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London Region

NHS

Using the NHS App:

Guidance and training materials for GP practices

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Version Control

Document title	Using the NHS App: Guidance and training materials for GP practices
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Author	Tara Bush - Senior Project Manager, Digital First (London Region), NHS England
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Should you have any queries relating to this document, please contact england.londondtt@nhs.net

About this document

- This document provides guidance, tips and links to useful resources to help practices better understand what they need to do to promote and maximise the features available to their patients via the NHS App.
- All GP practices in England are connected to the NHS App. This means that anyone aged 13 and over and registered with a GP practice in England can use it. A key theme of the Primary Care Access Recovery Plan is around empowering patients to manage their own health, with a focus on rolling out existing NHS App functionality to 90% of practices by March 2024.
- The video on the right shows at a glance how the NHS App is laid out and where different services are listed.
- The key functionalities of the NHS App have been listed on the next slide, with the ability to click to navigate to further information about each of them, including:

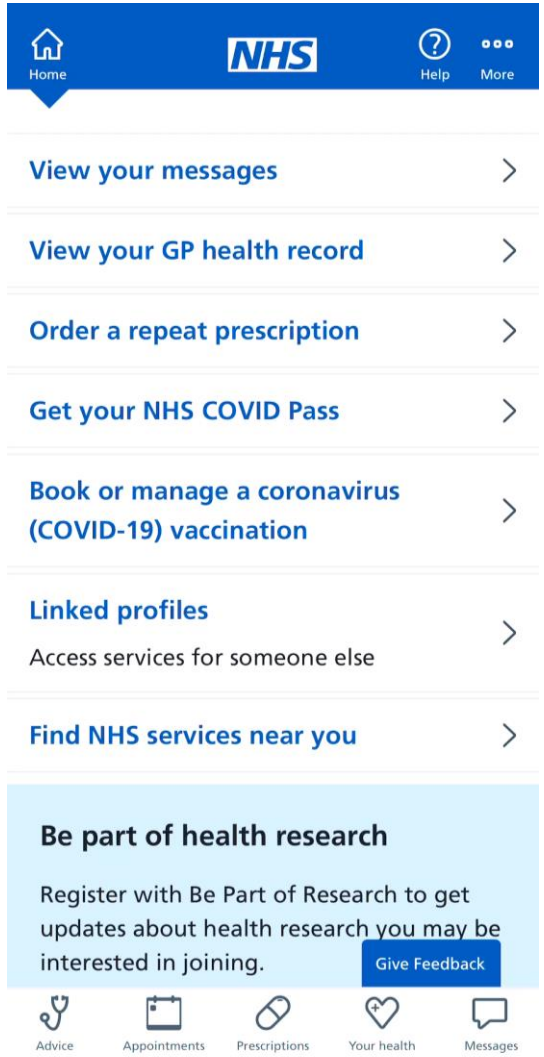
what each feature allows patients to do in the NHS App

how these services can support your operational processes

links to guidance on what you may need to do to ensure your patients are able to access these features

tips on how you can ensure effective uptake of these features by patients

- It is important to note that every practice operates differently, and it is up to them to make decisions about implementing these services in a way that best suits how they work.



How to use this document

- This document contains interactive elements so that users can easily navigate to preferred areas of interest.
- For the best viewing experience, we recommend opening this document in Microsoft PowerPoint and clicking on ‘Slide Show’; alternatively, you can press Ctrl + Click to follow each link.
- There are several graphics used throughout the document, each providing a summary of:

Information and resources, outlining how to access certain features and what they can be used for

Key benefits for GP practices and/or patients

Top tips for GP practices

Important information that GP practices should be aware of

What your practice needs to do

Actions for your GP practice to make the most of what the NHS App has to offer

Important information that patients should be made aware of

Users can click on this icon to navigate to the contents page

Contents Page

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Click the text to find out more

Features available within the NHS App

- Order repeat prescriptions
- Nominate a preferred pharmacy
- View GP health record securely
- View test results and care plans*
- Book/check/cancel a GP appointment*
- Book your first hospital or clinic appointment
- Manage hospital and other appointments*
- Ask GP for advice/request care using an online form*
- Receive notifications and messages from your GP*
- Linked profiles (proxy access)*
- Register with a GP surgery*
- Book your COVID vaccine
- Get your NHS COVID pass
- Find your NHS number
- Find NHS services near you
- Get health advice via 111 online
- Access the Health A-Z for health advice
- Update data sharing preferences
- Register to take part in health research
- Manage your organ donation decision

** Note: these services may be available to patients depending on their level of access and what has been enabled by the practice*

Useful information

- Patients registering for the NHS App
- Practice benefits of using the NHS App
- Tracking your practice's NHS App data
- Examples of good practice
- Communications and promotional material
- Further resources to support you

Patients registering for the NHS App

- Patients can download and install the NHS App on the Google Play (Android device) or App Store (Apple device). They will then be prompted to sign in with their NHS login. They can also log in through the NHS website.

