

## Building better participation

A guide to help patient participation groups and their GP practice work well



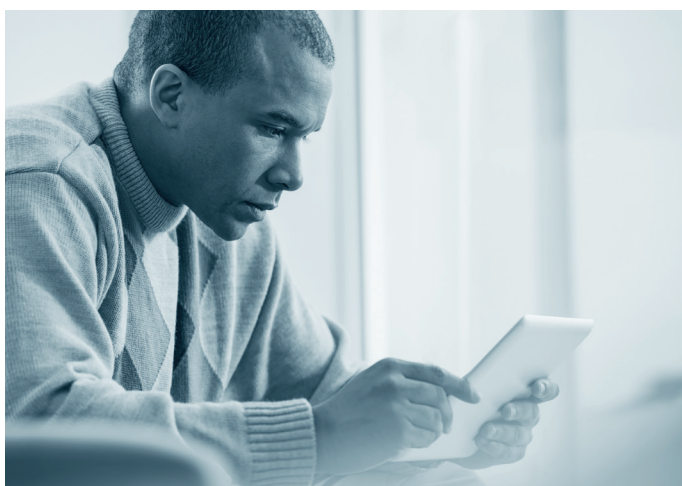
## Making GP online services work well for patients



Registered Charity 292157 [www.napp.org.uk](http://www.napp.org.uk)  
The national voice for patient participation in primary care  
This guide is supported by NHS England

# Making GP online services work well for patients

Good GP practices tend to have good patient participation groups (PPGs). Together, they have a shared understanding of the role of the PPG, how it works, and how patient participation supports practice development and can improve patient care.



*Building better participation* is a resource developed by the National Association for Patient Participation (N.A.P.P.), with support from NHS England. It aims to help PPGs and their GP practice reflect on what they do. There is a link to *Building better participation* in the resources section of this guide on page 6.

*Building better participation* gives guidance in four areas:

- area 1: Getting PPGs in place
- area 2: Helping PPGs work well
- area 3: Knowing and working with patients
- area 4: Influencing beyond the GP practice

*Making GP online services work well for patients* is a short additional guide designed to help PPGs and their practices apply some of the resources found in *Building better participation*, focusing on a specific subject: GP online services.

*Making GP online services work well for patients* sets out:

- information about GP online services
- key questions a PPG can discuss with its GP practice
- actions a PPG might take
- supporting resources available to help

The GP contract in England now requires practices to put in place and expand GP online services.

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Well-established GP online services can be very beneficial to patients because they:

- are quick to access, at a time convenient to the patient
- can prevent a visit or phone call to the practice, saving the patient time and releasing the Surgery's time for other patients
- can provide a record of a patient's medical history
- can help patients work in partnership with healthcare professionals, increasing their involvement in their healthcare.

*Making GP online services work well for patients* will help PPGs and practices introduce and embed online services in ways that are right for patients.

It will help PPGs ensure that patient views and concerns are listened to, considered and dealt with, meaning more patients can make safe, convenient use of digital technology in their interactions with their practice.



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### What are GP online services?

Digital technology has the power to change the relationship between patients and their GP practice just as it has done so in the way we do our shopping or manage our finances.

Patients want to take more control of their health care and using GP online services can make it more personal, convenient and efficient.

The NHS is committed to using new technology to make its services more responsive to the needs of patients their families and their carers.

GP online services are promoted through an NHS England programme which is supporting GP practices to help patients to go online to:



- book appointments
- order repeat prescriptions
- see their patient record – including test results, medication and immunisations

Accessing GP online services is quick, easy and secure, and is freeing up more time for the patient, and the practice, by reducing the need for phone calls and visits.



GP online services are offered by the majority of practices, but sit alongside the more traditional face-to-face and telephone interaction between patients and their GP which will always be available.

There are a range of resources, materials and practical guidance available to help patients use online opportunities for controlling more of their health care. A list of some of these is given in the resources section of this guide on Page 6.



### GP online services Quick, easy and secure

- Book GP appointments
- Order repeat prescriptions
- Access your GP Records



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## Some key questions a PPG can discuss with its GP practice

Some GP practices have well established online services, while others are in the process of introducing them.

The GP contract in England commits practices to increase the number of patients making use of their online services, and to increase the range of online services they offer.

Here are some key questions a PPG can usefully ask of its practice, depending on how established its online services are:

1. Does our practice offer any online services? If not, what are the barriers to online services being introduced?

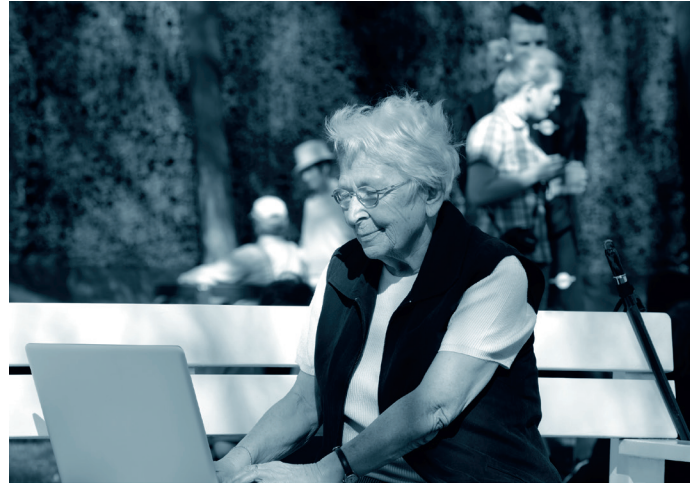
2. How are patients informed about online services and register for them? Are safeguards such as consent and confidentiality explained to the patient?

