



Patient Online November 2016 update

The contractual requirements for online access have expanded every year since the 2014/15 contract introduced patient online. Current contractual requirements mean that practices should now offer online booking of appointments, ordering of repeat prescriptions and viewing of detailed coded data in patient records.

There is also a non-contractual joint commitment between the BMA's General Practitioners Committee and the NHS for every practice to have at least 10% of patients registered for online services by 31 March 2017. In addition to this, and in line with a commissioning policy to extend patient online access wherever possible, Healthy London Partnership (HLP) has requested that practices make 80% of their appointments available online to patients. This is an ambitious expectation intended to bring patient online access up to the higher targets achieved outside of London.

The contractual requirements for online access for patients are very likely to be more demanding each year, so take action now and do not allow your practice to fall behind.

With less than four months to go to the end of March 2017, the latest figures we have been given for London show that 44.6% of practices have at least 10% of patients registered for online services.

There are a number of practices across London who have embraced Patient Online and they claim to have seen benefits for both patients and the practice.

Janet Carlo, a practice manager in Bromley told us:

"Patient online is better for us, but more importantly it is definitely better for patients. The benefit to patients is the convenience; they can order prescriptions or make appointments at any time, whenever it suits them. Now they can also see test results, look at immunisations and consultations. GP online services enable us to give patients a better service and more choice".

Benefits of offering access online for practices can include:

Freeing up telephone and reception time for other patients

An audit trail of all online activity

A reduction in DNAs if patients are able to cancel online

Benefits for patients can include:

An increase in patient ownership of care

Availability 24 hours a day

Saving time visiting or making calls to the practice

An article in the London Journal of Primary Care in February 2014 quoted that if 30% of patients accessed their electronic record online at least twice a year a 10,000 patient practice is likely to save 4,747 appointments and 8,020 telephone calls each year.

NHS England's Patient Online team have shared the top three tips to increase patient sign up and usage. These are:

When new patients register at your practice, make Patient Online part of the registration process. A guide to assist with the process is available [here](#).

When a patient calls the practice, ensure a message about Patient Online is on your call waiting or answer phone message.

When a patient visits the practice, have promotional items on display. Posters, leaflets, appointment cards and even bunting and balloons can all be ordered for free via the Orderline website (click "GP online services" on the left-hand menu).

It's worth noting that, according to NHS England's Patient Online team, a practice of 6,000 patients would have to register the following number of patients each month to reach the 10% target by 31 March 2017:

December

January

February

March

Total

0% registered currently

150

150

150

150

600

2% registered currently

120

120

120

120

480

5% registered currently

75

75

75

75

300

NHS England's Patient Online team have also produced a number of online resources for you to use:

The benefits of online test results for GP practices and patients

How to implement detailed coded record access

How to promote online GP services to patients

Safe access to online records – A practice's view

Benefits of online access to records for GP practices and patients

You can find more videos here as well as the documentation to support them.

For more support, please contact your London region implementation leads:

Ruth Adekoya, 07918 368 362 ruth.adekoya@nhs.net for: Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Haringey, Islington, Merton, Redbridge, Sutton and Wandsworth.
Jane Nicholls, 07710 152 891 jane.nicholls6@nhs.net for: Bexley, Brent, Bromley, Central London (Westminster), City and Hackney, Ealing, Greenwich, Hammersmith and Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Lambeth, Lewisham, Newham, Southwark, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest and West London.

For more info on specific data and any other queries or comments, please contact the Healthy London Partnership Patient Online London Team at ENGLAND.POLLondon@nhs.net.