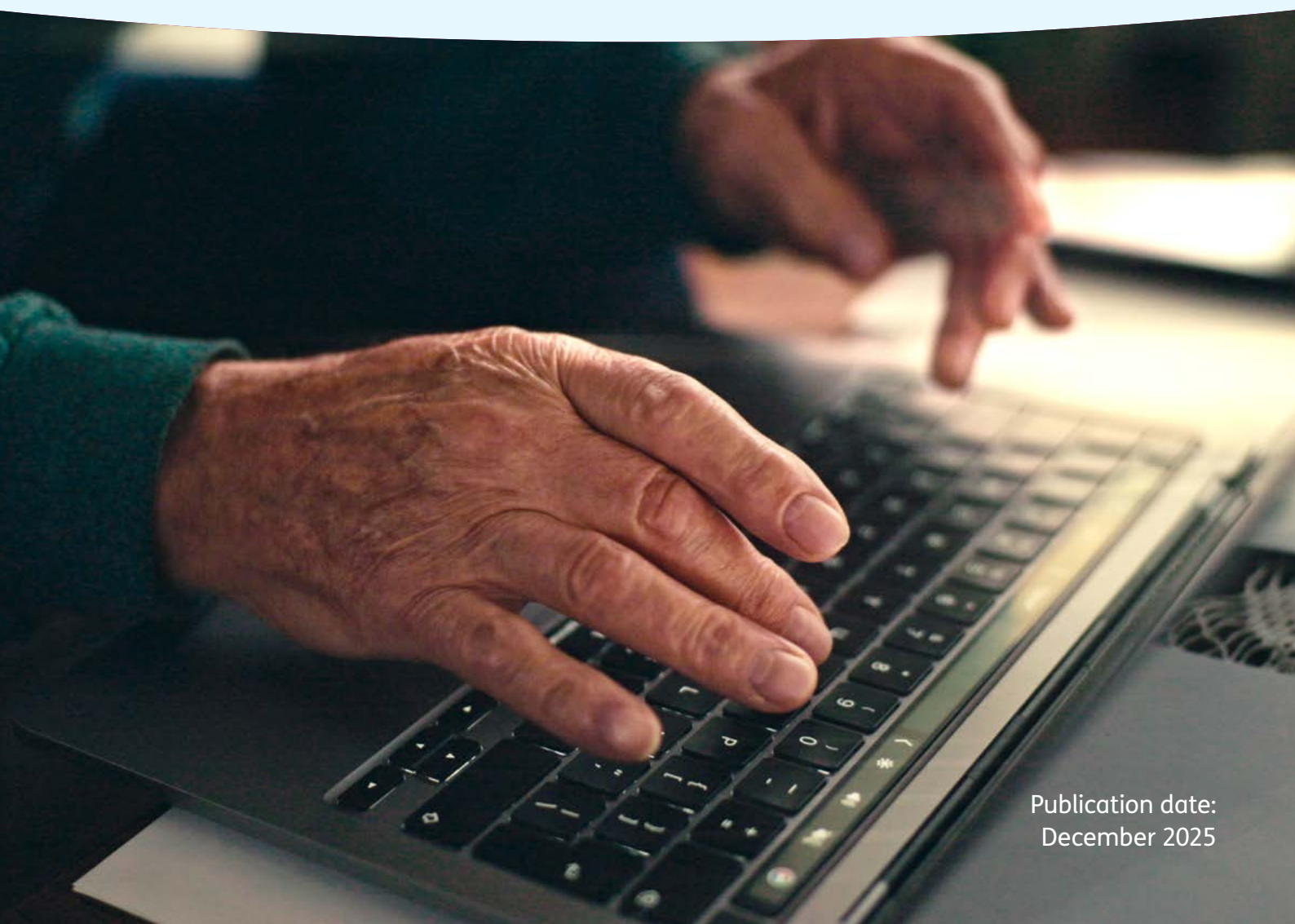


A guide to using the NHS website for England

How to access health services and your
health information through the NHS website



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Introducing you to the NHS website for England

Hello,

Welcome to Age UK's 'A guide to using the NHS website for England'.

This guide will show you how to set up an NHS account and access it through the NHS website. An NHS account gives you access to health services –those provided by your GP and other NHS services – and your health information online.

You may not be able to access all GP and NHS services and health information in your NHS account. It depends on what services your GP surgery and health services in your local area choose to give patients access to. This can vary in different areas of England. GP surgeries and local health services will make their own decisions on this. In this guide, we'll let you know all of the services and health information which you may be able to access through the NHS website. We recommend you speak to your GP surgery and local health services if you have specific questions about the services and information you can access.

Learning at your own pace

After you have set up your NHS account, you don't need to go through the guide page by page. You can go to the section that is relevant to the action you want to take. You can work through the guide by yourself or ask someone for help. Do this at your own pace, repeating any sections you want to focus on. Reflect on what you've learned and make notes, as this will help you to become more confident to access NHS services and health information.

If you've got any questions as you use the guide, you may be able to get support from your local Age UK. You can find your local Age UK at www.ageuk.org.uk/services/in-your-area/



Using this guide

This is a guide for people living in England who want to access their NHS account, using the NHS website. An NHS account gives you access to NHS health services and your health information online.

To use this guide, you need to:

- feel comfortable using a smartphone, tablet, laptop or computer
- understand some basic terminology. Have a look at the section called [‘Key terminology in this guide’](#) on page 9 where we explain some common words and phrases
- have an internet connection.

To make things as easy as possible for you, we’ve set out this guide to match the structure of an NHS account. This will help you to work through the guide.

If you prefer to use the NHS App rather than the NHS website to access your NHS account, we have another guide to help you do this. It’s called: [‘A guide to using the NHS App for England’](#). It includes information about how to find and download apps to your phone.

It might help to have a pen and paper handy to make any notes when you use this guide. You can work your way through it or dip in and out, depending on what you want to do with your NHS account. There is space to make notes at the end of each section in this guide.

Don’t worry if you’re feeling nervous about using this technology. You can recap on some of the information in our other guides to help you get online and feel confident using the NHS website.