How it works

Patients can set up an NHS login account by entering their email address and creating a password, after which they will receive an email asking them to log in. They will also be asked to enter their mobile phone number and enter the security code received by SMS.

Patients will need to prove their identity by either:

- sending a photo of their ID (UK/EU driving license of passport or European national ID card) and recording a video of their face while they say 4 random numbers shown to them
- entering registration details they have obtained from their GP practice, e.g. linkage key, practice ID/ODS code and an account ID

It will then ask them for their NHS number. They can either find it here, or they will be prompted to enter their name, date of birth and postcode.

They will need to wait for up to 2 hours for their information to be checked. They will receive an email to confirm their have passed all the checks and be able to use their NHS login to sign in. When logging in, they will be asked for their email and password, and to enter a security code sent to their mobile phone number.

Tips for practices

Get your practice team to download the app and/or set up a test patient to see what it will look like for patients

Watch this video or read the step-by-step guidance on getting patients started with NHS login

Upskill a practice staff member or ask your digital champions / facilitators to attend community events or support patients in the practice with registering and using the NHS App

Use these materials to promote the NHS App on your website, social media, telephone lines and within the practice.

Communicate the benefits to your staff

Ensuring that your patients are fully registered with the NHS App

Patients will need to click 'Connect to their GP surgery' and accept conditions of use for access to the full range of features. If the GP surgery is not connected, they can only use the app to check their symptoms and find out what to do if they need help urgently.

Practice benefits of using the NHS App

- The NHS App provides a simple and secure way for your patients to access a range of NHS services. There are several benefits of using the NHS App for GP practices, many of which lead to increased operational efficiencies and improved experience for both staff and patients.

Reduces text messaging and postage costs by sending messages for free via the NHS App

Reduces administrative requests (such as booking appointments and ordering prescriptions) which frees up time for practice staff to work on higher value tasks

Reduces the volume of phone calls and visits to the practice

Time released to support improvements to other services, including providing a better experience for patients (especially those who still prefer to, or need to visit or use the phone)

Reduces DNAs as patients can cancel appointments more easily

Patients can verify their identity themselves through NHS Login, which saves practice time

★★★ Improved communication between patients and practices, leading to higher levels of satisfaction

Empowers patients to undertake simple tasks without needing to contact their practice

Sharing of information supports increased patient safety, including fewer mistakes, duplications and complaints

Order repeat prescriptions

- Patients can request repeat prescriptions if the medication item is available to order, and they can view their previous orders through the NHS App.

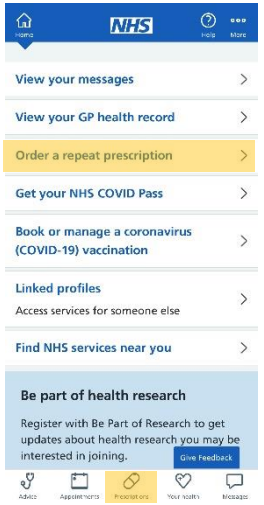
How it works

Patients can access this feature by clicking on the 'Prescriptions' icon or 'Order a repeat prescription' on the 'Home' screen. Once they make a prescription request, it is sent directly to the GP surgery for sign-off and then issued directly to the nominated pharmacy.

Orders can be made at any time, even when the surgery is closed. Once an order is placed, they can view their repeat prescriptions status and history, including when an item was last ordered.

Click here for a step-by-step guide to ordering repeat prescriptions on the NHS App

Watch this short video showing how patients can request prescriptions through the NHS App



Benefits:

- Less administrative workload, e.g. transcribing email or paper requests
- Fewer transcription errors
- Improved audit trails
- Shows when prescriptions are issued and ready for collection, reducing calls or visits to the practice

Tips for practices

- Click here to download digital and print promotional materials to promote the repeat prescriptions feature to your patients
- Consider streamlining the number of ways patients can request repeat prescriptions to avoid confusion – communicate any changes and always include options for the digitally excluded
- Review repeat prescribing protocols to ensure only suitable items are on repeat and available for ordering. You can also add reasons for taking the medication into the directions e.g. 'take one in the morning for blood pressure'.