3. Has the PPG been involved in the design of the practice's online services policy?

4. What promotional materials (e.g. leaflets, posters, appointment cards and other signage) about GP online services are being used by the practice if any?

5. What safeguards are in place to ensure that those who do not want to, or cannot, use GP online services are not disadvantaged in getting services from the practice?

6. Is your practice using social media or its website to promote GP online services?



7. Does the practice have a staff member (or members) designated to promote GP online services?

8. Are there people in the local community who will particularly benefit from GP online services?

9. How can our PPG work as a critical friend to the practice to make the best use of GP online services?

*Building better participation* contains guidance that will help PPGs have these kinds of conversations and discussions. You may find the following parts particularly helpful:

- *Getting PPGs in place* Goals 1, 2 and 3
- *Helping PPGs work well* Goals 1 and 5
- *Knowing and working with patients* Goal 2



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## Actions a PPG might take

Successful PPGs work effectively with their GP practice – as a critical friend, and as a voice for patients. They help their practice develop the ways in which it provides services. They carry out some activities to help local people understand both the PPG and the practice.

Some PPGs will have already worked effectively with their practice on the introduction of GP online services, and some have helped NHS England develop resources for use by practices.

Each PPG decides if and how it wants to work with its practice on online services, but more are increasingly playing an important role.

The following list of actions has already helped some PPGs and practices, and is recommended for consideration by each PPG:

- Hold a special PPG meeting for members to introduce them to GP online services, the practice's approach to GP online services, and the possible contribution the PPG might make
- Ask PPG members to test our online services and give feedback to the practice
- Identify a GP online services "patient champion" who is a named individual who can offer practical help to other patients
- Publicise and promote GP online services through other PPG activity such as public events, stalls, and work with local community groups
- Hold demonstration sessions to let patients see how online services might help them, and to share information about GP online services, including details about confidentiality safeguards



- Promote the benefits to patients (e.g. convenience, saving time, and having more control of healthcare by working in partnership with the GP and others)
- Feed back to the practice good and bad patient experience of GP online services
- Help the practice develop appropriate promotion about GP online services that will meet the needs of the local population, and consider promoting online services yourselves
- Include questions about GP online services in a PPG patient survey
- Guide patients to local computer courses that will help increase their confidence in using GP online services
- Consider promoting GP online services through PPG newsletters, websites and social media.



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## Supporting Resources – Patient Online

The following resources are available for all PPGs to use. This guide can be found online here: [www.napp.org.uk/bbp.html](http://www.napp.org.uk/bbp.html)

### WEBSITES

[www.nhs.uk/GPonlineservices](http://www.nhs.uk/GPonlineservices)

Here you can find:

- Links to patient stories (videos)
- Links through to the supplier websites
- General information on GP online services

[www.england.nhs.uk/patient-online/case-studies](http://www.england.nhs.uk/patient-online/case-studies)

Here you can find:

- Case studies

[www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/pe/patient-online/support/](http://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/pe/patient-online/support/)

Here you can find:

- Getting started guides
  - Patient Online: making the most of online appointments and repeat prescriptions
  - Patient Online: offering patients access to detailed online records
  - Patient Online: registering patients for GP online services
- Support and resources guide
- Fact sheets
- Other resources
  - Time saving calculator, promotional materials, frequently asked questions, regional and local support, RCGP information and resources, webinars for implementing online services for patients
- Key publications
- GP contracts

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/pe/patient-online/support/patient-material/>

Here you can find:

- Toolkits
  - For GP practices
  - For CCGs, CSUs and NHS Trusts
- Promotional materials and digital materials
  - Posters, leaflets, display materials, appointment cards
  - GP online web banner, waiting room screen savers, social media icons
- Patient guides – in colour or black and white
  - Getting started with GP online services
  - Giving another person access to your GP online services
  - Giving employed carers access to your GP online services
  - GP online services for carers including young carers
  - Protecting your GP online records
  - What you need to know about your GP online records
  - Young people's access to GP online services
  - Your GP record

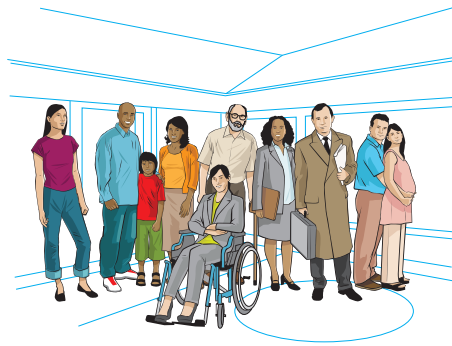
## Supporting Resources – N.A.P.P

- Patient experiences of online services and reports on N.A.P.P. Patient Online engagement workshops [www.napp.org.uk/patientonline.html](http://www.napp.org.uk/patientonline.html)
- Research on improving digital health skills in communities <https://www.goodthingsfoundation.org/news-and-blogs>
- Tinder Foundation NHS Widening Digital Participation programme <http://nhs.tinderfoundation.org/#home>



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**National Association for Patient Participation**

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