These include:

- [‘A beginner’s guide to connecting to the internet’](#)
- [‘A guide to choosing your device’](#)
- [‘A guide to making your device easier to use’](#)

You can find these guides on the Age UK website: www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/work-learning/technology-internet/digital-instruction-guides/

The benefits of an NHS account

If you haven't used an NHS account before, it's worth thinking about. An NHS account allows you to:

- manage your healthcare online. For example, you can [order repeat prescriptions](#) (see page 21) and [communicate with healthcare professionals through your account](#) (see page 40)
- find out appointment dates and times if a letter for a medical appointment is delayed in the post
- access health services and your health information at any time of the day
- use health services and view your health information, wherever you are.

Your personal information is secure and protected. Read more about this on page 54 in the section on [how your personal information will be used](#).

Of course, if you want to call or visit your GP surgery at any point, you can still do this. The online NHS account doesn't replace existing telephone or face-to-face services.

If you prefer to use the NHS App to access your NHS account, we have another guide that will show you how to do this.

Your GP surgery and local health services decide which NHS health services you can access through your NHS account. Speak to your GP practice to find out what services and information are available for you to access online. For example, some people can book appointments with doctors online, but others can't.



Key terminology in this guide

It can take time to get your head around the language used to describe different technology. Here are some common words and phrases and what they mean:

Android: The name of the software that many devices use to function. Phones, tablets and laptops from lots of different brands fall into the bracket of Android devices. These brands include: Alcatel, Google, HTC, LG, Moto, Samsung and Sony.

Apple: A brand of phones, tablets and laptops. Apple phones are known as iPhones and tablets are called iPads. If your device isn't Apple, it's likely to be an Android device.

Application, or 'app': A type of program that you can download for your computer, laptop, tablet or smartphone. There are a lot of apps available, from games and puzzles to banking and apps to manage your health, including the NHS App.

Broadband: A generic term for the connection which allows you to access the internet. To get home broadband, you will need to set up a contract with a broadband provider (such as BT, TalkTalk or Plusnet) who will charge you for the equipment and services needed to connect your device to the internet.

Cookies: Most websites pop up with a message asking you to 'accept cookies'. A cookie is a small piece of data that is stored on your computer, laptop, smartphone or tablet when you visit a website or app. They allow the website to track information about your activity, such as how many times you have visited and how long you spent on the website or app. Websites use this information to improve your experience, but your personal information won't be shared with anyone. You don't have to accept cookies, but it might mean that you can't access some websites. You can find more information about cookies at: <https://accessibility.campaign.gov.uk/cookies-and-privacy/>

Device: A general term for a smartphone, tablet, laptop or computer.

Email: It's a way of sending and receiving messages over the internet. It's free and quick to use and has replaced letter writing as the most common way to keep in touch. You will need to have an email address set up to be able to use the NHS website and app.

Fingerprint log in: Instead of entering a password, you place your finger on the screen or home button of your device to log in to an account. Some websites and apps, such as the NHS App, may allow you to use your face or iris (part of your eye) to log into an account. It depends on the device you're using.

Google: The most popular search engine on the internet. It allows you to find websites and ask questions. You can visit www.google.com, then type in some keywords to find out information about them. Someone might tell you to ‘Google’ something, which means to look up information online.

http / https: Most web addresses start with ‘http’ or ‘https’. This refers to how the information is shared over the internet. If you’re entering personal or financial details, make sure the website you’re using starts with ‘https’. The ‘s’ stands for secure.

Link (or ‘hyperlink’): Text, an image or a button that you can click or click on to access a website. The link may be blue in colour, underlined and include text such as ‘Click here for more information’ or ‘Find out more’.

Internet: This is a large network that connects computers and devices around the world to access information. It’s also known as the worldwide web. You’ll see the abbreviation ‘www’ at the beginning of web addresses. For example, the Age UK website is www.ageuk.org.uk.

IP address: This stands for Internet Protocol address. It’s a unique number that is given to every device connected to the internet.

Log in: If you’ve set up an online account for email, banking, shopping or social media, you’ll need to use a username (often your email address) and password to access the account. This is known as logging in.

Minimise: Reducing the size of an app or web page you are using so you can carry out another task on your device. For example, checking text messages for a security code to log into the NHS App.

Mouse: A handheld pointing device that allows you to move the cursor around on your laptop or computer.

Online: This refers to doing anything using the internet. For example, online shopping or online banking uses a website or an app, rather than doing the activity in person or over the phone.

Search engine: These help you to find information on the internet. Popular search engines include Google and Bing. You can type in keywords to find what you're looking for in the space provided. The search engine will search through relevant webpages and display the results in a list. Someone might tell you to 'Google' something, which means looking up information online using a search engine called Google.

Scrolling: Using your finger or a mouse to move the screen and see different text or images.

Smartphone: A mobile phone which connects to the internet. You can use it to do everything from sending emails to making video calls.

Stylus: A pen-like object you can use to operate the touchscreens of your electronic devices.

Tablet: A small portable computer with a touch screen. You click the screen with your finger, or a special pen known as a 'stylus', rather than using a keyboard and mouse.

Tap: To quickly touch and then lift your finger off a touchpad to carry out an action. This could be to move to a new screen or open an app on your device. It's the equivalent of clicking a mouse on a computer. You can read more about this in ['A guide to making your device easier to use'](#).

Touchscreen: A type of screen on a device that allows you to use your finger, or a stylus, to navigate and interact with content. This is an alternative to a mouse and keyboard.

URL: This is the address of a webpage. For example, 'www.ageuk.org.uk'. You type the URL into the address bar at the top of your web browser, such as Google Chrome and Microsoft Edge, to visit a website.

Web/internet browser: This is a program that runs on your device and allows you to access webpages on the internet. Common web browsers include: Microsoft Internet Explorer or Edge, Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox and Apple Safari.

Webpage: Webpages provide information through text, images and videos, and are displayed on your web browser, such as Google Chrome or Microsoft Edge. Websites are made up of webpages, just like a book is made up of pages.

Website: A set of related webpages owned by one person or organisation. For example, Age UK's website is made up of hundreds of individual webpages on different topics. You visit websites on your web browser, such as Google Chrome or Microsoft Edge.

Wireless network, or 'WiFi': How your phone, tablet, laptop or computer connects to the internet without using wires or cables. You can access public WiFi networks when you're out of your home. And you can arrange a contract with an internet provider so you can use WiFi at home.

Is your device Android or Apple?

If your device is an iPhone or iPad, then it's an Apple brand. It will have the Apple logo on the back. All other phones and tablet brands are more than likely to be Android devices.