What your practice can do

Ensure information on your website relating to prescriptions is updated and encourages patients to use the NHS App - here is an example

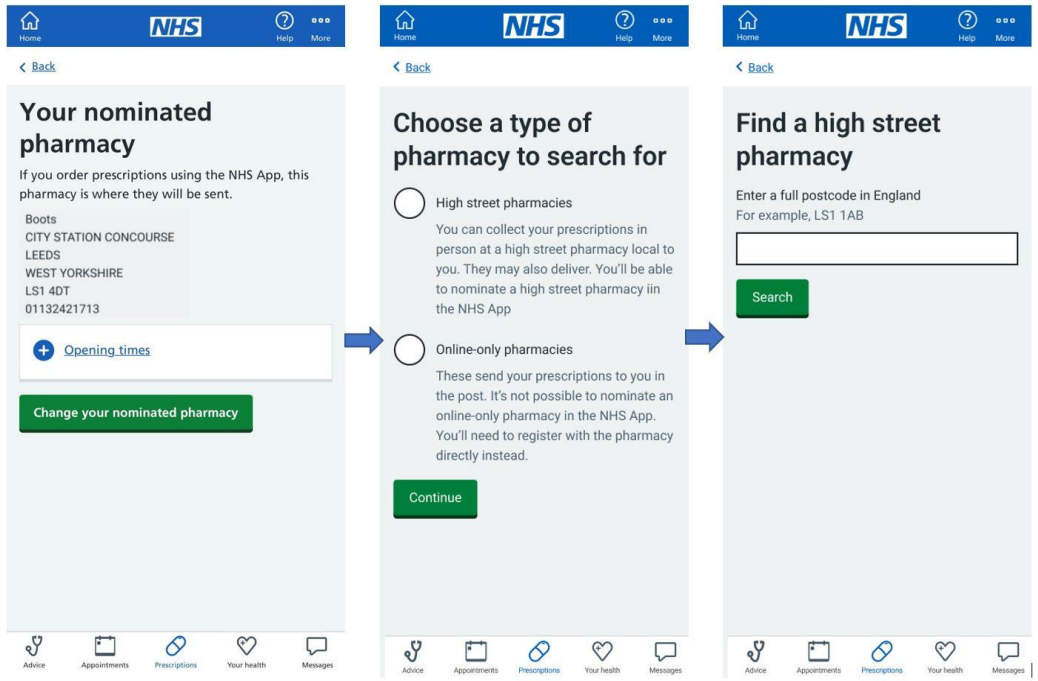
Nominate a preferred pharmacy

- Patients can choose where to collect their prescription after it has been issued by the GP – this is called a nominated pharmacy.

How it works

Patients can access this feature by clicking on the 'Prescriptions' icon, then 'Your nominated pharmacy'

To makes any changes, they can select 'Change your nominated pharmacy'. Click here for further guidance.



Once a patient nominates a pharmacy:

- The nominated pharmacy will receive their prescriptions until they change or remove this nomination
- They can change their nominated pharmacy at any time, although it is best to do so before they order any items. Any outstanding prescriptions already ordered and in transit will be delivered to the pharmacy nominated at the time of the request.
- They will no longer need to collect paper prescriptions from their GP surgery
- They cannot remove a nominated pharmacy in the NHS App and will need to contact their GP surgery to ask them to remove this for them

Benefits:

- Patients can collect their medicine from a pharmacy close to where they live or work.
- Patients may not have to wait as long at the pharmacy – prescriptions can be prepared before they arrive

View GP health record securely

- Patients can view their GP health record through the NHS App, NHS website or other GP online services/apps to make it easier for them to understand and make choices about their health. They can also access someone else's records if authorised to do so.

How it works

Patients can access their records by clicking on 'View your GP health record'. A security message will flag that they will be accessing personal and sensitive data.

Summary Care Record – patients with record access will be able to see information about their medicines and allergies

Detailed Coded Record – patients will need to contact their GP surgery to request access to view coded information, such as test results and immunisations

Full Record – patients will need to contact their GP surgery to request access to view all coded information, free text, documents and consultations

Prospective Record – some GP surgeries may have granted patients full access to information added to their record from a set date onwards

Further details and support can be found here

Prospective (future) record access - changes to 2023/24 GP contract

New entries in the GP record will be visible to all patients aged 16+ and with an online account by 31 October 2023. This will occur unless they have individually decided to opt-out or any exceptions apply. See the GP readiness checklist and bitesize videos or speak to your local commissioner for further support. You can also:

- watch this webinar on safeguarding and reducing harm
- view these case studies to understand the benefits of record access
- view the guidance on updating clinical system configuration settings

What your practice needs to do

Any changes to your workflow should be clearly documented and understood by staff - ensure that any sensitive or third-party information is redacted and know when it may be inappropriate to give a patient access to their record. You can review or remove access at any point. Find out more here.

