a [package of communication materials](https://digital.nhs.uk/services/nhs-app/nhs-app-guidance-for-gp-practices/guidance-on-nhs-app-features/accelerating-patient-access-to-their-record/gp-practice-readiness-checklist#patient-communications-for-practices) for general practice teams to use to inform their patients
* [Information Governance (IG) Guidance](https://www.nhsx.nhs.uk/information-governance/guidance/access-to-patient-records-through-the-nhs-app/) and a national template to support a Data Privacy Impact Assessment by a practice team.
* [GP online services support and resources guide](https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/patient-online-support-and-resources-guide)

## Practices to consider the following:

* Harmful and confidential third-party information needs to be redacted as it is being entered into systems. See redaction guidance for [TPP SystmOne](https://tpp-uk.com/resources/) or [EMIS web](https://www.emisnow.com/csm?sys_kb_id=72e713111b2f89543e24ed32b24bcb27&id=kb_article_view&sysparm_rank=1&sysparm_tsqueryId=f56196021bc091183e24ed32b24bcb0a).
* Patients at risk of harm from access to records need to be reviewed. See the [RCGP GP online services toolkit](https://elearning.rcgp.org.uk/mod/book/view.php?id=13455) and [enhanced review codes](https://digital.nhs.uk/services/nhs-app/nhs-app-guidance-for-gp-practices/using-enhanced-review-snomed-codes-when-giving-a-patient-access-to-their-health-record) (SNOMED CT) that prevent prospective access from being automatically applied.
* Young people gain access to their records when they reach 16 and may need safeguarding processes in place. See the [RCGP GP online services toolkit](http://elearning.rcgp.org.uk/mod/book/view.php?id=13455).
* Patients will be able see coded information, free text, letters and documents. See how to [set up a test patient](https://digital.nhs.uk/services/nhs-app/nhs-app-guidance-for-gp-practices/set-up-a-test-patient) to confirm what your patients will see.
* Information should be entered in a way that is suitable for the patient view. See [information governance guidance](https://www.nhsx.nhs.uk/information-governance/guidance/access-to-patient-records-through-the-nhs-app/) and a [national template to support Data Privacy Impact Assessment (DPIA)](https://www.nhsx.nhs.uk/documents/129/Data_Protection_Assessment_template.odt).
* Some practices have already successfully implemented this change. See [learning and good practice from early adopter sites](https://digital.nhs.uk/services/nhs-app/nhs-app-guidance-for-gp-practices/guidance-on-nhs-app-features/accelerating-patient-access-to-their-record/learning-from-early-adopter-sites).

# Learning from early adopter sites

All early adopter sites had similar approaches to implementing patient access at their practices.

Feedback details that the following key steps were taken:

* **raising awareness**, practice staff were identified to be champions to drive and support this change
* **regular communications** and engagement sessions with staff were held to raise awareness
* **development of new processes**and policies at the practice were required; this included revision of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)
* **training** was provided to all relevant staff groups on redaction and patient data management
* **restricting access**, patients were identified where access should be restricted due to potential ongoing risk of serious harm from having access to their health information, or where they are unable to keep online access to their records secure

See the [**GP practice readiness checklist**](https://digital.nhs.uk/services/nhs-app/nhs-app-guidance-for-gp-practices/guidance-on-nhs-app-features/accelerating-patient-access-to-their-record/gp-practice-readiness-checklist) for a range of resources to support you and your practice in taking similar steps to prepare for this change.

# Concerns and mitigations- Early Adopter Sites

Early adopter sites had varying levels of concerns prior to the switch on of prospective access at their practice.

These included:

* administrative staff’s names appearing in the record
* third party data being entered into the record
* safeguarding information being shared with a patient inappropriately or accessed inappropriately by a third party
* increased volume of enquiries from patients

Their concerns were mitigated by:

* training and discussions with practice staff around what should be put in the record
* training sessions on how to make entries invisible from the online viewer
* ensuring staff were briefed before access was enabled, promoting the benefits to the practice and the patient
* updating them on progress, giving them information to use in their role but also how to inform patients if asked

# Safeguarding patients who should not have access- Early Adopters

Early adopter sites used a variety of different approaches to excluding people who should not have access to their records due to a risk of serious harm to themselves or others.

NHS Bath and Northeast Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group, Named Safeguarding GPs have developed some supporting guidance, these have been shared on NHS Futures:  [FutureNHS Collaboration Platform](https://future.nhs.uk/) as good practice.

It should be noted that the code lists and processes shared on the Futures Platform are a mitigation and rely on patient records being coded to show they may lack capacity or have safeguarding concerns correctly within the record, before these tools are used by practices

Practices were provided with a SNOMED code, to be added to an individual patient's record in order to prevent them from automatically being able to see new entries. The SNOMED code can be applied to patient’s identified with the code lists, or on an individual basis. Some practices chose not to proactively apply the code to at risk groups, and instead had robust processes to identify and review record settings as new information was being entered.

Caution should be applied if cohorts of patients are excluded to prevent potential discrimination.

Effort should be made to ensure at-risk individuals are reviewed to assess if record access can be provided

Please note that some of the information available on NHS Futures is not available to download. We therefore suggest that you register and log on to NHS Futures website to view other sources of information.