If you aren't sure, then here are some ways to find out:

- Check the handbook that came with the device.
- Search for the brand of your device online.
- Go to your phone menu. Click 'Settings', then 'General' and then 'About'. There, the version will be listed. Some phones will only need you to click 'Settings' and then 'About phone' – there isn't a middle step.



An NHS account

The NHS account is for patients in England. It gives you access to some NHS services and personal information and health records. You can log in to your NHS account, using either the NHS App or the NHS website (www.nhs.uk). This guide looks at how to use the NHS website to access your NHS account.

An NHS account allows you to do things like:

- order repeat prescriptions
- book and manage appointments
- get health information and advice
- view your health record securely
- see your NHS number.

Who can have an NHS account

To have an NHS account – and use the NHS App or NHS website to access NHS services – you must be:

- aged 13 or over
- registered with an NHS GP surgery in England or the Isle of Man.



How to use the NHS website to access your NHS account

How to set up your NHS account

If you don't already have an NHS account, you can set one up through the NHS website.

1. Go to: <https://access.login.nhs.uk/register/create-account-steps>. Click on the green 'Continue' button.
2. Enter your email address on the webpage and choose a password.
3. Confirm the email sent to you by the NHS website.
4. Provide a mobile phone or landline number. A six-digit security code will be sent to you by text message.
5. Enter the six-digit security code that you are sent into the website.
6. You need then to prove who you are. You'll only need to do this once at the start when you register. You can use a photo ID to do this, such as a passport or UK driving licence. Choose one ID and submit a photo of it by uploading it to the website. Provide your postcode (it must be the same postcode that you have registered with your GP). Your information will then be checked, and you will receive a confirmation email within two to three days. Once confirmation is received, you can use the NHS Account.

If you don't have photo ID, you will need the following three pieces of information to prove who you are. Ask your GP surgery to provide these to you.

1. Linkage key or passphrase
2. Organisation Data Service (ODS) Code or Practice ID
3. Account ID

Your information will then be checked and you will receive a confirmation email within three days. When you have received this, you can use the NHS website or app.

Setting a strong password

The best way to keep your NHS account safe is to choose a strong password that only you have access to. Avoid using anything obvious for your password, like your name or address or choosing a weak password like '12345' that someone else might easily guess.

Never write down your password. If you need a written reminder, try to write a hint that only you understand, rather than the actual password. If you do write anything down, keep that information somewhere safe and away from the device you use. Remember never to share your password with anyone.

How to log into your NHS account

When you have set up an NHS account, you can log into the account each time through the NHS website.

1. Put the following web link into your web browser: www.nhs.uk/nhs-app/account/ to log into your NHS account.
2. This will take you through to another webpage with information about accessing your NHS account. There is a dark blue button which says: 'Continue to NHS login'. Click on the button.
3. You will then go through to another webpage with more information about the NHS account. Scroll down the page and there will be another blue button which says: 'Continue'. Click on this button.
4. On the next webpage, you'll be asked to enter the email address you used to set up your NHS account. Enter your email address and click the green button which says: 'Continue'.

Then, on the next webpage, you will be asked to enter the password you used to set up your account. Enter your password and then click the green 'Continue' button. This will log you into your NHS account and you'll go through to the homepage of your NHS account.

Top Tips

When you enter your password, click 'Show' which is in the right hand side of the box. This will show your password as you type it, so you can check it's correct.

How to use an NHS account through the NHS website

When you log into your NHS account through the NHS website, you'll see the home screen. At the top of the screen is a menu. There are four options: 'Home', 'Services', 'Your health' and 'Messages'.

In the top right hand corner, above the four other menu options, there is a menu with three options:

- Help and support – click this to read information about the app and the services you may be able to access
- Account

This includes:

- personal details such as your GP surgery
 - health choices, such as decisions about organ donation
 - settings for your account, including notifications, and fingerprint, face or iris recognition
 - contact and login details
 - information about cookies
- A 'Log out' button – click on this to log out of your NHS account.

Notes

How to find your NHS number in an NHS account

You may be asked for your NHS number but not know it off hand.

You can find your NHS number in your NHS account through the NHS website. When you log into your NHS account, you can find your NHS number at the top of the home page under your name.

You can also have your NHS number sent to you by text, email or letter.

1. Go to your web browser and put in: www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/online-services/find-nhs-number/
2. Scroll down the screen and click the green 'Start now' button. You will then be asked to enter your full name, date of birth and the postcode of the address you've registered at a GP surgery with.

You can also contact your GP surgery to get your NHS number.

How to access health services and information in your NHS account

This section explains what health services and information you may be able to use and look at in your NHS account. You may not be able to access all of them. Your GP surgery and local health services will decide which health services and information to give patients access to.

How to use GP services

There are four GP services you may be able to access through your NHS account. Accessing them depends on your GP surgery and what services they choose to give patients access to.

These are:

- 'Request repeat prescriptions'
 - 'Contact your GP about a health problem'
 - 'Contact your GP surgery for a document or update'
 - 'Check for available GP appointments'
1. To find GP services on the NHS website, stay on the homepage and click the blue link to the right of 'Services', which says 'View all'.
 2. Or you can click 'Services' in the top menu. 'Services' is the second option from the left.
 3. This will take you to a page with four GP services listed. These appear in a menu called 'Your GP services'.

1. How to order repeat prescriptions

If you have repeat prescriptions set up with your GP practice, you can use this online service to order your medications.

1. Click on the top blue link in the 'Your GP services' menu. The link says: 'Request repeat prescriptions'. This will take you to a webpage where you can check your chosen pharmacy. This is the pharmacy the medicines will be collected or delivered from. The name and address of the pharmacy will be listed.
2. There is a blue link under the name and address of the pharmacy. Click on this to check the opening times of the pharmacy.
3. Under the name and address of the pharmacy is a link to change your chosen pharmacy. Click on this to change the pharmacy where you will collect your medicines from or have them delivered from.
4. If you are happy with your chosen pharmacy, click on the green button at the bottom of the screen which says 'Continue'.
5. Then you will go through to a screen with a list of your repeat prescriptions. Select all the medicines you want to request by clicking on the white square boxes.
6. Scroll down the page. You can add an optional note to your GP if you want to. If you have an urgent message, contact your GP surgery by phone.
7. Once you are happy with what you have selected, click on the green button at the bottom of the screen which says 'Continue'. You will then go through to a webpage where you can check the details before sending the request. When you are happy, click on the green button at the bottom of the screen that says: 'Confirm and send'.