Check out these resources and FAQs to support your staff with switching on record access

Use these resources to promote record access via the NHS App

Benefits:

Reduces patient queries related to test results or referrals, which saves staff time

Empowers patients to manage their health and care

Reduces costs associated with printing and sending letters, also reducing carbon footprint

View test results and care plans

- Patients can view their test results carried out by their GP surgery if they have been given access to their detailed coded record. They may also be able to view hospital test results if they have access to their personal health record in their NHS App.

How it works

Patients can access this service by either clicking on 'View your GP health record' on the 'Home' screen or tapping the 'Your health' icon at the bottom right and selecting 'GP health record' > 'Test results'.

Test results from the GP surgery or hospital are listed once checked and filed to the record by a GP. Patients will be contacted if there is a need to discuss the results further. They can see previous test results by clicking 'View all test results'.

If their GP surgery or hospital supports this service, patients can manage their personal health record, which stores information about their health and care online. Health professionals can add information to this. They may also be able to view and manage their care plans. This usually includes an action plan, with details about their care, health goals and advice on monitoring their conditions.

Benefits:

Saves admin and clinical team time and reduces the number of phone calls from patients

Supports patients to better understand and manage their own health, particularly those with long-term conditions

Improves communication between health professionals and patients, which leads to improved patient satisfaction

What your practice needs to do

Find out how to enable detailed coded record access here

Encourage patients to check their results on the NHS App and explain the benefits of them viewing their results online

Ensure practice staff are aware that patients will be able to see their results and any comments once they have been reviewed/filed. Sensitive results should be redacted or hidden as they are filed.

Book/check/cancel a GP appointment

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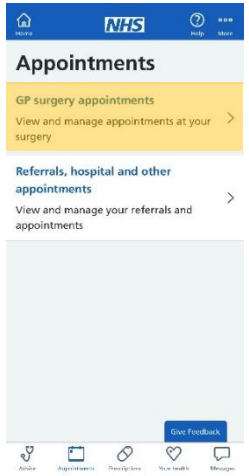
- Patients can book/manage GP appointments by clicking on the 'Appointments' icon. There is a new contractual requirement to make all "directly bookable" appointments available online, as well as by phone/in-person. This includes appointments that do not need to go through a triage process.



What your practice needs to do to set this up

You'll need to enable online appointment booking. The NHS App will show any appointments you have made available for online booking within the **next 16 weeks**, but you can decide how far in advance appointments are available to book.

Click here for guidance on how to make appointments available within your clinical system. Set up a test patient once you've amended the settings to check how it appears in the app.

Click here for some tips on features you can use to support your processes

Naming appointments

- Use simple language when naming appointments so patients know what they are for - avoid clinical terms
- Make the appointment type clear, e.g. phone or online
- Clearly state the purpose of the appointment and the patient group it is for
- Click here for instructions on naming appointments in your clinical system.

Benefits:

- Relieves some of administrative workload by reducing patient phone calls and visits
- Increased operational efficiencies
- ★★★ Higher levels of patient satisfaction
- Improved communication between patients and practices
- Can decrease waiting times by reducing DNAs

Tips for practices

- Try to open up appointments for online booking in a staged approach and gradually extend the number and type of appointments enabled
- See guidance on improving accuracy of appointment recording here
- Let your patients know if you are using this service – you can use these promotional resources or signpost them to further support here

Book your first hospital or clinic appointment

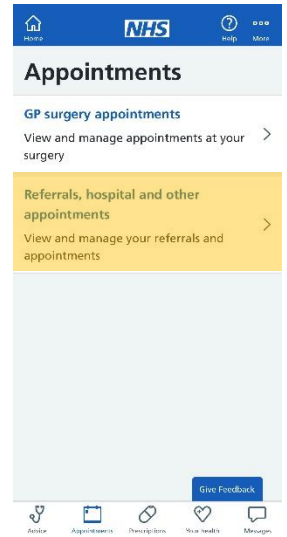
- Patients can use the NHS App to book and manage hospital or clinic appointments if their GP surgery has referred them to a specialist and providing the hospital has enabled the function and is linked to the NHS App. Patients can use the NHS e-Referral Service to choose the place, time and date for their first appointment. Multiple referrals can be managed at any time, as long as they are first appointments.