2. How to contact your GP about a health problem

1. The second blue link in the 'Your GP services' menu says: 'Contact your GP about a health problem'. If your GP allows this service, you will see a note under the link which says: "Provided using X".

This is a service provided by external companies, like Accurx. The service connects patients with healthcare professionals at a GP surgery. A GP practice must choose to use this service for you to be able to use it.

2. If you do have access to this service, click on the link.

3. The next screen tells you who provides this service and asks you to click on a white button to 'Continue'.
4. When your GP surgery is open, you can tell them about your health problem using this option. You won't be able to do this when the surgery is closed.

On the Accurx system, the first screen asks if you are the patient or if someone else is and you will need to fill in your date of birth by typing numbers into the boxes. When you are finished, click on the blue 'Continue' button.

5. You can't use this service if you urgently need medical attention. Read the lists of symptoms and click the blue 'I confirm, none are present' button at the bottom of the screen if it's not an emergency.
6. The next webpage allows you to tell your GP surgery more information about your health problem. Use the first box to describe the problem. You have 500 characters to do this. Characters are single letters or numbers.
7. You could attach a photo to help explain your health problem by clicking the 'Attach a photo' option underneath 'Describe the problem'.
 - If you want to upload a photo, read the information about what photos are allowed. Photos should not include intimate areas of the body. The photos may be seen by staff of all genders and saved to your medical record. Click the white box 'I have read and agreed to the above' and then the blue 'Continue' button at the end of the screen.
 - On the next screen you can click the blue 'Upload' button at the bottom of the webpage to upload your photo.
 - When you have chosen the photo that is saved on your device, click the blue 'Continue' button at the end of the screen.
8. You will return to the main webpage where you can tell the GP surgery about your health problem. Use the second box on this screen to describe how long the health problem has been going on for. You have 500 characters to do this.
9. Use the third box to explain if you have tried anything to help with your health problem. Again, you have 500 characters to do this.
10. Use the fourth box to share if there's anything in particular that you are worried about connected to the health problem. The same character limit applies.
11. Use the fifth box to tell the GP practice what you would like them to do to help. For example, you might want to request a face-to-face appointment. You have 500 characters of space to do this.
12. The final box asks you to fill in when are the best times to contact you. You don't have to fill this box in.

13. When you have filled in all of the boxes, click the blue 'Continue' button at the bottom of the screen.
14. On the next webpage, use the boxes to fill out your name, postcode and phone number. Tick the relevant box when you are asked how you would prefer to be contacted. Click 'Yes, verify now' or 'No, skip' when you are asked if you would like to receive a verification code to process the request faster. This is a code that will be sent to your phone.

Click the blue 'Continue' button when you have filled in each box on this page.

15. The next webpage asks you to review all of the information you have entered. If you are happy with what you have written, click the blue 'Submit request' button at the end of the screen. Then the information you have written will be sent to your GP surgery and they will get in touch with you.

If you want to edit what you have written, go to the previous screen using the back button on your web browser.

3. How to contact your GP surgery for a document or update

1. The third blue link in the 'Your GP services' menu says: 'Contact your GP surgery for a document or update'. If your GP allows this service, you will see a note under the link which says: "Provided using X".

This is a service provided by external companies, like Accurx. The service connects patients with healthcare professionals at a GP surgery. A GP practice must choose to use this service for you to be able to use it.

If you can use this service, click on the link.

2. The next screen tells you who provides this service and asks you to click on a white button to 'Continue'.
3. When your GP surgery is open, you can contact them for a document or update using this option. You won't be able to do this when the surgery is closed.

On the Accurx system, the first screen asks if you are the patient or if someone else is and you will need to fill in your date of birth by typing numbers into the boxes. Then, click on the blue 'Continue' button.

4. **You can't use this service if you urgently need medical attention.** Read the lists of symptoms and click the blue 'I confirm, none are present' button at the bottom of the screen if it's not an emergency.

5. The next screen asks you about the nature of your request. You can ask for a:

- fit (sick) note
- routine care appointment
- test results
- referral follow-up
- doctor's letter
- other admin request.

Click on the white circle next to the option you want to choose.

6. The next screen will ask you for more information about the option you have chosen. Fill in the relevant boxes with details of your request and click the blue 'Continue' button at the end of the page.

7. Use the boxes to fill out your name, postcode and phone number. Tick the relevant box when you are asked how you would prefer to be contacted. Click 'Yes, verify now' or 'No, skip' if you would like to receive a verification code to process the request faster. This is a code that will be sent to your phone.

Click the blue 'Continue' button when you have filled in each box on this page.

8. Review all of the information you have entered. If you are happy with what you have written, click the blue 'Submit request' button at the end of the webpage. Then the information you have written will be sent to your GP surgery and they will get in touch with you.

4. How to check for available GP appointments

Some GP surgeries allow you to book appointments online. Others don't. Speak to your GP surgery to find out if they offer this service.

1. The fourth blue link in the 'Your GP services' menu says: 'Check for available GP appointments'. Click on the link.
2. This will take you through to another screen where you can find out if you can book GP appointments online. If you aren't able to book appointments online, you should contact your GP surgery directly.

For urgent medical advice, you should go to 111.nhs.uk or call 111.

3. Scroll down the screen and there are options to ask your GP for medical advice and ask your GP surgery a question. Click on the blue links to do this.

Notes

How to use other NHS services

As well as services provided by your GP surgery, there are five other NHS services you may be able to access in your NHS account. The local health services in your area will decide what services you can access in your NHS account.

These are:

- 'Check if you need urgent medical help using 111 online'
- 'Request an emergency repeat prescription using 111 online'
- 'Book, cancel or change a COVID-19 vaccination appointment'
- 'Book or cancel a free NHS flu vaccination at a pharmacy'
- 'Find NHS services near you'.

1. To find the other NHS services through the NHS website, click 'Services' in the menu at the top of the screen. This is the second option from the left.

Or, on the home screen, you can click the blue link to the right of 'Services', which says 'View all'.

2. Either of these two options will take you through to the same page which lists 'NHS services'. Scroll down the screen. 'Other NHS services' is under 'Your GP services'.

1. How to check if you need urgent medical help using 111 online

1. Click on the first option in the 'Other NHS Services' menu. This is a blue link called: 'Check if you need urgent medical help using 111 online'.