How it works

Patients can access this service by clicking on 'Appointments' > 'Hospitals and other appointments' > 'Book or cancel your referral appointment' > 'Choose an appointment'. They can then select the clinic they'd like to attend, plus the date/time, from the options available. Once booked, they can 'View details' and cancel their appointment if needed.

Patients can only book hospital appointments in their NHS App if they have been referred through the NHS e-Referral Service

Patients cannot manage any further appointments for an existing referral - this must be done with the specialist they're referred to



Benefits:

- Patients can manage their appointments 24/7 without needing to contact the practice
- Can save practice time and money
- Reduces the likelihood of patients not being aware of their referral or how to progress them
- Reduces DNA rate, avoiding practices having to refer these patients again

What your practice can do

- Talk to your patients about managing their own referral online.
- Download this video to play in your waiting room. A PowerPoint version and YouTube version are also available.
- Update your website and social media pages to inform patients about the NHS App – see templates here
- Continue to support patients who don't have access to online services and for more urgent appointments
- Read this guide to find out how your staff can get the most out of the NHS e-Referral Service

Manage hospital and other appointments

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- This service delivers functionality to allow patients to access and manage secondary care appointments and referrals through the NHS App. It works by surfacing information from Patient Engagement Portals (PEPs) at a Trust into the NHS App. This means that patients will be able to see all their appointments in one place on the NHS App, regardless of the Trust or PEP provider. Find out more here.

How it works

All GP practices associated with a participating acute trust will have the following features activated, enabling their patients to:

- view all referrals and future hospital appointments in one place
- see a single point of contact for each appointment
- access supporting information
- book, change or cancel their hospital appointments

What your practice needs to know

GP practices do not have control over the integration with hospital-based services. Patients can still use the PEP directly if this functionality isn't available within the NHS App.

Patients can check information from hospital appointments they've already attended once this is sent to the GP practice - this will be in the 'document' section of their online GP record

Benefits:

More consistent user experience through one single point of entry to NHS services through the NHS App

Provides patients with more visibility and control over appointment bookings, meaning reduced DNAs

Reduced administrative burden associated with dealing with patient queries about status and waiting times

Patients have improved access to information and services whilst waiting

Patients can access supporting information to help prepare for hospital appointments

★★★ Patients are more informed about their care and waiting times, improving patient experience

Further information

- Guidance and promotional material for trusts
- Example comms pack for acute trusts
- Contact the Wayfinder team with any queries
- FAQs

Ask GP for advice/request care using an online form (online consultation)

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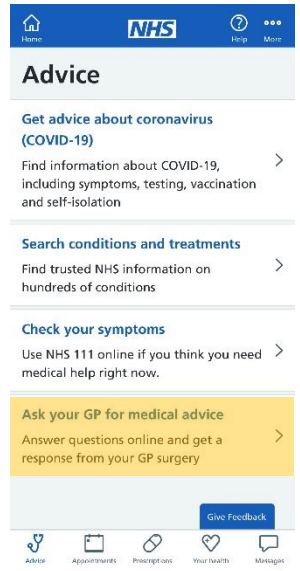
- Patients can submit symptoms or requests for support through the NHS App and receive appropriate triage or referral prior to a consultation.
  Note: this feature is only available for patients registered at practices using an online consultation supplier that has integrated with the NHS App.

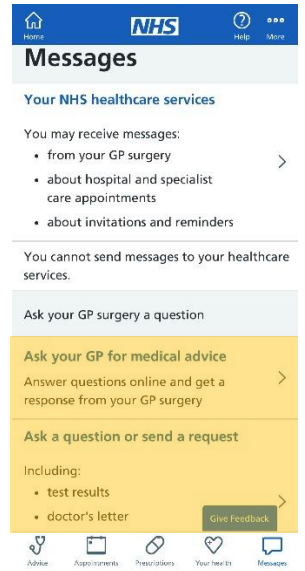
How it works

Patients can access online consultations in the NHS App by clicking on the 'Advice' icon and selecting 'Ask your GP for medical advice'. They can also access this section by clicking the 'Messages' icon.

They can fill in the online form with information about their symptoms, conditions or treatment (or on someone else's behalf). They can also request help with sick notes or GP letters.

Once submitted, a GP or another professional reviews the form. They then decide on the right care for the patient, e.g. email/message with advice or information, telephone or video consultation, or face-to-face appointment. Patients are directed to seek acute care if they hit a red flag.





What your practice can do

Your practice doesn't need to do anything if it already uses an online consultation system that is integrated with the app

Refer to this handbook for tips on making best use of online consultations

Let your patients know that this service is available via the NHS App – view the promotional materials and suggested wording for SMS/websites

Benefits:

More convenient - patients don't need to call or attend the surgery

Same experience for users and GP surgery staff – details entered in the NHS App are seamlessly passed into the online consultation system

For urgent medical help, patients should call the practice before contacting 111 or 111.nhs.uk. For emergencies, they should always be advised to ring 999 or go to their nearest A&E. Patients should NOT use online forms for urgent (same day) problems, unless the practice has a process for this.

Receive notifications and messages from your GP

- Patients in some practices can receive messages securely from their practice via NHS app instead of SMS, providing they have downloaded the app and switched on the notification toggle. This short video shows how patients can turn on notifications in the NHS App.

How it works

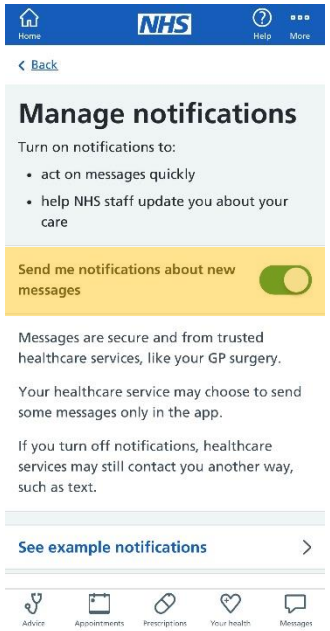
Patients can turn notifications on/off by clicking 'More' on the top right corner > 'Account and settings' > 'Manage notifications' and using the toggle to set their preference

Practice staff member creates a message to the patient in the same way they are used to using their communication supplier of choice, such as Mjog, iPlato, Accurx etc.

Communication supplier automatically attempts to send message to patient using appropriate channel (e.g. NHS App, another app). If the message is not read via initial channel, it will automatically try the next priority channel (e.g. SMS).

Messages received via NHS App are stored in the inbox for that NHS number and, if switched on, patients will receive a notification to let them know they have a new message

Time-critical messages are not sent via NHS App



What your practice needs to do to set this up

Check whether your messaging supplier offers NHS App messaging. If they do, ask them when they will be rolling this out in your practice. If they don't, ask them to contact the app onboarding team at app.onboarding@nhs.net.

Find out how you can implement NHS App messaging by emailing england.nhseimplementation@nhs.net. See this page on the FutureNHS platform for further information.

Update your privacy policy

Plan how you will tell patients about this service – check out these promotional materials and see guidance here

Benefits:

Supports a reduction in SMS costs – you can also explore other ways to be more sustainable with messaging here

More secure than other channels like SMS

Messages can be longer and richer in content, e.g. with branding

Linked profiles (proxy access)

- Patients can request to act as a proxy for children, relatives or someone they care for. This enables them to access health services on behalf of other people using the 'linked profiles' feature.

How it works

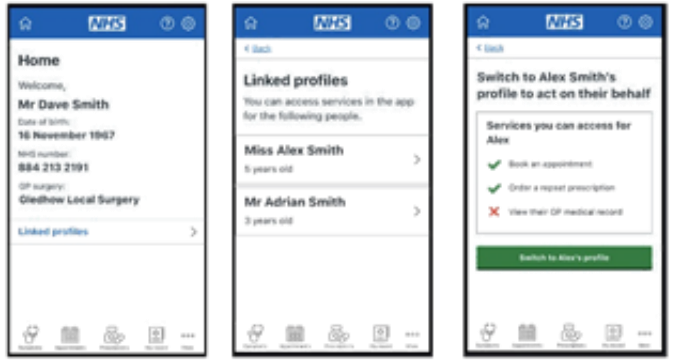
Patients will need to contact their GP surgery and ask them to register them for proxy access. They will then be able to access the linked profile by using the NHS App or by logging in through the NHS website and clicking on 'Linked Profiles'. They can then select the name of the person they want to act for.

A yellow banner at the top will show they are 'Acting on behalf of' someone else once they switch to another person's profile. They can return to their own profile by selecting 'Switch profile'.

Patients can use linked profiles if:
- they and the other person are both registered at the same GP surgery
- their GP surgery has registered them for proxy access
- their GP surgery uses TPP (SystmOnline) or EMIS (Patient Access)

Depending on the level of proxy access the surgery agrees to provide, they may be able to switch profiles to book an appointment, order a repeat prescription, or view some or all of their GP health record.