When you click on the link, it will take you through to a page called: 'Agree to share your NHS login information'.

2. To continue, you need to agree to share your NHS login information with NHS 111 online.

NHS 111 will use your:

- first names
- last names
- date of birth
- email address
- phone numbers
- NHS number
- identity level – how much information you access on the NHS App is connected to what ID you have provided to prove who you are. If you only provide an email address and phone number, you'll be able to access less information. If you upload photo ID and this is verified, you will be able to access more personal information
- GP surgery's name and address.

3. Partway down the page, there is a blue link that says: 'Terms of use and privacy policy'. You can click on this link to read information about how NHS 111 online will use your information if you use this service.

4. If you're happy to share your details, click the button which says: 'I agree'.

You will then go through to another screen which says: 'Do you want to use these details on 111 online?' Under this, it will list your name, date of birth, home address, phone number, email and GP surgery.

5. Underneath, you can either click to say: 'Yes, use these details'. Or click to say: 'No, I'll enter the details myself'. When you are happy to move forward, you can click the green 'Next' button.
6. On the next page, a box will appear which says: 'We will not access or know about any conditions or medicines on your healthcare record. If we need to know, we will ask you for this information.' To move forward, click the green button which says: 'I understand'.

7. You will then go through to a screen about checking your symptoms. If you're worried about a symptom, you can answer some questions and the service will tell you what to do next. Click the green button which says 'Start now' to answer the questions.

Before you start answering the questions, you will see a message saying to call 999 now for any of the following:

- signs of a heart attack
- signs of a stroke
- sudden confusion (delirium)
- suicide attempt
- severe difficulty breathing
- heavy bleeding
- severe injuries
- seizure
- sudden, rapid swelling
- labour or childbirth.

8. If none of these apply, click the green button which says 'I have none of these' to begin to answer more questions about your situation.

Calling 111

Please call 111 instead if you:

- have complex problems caused by an existing medical condition
- have a care plan from your doctor for your current health problems
- need to get end-of-life care.

2. How to request an emergency repeat prescription using 111 online

1. Click on the second option in the 'Other NHS services' menu. This is a blue link that says: 'Request an emergency repeat prescription using 111 online'.

When you click on the link, you'll go through to another screen with information about emergency prescriptions. You can use this service to request a limited emergency supply of a medicine you've completely run out of. This must be a medicine you are prescribed regularly through a repeat prescription. You will be charged your usual prescription fee. If you don't usually pay, the emergency prescription will be free.

You can't use this service to get antibiotics for a new or recent problem or controlled drugs that require identification to collect.

2. To use the service, click the green button that says: 'Start now'.

Before you use the service, you will see a message saying to call 999 now for any of the following:

- signs of a heart attack
- signs of a stroke
- sudden confusion (delirium)
- suicide attempt
- severe difficulty breathing
- heavy bleeding
- severe injuries
- seizure
- sudden, rapid swelling
- labour or childbirth.

3. If none of these apply, click the green button which says 'I have none of these' to answer the questions about your situation.

3. How to book, cancel or change a COVID-19 vaccination appointment

1. Click on the third option in the 'Other NHS Services' menu. This is a blue link called 'Book, cancel or change a COVID-19 vaccination appointment'.
2. When you click on the link, it will take you through to a page called 'Book, change or cancel a COVID-19 vaccination appointment'.

You can use this service to:

- check if you need an appointment
- book an appointment
- check your existing appointment details
- change your appointment
- cancel your appointment.

You may also be offered a flu vaccination in the same appointment if you are eligible.

3. There is a green button partway down the page which says: 'Start now'. Click the button and it will take you through to a page called: 'Are you able to get a COVID-19 vaccine?'. This page checks your eligibility and asks you to answer a question to determine whether you're eligible. The question will be different if you are under or over 75. People over 75 are normally eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine.

If you are eligible for a vaccine, choose this option and click the green 'Continue' button.

4. On the next screen, click the green 'Continue' button to choose an appointment.

4. How to book or cancel a free NHS flu vaccination at a pharmacy

1. Click on the fourth option in the 'Other NHS Services' menu. This is a blue link called 'Book or cancel a free NHS flu vaccination at a pharmacy'.

When you click on the link, it will take you through to a page called 'Book, change or cancel a free NHS flu vaccination at a pharmacy'. You can use this service to:

- check if you need an appointment
 - book an appointment
 - check your existing appointment details
 - change your appointment
 - cancel your appointment.
2. The service will check if you need a vaccine before you book. To check if you need a vaccine, click on the green button partway down the page. The button says: 'Start now'.
 3. On the next page, you will find information about whether you are able to book an appointment or not.

Choose either 'Yes, I'm eligible for a free flu vaccine' or 'No, I am not eligible' by clicking the relevant white circle at the end of the page. Then click the green 'Continue' button.
 4. On the next screen, click the green 'Continue' button to choose an appointment if you are eligible.

5. How to find NHS services near you

1. Click on the fifth option in the 'Other NHS Services' menu. This is a blue link called 'Find services near you'.

When you click on this link, it will take you through to a page with a list of services. These are:

- 'GP'
- 'Dentist'
- 'Vaccinations and booking services'
- 'Pharmacy'
- 'Urgent care services'
- 'Mental health services'

- 'Hospital'
- 'NHS sight test'
- 'Sexual health services'
- 'Pregnancy services'
- 'Find other NHS services'.

2. The list of services are all blue links. You can click on these to find more information.

Below the list of services, there are links to information about what to do if you need help. These are:

- 'If you need help now, and you're not sure what to do'
- 'If you think it's an emergency'.

3. Click on the blue links to find more information.

How to find health guidance

With an NHS account, you can read information about health, medicines and COVID-19. Everyone should be able to view and read this information.

1. To find health guidance, go to the homepage. Next, click on the blue link which says: 'View all' to the left of 'Services'.
2. Or you can click on the 'Services' icon at the bottom of the screen. It's the second icon from the left.
3. Scroll down the page to the third menu of options called 'Find health information'. It lists three options here:

1. How to browse NHS health information

1. Click on the first option in the 'Find health information' menu which says: 'Browse NHS health information'. This text is a blue link. Click on the link and it will take you through to information about different conditions, symptoms, medicines, tests and treatments, including what to do and when to get help.
2. This page has links to different health information. It includes:
 - conditions in alphabetical order
 - symptoms in alphabetical order
 - tests and treatments in alphabetical order
 - medicines in alphabetical order
 - information about caring for a baby

- information about different types of contraception, and where to get them
- information and support about mental health
- information about trying for a baby, pregnancy, labour and birth
- information about vaccinations for babies, children and adults.

Click on the blue links to read the information.

2. How to browse NHS medicines information

1. Click on the second option in the 'Find health information' menu which says: 'Browse NHS medicines information'. This text is a blue link. Click on the link and it will take you through to a page with an alphabetical list of medicines. Here, you can find out how your medicine works, how to take it and possible side effects.
2. At the top of the page is the alphabet from A to Z. These are blue links which you can click on to find your medicine. For example, if your medicine begins with 'C', click on 'C'. This will take you to a list of all the medicines beginning with 'C'.
3. Or you can scroll down the page to find an alphabetical list of medicines. Each medicine name is a blue link which you can click on. For example, you can scroll down to 'C' and click on 'Cetirizine'.

3. How to find guidance about COVID-19

1. Click on the third option in the 'Find health information' menu which says: 'Find COVID-19 guidance'. This text is a blue link. Click on the link and it will take you through to a page with NHS information and advice about COVID-19.

This includes symptoms of COVID-19, what to do if you have COVID-19, how to avoid catching and spreading it, treatments, vaccinations and long-term effects.

2. To read the information, you need to click on the relevant blue links. When you click on these links, you will go through to other pages on the NHS website.

Notes

How to access information about your own health

This section of your NHS Account allows you to view your records and choices you have made about your healthcare. You may not be able to access some of this information. GP surgeries and local health services will decide what information patients can access in their NHS accounts.

1. Click on the 'Your health' option in the menu at the top of the screen. It's the third option from the left.
2. Or scroll down the homepage until you reach 'Your health' in the menu. To the right of this, there is a blue link that says: 'View all'. Click on the link.

Both of these options will take you through to the same screen. You will see a menu with a list of links you can click on. The number of links will be different for everyone as it depends on what access your GP surgery and local health services have given you. There may be eight options in the menu.

1. How to access your GP health record

Your record shows your information, such as your personal details, allergies and medications. Depending on what your GP surgery shares, you may also see:

- your medical history, including problems and consultation notes
- test results that you may not have discussed with your doctor.

1. Click on the first blue link in the 'Your health' menu. It says: 'GP health record'.
2. On the next screen, you will see an important message. It says: "Your record may contain sensitive information. If someone is pressuring you for this information, contact your GP surgery immediately. You have a legal right to access the information in your record."

If you are happy to go ahead, click on the green 'Continue' button at the bottom of the page.

3. On the next screen, you will see your GP health record. It will list: your name, date of birth, NHS number and address.

Underneath this, you will see different options which could include:

- 'Allergies and adverse reaction'
- 'Medicines'
- 'Immunisations'
- 'Health conditions'
- 'Test results'
- 'Consultations and events'
- 'Documents'.

These options are blue links which you can click on. Click on them to see the information.

4. In your health record, there may be medical abbreviations that you aren't familiar with. Click on the blue link at the bottom of the screen which says: 'Help with abbreviations'.
5. On the next screen, you can scroll through a list of different abbreviations.

2. How to view and manage prescriptions

This service allows you to check your prescriptions and choose the pharmacy you collect them from.

Click on the second blue link in the 'Your health' menu. This is a blue link that says: 'View and manage prescriptions'.

On the next screen, you'll see four options:

Requested medicines

1. Click on the first blue link to check if your GP has approved or rejected medicines you requested in the website.
2. On the next screen, you'll see a list of medicines you have requested. Scroll down to see these.
3. There is a blue link near the top of the screen which says: 'Your approved prescriptions'. Click on this to view approved prescriptions.

If you have prescriptions that have been approved, you will see these on the next screen.

Your approved prescriptions

Click on the second blue link to check prescriptions that have been approved by your GP. These will be ready for your pharmacy to prepare.

Your chosen pharmacy

1. Click on the third blue link to see information about the pharmacy that you collect your prescriptions from or delivers your medicines to you.

On the next screen, you will see the address of your chosen pharmacy.

2. Underneath this is a blue link which says: 'Opening times'. Click on this blue link to find out the opening times of your chosen pharmacy.
3. At the bottom of the screen is a box that says: 'Change your chosen pharmacy'. Click on this box to change the pharmacy you want to collect your prescriptions from or deliver your medicines to you.

Hospital and other medicines

Here, you can view your current and past hospital medicines.

1. Click on the third blue link which says: 'Hospital and other medicines'.
2. A GP has to work with an external provider to provide the service. If you can use the service, it will allow you to see any medicines you may have been prescribed by hospitals.

3. How to see upcoming and past appointments

This service allows you to view or manage upcoming and past appointments, referrals and waiting lists.

1. Click on the third option in the 'Your health' menu. This is a blue link that says 'Upcoming and past appointments'.
2. On the next screen, there are four options. They are blue links which you can click on.

GP surgery appointments

1. Click on the blue link called 'GP surgery appointments'. On the next screen it will tell you whether or not you can book GP appointments online.

If you can't book an appointment online, contact your GP surgery directly.

2. Under this, you may see options to ask your GP for medical advice and ask your GP surgery a question. These services are provided by external companies that aren't part of the NHS, so you may or may not have access to them. It depends if your GP surgery has set up these services for its patients.
3. You may also see a list of your upcoming and past GP appointments.

Referrals

Click on the blue link that says 'Referrals'. This will take you to a new screen with information about any referrals you have. These are split into upcoming appointments and past appointments.

Some of your appointment information may not be visible.

Hospital and specialist appointments

Click on the blue link that says: 'Hospital and specialist appointments'. This will take you to a new screen with information about which appointments you have. Some of your appointment information may not be visible in the app.

Waiting lists

Click on the fourth blue link that says: 'Waiting lists'. This will take you to a new screen with information about which waiting lists you are on. Some of your waiting list information may not be visible on the app.

4. How to access hospital and specialist documents and questionnaires

1. Click on the fourth option in the 'Your health' menu to look at hospital and specialist documents and complete questionnaires. This is a link that says: 'Hospital and specialist documents and questionnaires'.
2. On the next screen, it will show you hospital and specialist documents and allow you to complete questionnaires. Some of your documents and questionnaires may not be visible.
3. Scroll down to see a list of your hospital appointment letters and any questionnaires that you can complete. Click on the arrow to the right of each 'Appointment' to read the letter.