Carers can order medication by proxy which reduces the time spent processing requests from Medication Administration Record charts - see guidance here.



What your practice needs to do to set this up

You can set up a linked profile for a patient by following the normal process in your clinical system. See the relevant guidance on how to add a proxy user in your clinical system: TPP or EMIS.

Follow the existing guidelines for proxy access and identity verification provided by the RCGP. Patients will need to provide identification so that you can confirm who they are and check they are the correct person to act on the other person's behalf.

Benefits:

- Can help ensure that information held by the surgery is correct, e.g. medication and allergies
- Supports those who may not have access to GP online services
- Reduced calls and/or visits to the GP surgery

Register with a GP surgery

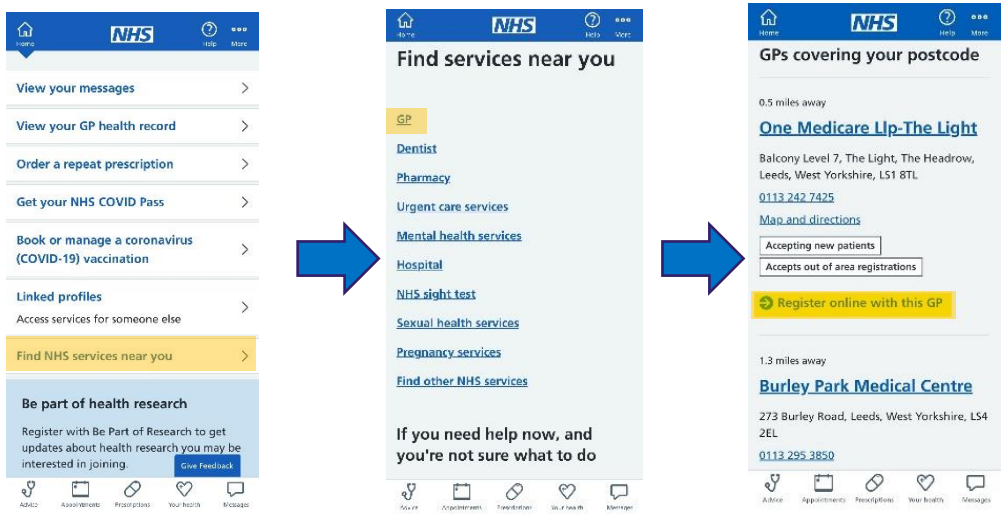
- Patients can find a GP and apply to register themselves or someone they care for via the NHS App, but only if their GP has enrolled with this service. It is simpler, easier and more inclusive for both patients and GP surgeries, whilst also reducing the administrative time required to complete the process.

How it works

Patients can access this service by clicking on the 'Home' icon at the top left and selecting 'Find NHS services near you' > 'GP'. After entering their postcode, they can click to 'Register online with this GP' if that GP surgery has enrolled with the service.

You can view a step-by step guide for patients here. There is also a short demo on how patients can register with a GP via the app.

There is also an updated paper form for patients with limited or no access to the online service which you can download here



Benefits:

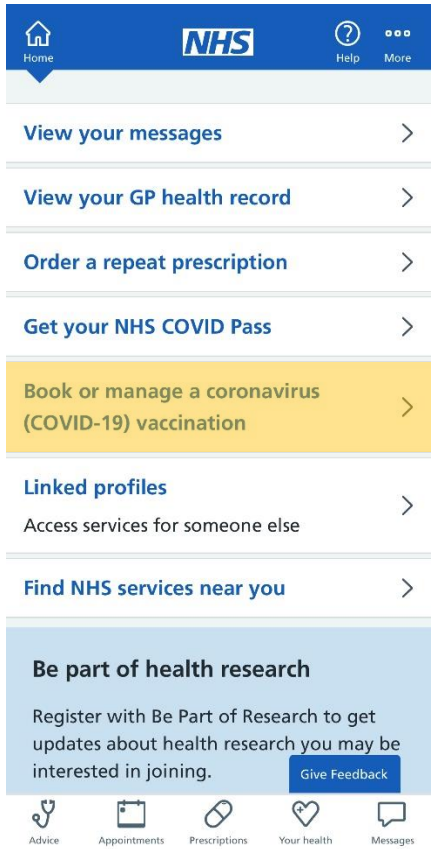
- Can halve the time taken to register a patient – it should only take practice staff **10-15 minutes**
- Standardises information needed to onboard a patient, making it easier to read and in the correct format
- Validates answers provided by the patient to improve the accuracy of registration information
- Free for patients and GP surgeries – your surgery could save up to **£2,156 a year**
- Can use NHS login, which is less work for your surgery as patients will already have verified their identity
- Follows accessibility guidelines and regulations which minimises support needed from staff