5. How to view test results and imaging

Click the fifth option in the 'Your health' menu to look at test results. This is a blue link that says: 'Test results and imaging'.

On the next screen, you will see two options:

GP-ordered test results

1. Click on this option to view test results requested or done by your GP surgery. When you click on the blue link, it will take you through to another screen which will give you test results for the current year.
2. To search for test results from other years, click the blue link that says 'View all test results'. On the next screen, you will see a list of years. You can click the year you are looking for a test result for and this will take you through to another screen with information about relevant test results.
3. If you're looking for test results from older dates, scroll down to the bottom of the screen and click the blue link in the bottom right hand corner of the screen. The link is called 'Older dates'. You'll then go through to another screen with a list of years. Click the year you are looking for a test result for and this will take you through to another screen with information about test results.

Hospital-ordered test results

The second blue link in the list is 'hospital-ordered test results'. When you click on the link, you may be able to see tests requested in hospitals, including specialist requested tests. This service is provided by an external company.

6. How to view your COVID-19 vaccine record

1. Click the sixth option in the 'Your Health' menu to view your COVID-19 vaccine record. This is a blue link that says: 'View COVID-19 vaccine record'.
2. On the next screen, you'll see information about any COVID-19 vaccines you've had.

If you have had any COVID-19 vaccines, you will see the date you had it, the name of the vaccine and the batch number.

7. How to track and manage your health

You can record your decisions about your health and keep track of information with this service.

1. Click on the seventh option in the 'Your health' menu. This is a blue link that says: 'Track and manage your health'.
2. On the next screen, you will see three options:
 - 'View links from your health team'.
 - 'Track your symptoms'.
 - 'Share records with your health team'.

Each of the above three options are blue links which you can click on. An external company provides these services.

8. How to view your care plans

This service allows you to check plans you've agreed with your health team about how you want to be cared for.

1. To view your care plans, click on the blue link at the end of the 'Your health' menu called 'Care plans'.
2. On the next screen, you will be told which external provider manages this service with your GP surgery. Click the white 'Continue' button.

3. You'll be asked to give your consent to share your NHS login information with the external provider. This includes:
- first names
 - last names
 - date of birth
 - email address
 - NHS number
 - identity level – how much information you access on the NHS App is connected to what ID you have provided to prove who you are. If you only provide an email address and phone number, you'll be able to access less information. If you upload photo ID and this is verified, you will be able to access more personal information.

If you agree to share this information, click the green 'I agree' button.

4. Then you will be able to choose between:
- 'Managing your health care plans'
 - 'Viewing your Universal Care plan'.

These are blue links that you can click on. Both services are run by external companies.

Notes



How to view **messages** from your GP, hospital and specialist doctors

Being able to receive messages from, and send them to, healthcare professionals is a helpful way to keep track of appointments and review health information. You may also find it more convenient than waiting on hold on the telephone.

Through your NHS account, you can:

- receive messages from your GP surgery, about hospital and specialist care appointments, and invitations and reminders
- send or receive messages about your health record, documents and letters, and pre-appointment questionnaires.

1. Click on 'Messages' in the menu at the top of the screen. It's the fourth option from the left.

Or you can scroll down the homepage until you see 'Messages'. It's under the section called 'Your health' and is the third option down. Click on the blue link which says: 'View your messages'.

2. On the next screen, you will see two message boxes. One for messages from 'Your NHS healthcare services' and one for messages from 'Your hospital and specialist doctors' or 'GP surgery messaging'.
3. When you click on the top message box, called 'Your NHS healthcare services', it will take you through to a list of messages about hospital and specialist care appointments, and invitations and reminders.
4. If you have any messages, you can click on them to open them. Each message will say who it is from. For example, the name of your local NHS trust. Click on the name which is a blue link to open it.
5. When you click on the message box at the bottom called 'Your hospital and specialist doctors', you may be taken through to a service provided by Patients Know Best. Some GP surgeries and hospitals choose to provide this personal health record service. Others don't.
6. If you have an option called 'GP surgery messaging' you will be able to send messages to your practice. Some surgeries turn this option off.

Notes

How to make changes to your NHS account

There may be times when you have to change your personal information, such as the name and address of your GP surgery or your mobile number.

1. On the homepage, click on 'Account' in the menu in the top right hand corner. It's the middle option in the menu.

This will take you through to a page with your name, date of birth and NHS number.

2. Underneath this, there is a link called 'Manage health services for others'. See the section on ['How a family member or carer can manage health services and information for you'](#) on page 56 for more information about this.

Underneath this, there are different options:

Personal details

1. Click on the blue link called 'Your GP surgery'. You will go through to another page called 'GP surgery'.
2. You'll see the name and address of your GP practice. If you have moved to a new GP practice, click on the 'Change GP surgery' button.

Health choices

In this section, there are three options listed. These are:

1. Organ donation decision

1. Click on the first blue link in the 'Healthy choices' menu to change your decision about organ donation.
2. On the next page, it will say what your decision is about organ donation. You are then given the option to update your decision about organ donation. Click on 'This is still my decision' to keep the same decision. Or click on 'I want to change my decision' to change it.
3. On this page, you can also get advice and tips about talking to your family and friends about your decision about organ donation. Click on the blue link 'Tell your family and friends'.
4. Underneath there is a blue link to information about sharing your decision about organ donation on social media. Click the link to find out more information.
5. At the bottom of the page there is a link to register to be a blood donor. Click the blue link that says 'Register to be a blood donor'.

2. Health data sharing decision

1. This is the second option in the 'Healthy choices' menu. Click on the blue link which says: 'Health data sharing decisions'. This will take you through to another page where you can find out how data from your health records can help with research and planning and then choose if you want to share your data.
2. There are five links on this page with more information. These are:
 - 'Overview'
 - 'How confidential patient information is used'
 - 'When your choice does not apply'
 - 'Make your choice'
 - 'Information in different languages and formats'.

3. Take part in health research

This is the third option in the 'Healthy choices' menu. Read the section about ['How to join health studies'](#) on page 52 for information about this.

Settings

In this section, there are four options listed. These are:

1. Contact and login details

1. Click on the blue link which says: 'Contact and login details'.

You'll go through to a screen with two options:

2. Click on the blue link 'Contact details' to change the email address and phone number your GP and other NHS services use to contact you.
3. Click on the blue link 'Login and security settings' to manage the details you use to log into the NHS account.

2. Cookies

1. Click on the blue link that says 'Cookies' to manage cookies.

NHS England has put some small files, called cookies, on your device to make the NHS App work. They won't use any other cookies unless you choose to turn them on.

2. On the next page, there's a link to read the 'Cookies policy'. Click on the blue link to read this.
3. Under the link to the 'Cookies policy', there is an option to say whether you accept the use of optional cookies being used to improve the performance of the NHS App. If you agree to this, click on the grey circle to move it to the right. When you agree to the optional cookies being used, the background behind the circle turns green.

About the NHS App

1. If you'd like to find out about the privacy and legal policies for the NHS App and NHS website, click on the blue link which says: 'Privacy and legal policies'.
2. On the next screen, you'll see a list of documents. These are:
 - 'NHS App cookies policy'
 - 'NHS App accessibility statement'
 - 'NHS App terms of use'
 - 'NHS App privacy policies'
 - 'NHS App open source licences'.

These are blue links which you can click on to read more information.

Notes



Getting help to use health services and information in your NHS account

There is a lot of information in the NHS account and you may want some help with using the different services and finding information.

Click on 'Help and support' in the menu at the top right hand side of the screen. It's the first option in the menu.

On the next screen, you will see nine white boxes:

1. Get started

1. Click on the purple link which says: 'Get started'.
2. On the next page you will find information about how to set up your login and start using the NHS account.

2. Health records

1. Click on the purple link which says: 'Health records'.
2. On the next page you will find information about managing your health records and choices.

3. Manage health services for others

1. Click on the purple link which says: 'Manage health services for others'.
2. On the next page, you will find information about how to manage services for another person in the website.

4. Appointments

1. Click on the purple link which says 'Appointments'.
2. On the next page you will find information about booking and changing appointments.

5. Prescriptions

1. Click on the purple link which says 'Prescriptions'.
2. On the next page you will find information about requesting and managing prescriptions.

6. Messages

1. Click on the purple link which says 'Messages'.
2. On the next page you will find information about reading and sending messages.

7. Account and settings

1. Click on the purple link which says: 'Account and settings'.
2. On the next page you will find information about changing your settings and preferences.

8. Technical information

1. Click on the purple link which says: 'Technical information'.
2. On the next page you will find guidance on technical issues.

9. Contact the NHS App and account team

1. Click on the blue link which says: 'Contact the NHS App and account team'.
2. On the next page you will find information about how to get in touch about the NHS App or your NHS account.

Underneath the boxes are two purple links which say:

- 'Get help for mental health now'
- 'Get urgent medical help now'.

You can click on these links to get more information.

Notes

How to join health studies

If you're interested in being part of health studies and research, you can sign up to take part. This is called 'Be Part of Research' and is run by the National Institute for Health and Care Research. Anyone can take part in the research, whether you have a health condition or not.

1. Log into your NHS account, then scroll down to the bottom of the home screen.
2. There is a dark blue box that says: "Research changes lives – Register with Be Part of Research to find and join health studies." Click on the white arrow in the box.

This will take you through to another webpage with a box. The box says:

"Be part of health research

This website is run by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR)

Continue to the Be Part of Research website to register and create an account. You can then be contacted about health research you may be interested in joining."

3. If you want to sign up to 'Be Part of Research', click on the white box that says 'Continue'.
 4. This will take you through to another page where you can register to take part in the research. To sign up to take part in the research, click the dark blue button that says: 'Start Registration'.
 5. You will then go through to a webpage where you need to agree to share your NHS login information to be part of research. Be Part of Research will use your:
 - first names
 - last names
 - date of birth
 - email address
 - NHS number
 - identity level – how much information you access through the NHS website is connected to what ID you have provided to prove who you are. If you only provide an email address and phone number, you'll be able to access less information. If you upload photo ID and this is verified, you will be able to access more personal information.
- If you don't feel comfortable sharing this information, you won't be able to be part of the research.
6. You can read the terms of use and privacy policy for the Be Part of Research to find out how your information will be used.
 7. Next, you go through to a page that says: "NIHR Be Part of Research". This is still part of the NHS website. If you want to go ahead, click on the dark blue button that says: 'Start Registration'.

Notes



How a family member or carer can manage health services and information for you

If you'd like a family member or a carer to manage health services and personal health information for you, you need to talk to your GP surgery. A trusted person can apply to access the services for you. They will need to go into the GP surgery and share their proof of identification.

For someone else to manage health services and personal health information for you, they will need to be registered at the same GP surgery as you.

Once this is agreed by your GP practice and set up, your family member or carer can manage health services and your health information for you.

If you have any questions about this, please speak to your GP practice. Your GP surgery can guide you through registration.

Notes



How your **personal** information will be used

The NHS App for England will use your personal information to make sure you can access health services and information about your healthcare. This applies whether you are using the NHS App or the NHS website to access your NHS account.

Your personal information will also be used to:

- improve the NHS App
- resolve any technical problems
- maintain and improve security
- comply with the law
- protect you against potential fraud.

If you provide information when you use the NHS website for England that suggests you or others may be at risk of harm, your personal data will be used to act on what you say.

What personal information will be used

The NHS App for England will collect:

- your name
- details of your registered GP
- email address
- date of birth
- age
- sex
- gender
- physical description
- your NHS number
- home phone number
- online identification such as your IP address
- website cookies
- mobile phone number
- medical record information
- messages from health and care providers.

Keeping your personal information safe

You might have questions about how your personal information is kept safe.

NHS accounts are secure and safe. They have been independently tested against standards set by the National Cyber Security Centre. This is a government body that provides support to help make the UK a safe place to live and work on the internet.

Notes

Next Steps

We hope you've enjoyed getting to grips with your NHS account via the NHS website. Once you feel comfortable using the website to access your NHS account, you might want to try using the NHS App on your smartphone to access it. We have another guide to help you do this. You might want to read some of our other guides too. These include: guides for video calling, doing online shopping, and accessing entertainment and hobbies.

We provide advice and information for people in later life through our Age UK Advice line, publications and online. Age UK Advice: **0800 678 1602** Lines are open seven days a week from 8am to 7pm. You can find more information at **www.ageuk.org.uk**