What your practice needs to do to set this up

- Your surgery will need to enrol with the service to offer online registration to patients through the NHS App - click here to find out how to self-enrol
- This webinar explains how practices can set up this service and there is also a resource hub for further details
- Once enrolled, you can use these materials to promote the service

Book your COVID vaccine

- The coronavirus vaccination booking service accepts appointment bookings from people who have received a notification from the NHS, through the national service by text or letter, asking them to book. Those who have not received a notification may also be eligible to book an appointment. Eligible patients can use this service if they are registered with a GP surgery in England.



How it works

When the service is available, patients can access this feature by clicking on the 'Home' icon at the top left and selecting 'Book or manage a coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccination'

Patients can:
- check if they need a COVID-19 vaccine
- book a COVID-19 vaccine
- check their existing appointment details
- change their appointment
- cancel their appointment

The service will check if a patient needs a vaccine before they book. They will need their booking reference number to change or cancel an appointment.

Patients can call 119 to book over the phone if they are not able to book online. They can also speak to a translator if needed.

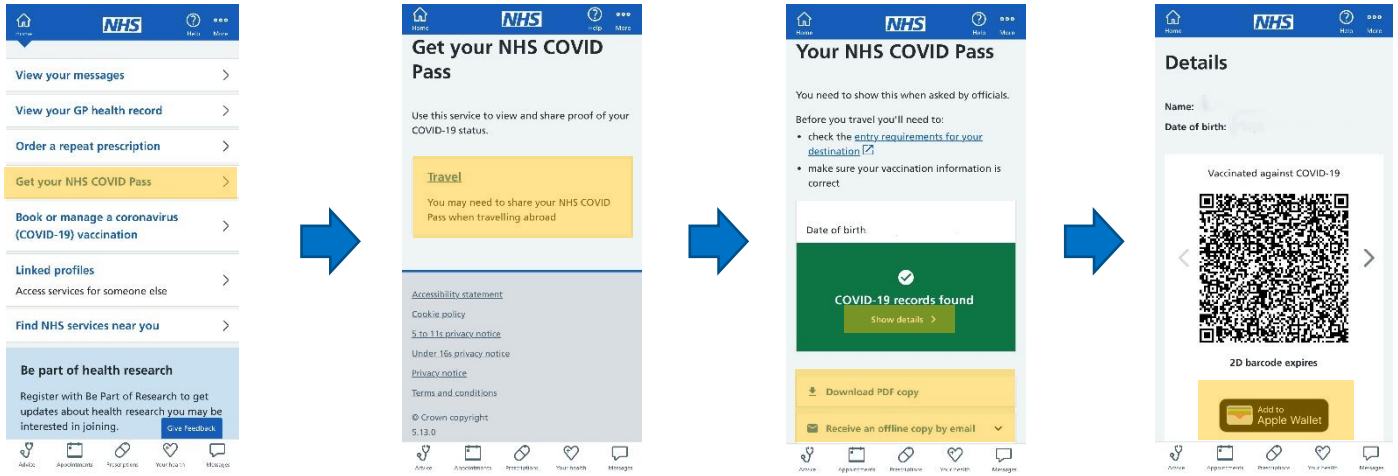
Get your NHS COVID pass

- Patients can use the NHS App to view and share proof of their COVID-19 vaccination status when travelling abroad, if applicable. Those aged 5+ can get an NHS COVID pass if they have one of the following: at least 1 dose of a COVID-19 vaccine recognised in the UK or a positive NHS PCR test within the last 180 days. The pass is valid for 180 days from the day a patient applies for it. Find out more here.

How it works

Patients can access this service by clicking on 'Get your NHS COVID Pass' on the Home screen > 'Travel'. Patients are reminded to check the entry requirements of their destination. A green box indicates if a record has been found.

After selecting 'Show details', a **2D barcode** is generated. The pass can be added to a smartphone wallet, making it easier to display. Patients can also download the pass as a **PDF** or have it sent to them by **email**. Each digital code is valid for 30 days, after which they need to log in and follow the same process again to get a new one.



Other ways patients can get a COVID Pass

Online – patients aged 12+ can log in through the NHS website to view and download their pass

Email – patients can request a pass sent by email for themselves or a child without having to create an NHS login. They must have a mobile phone number or email address on their GP record.

Other formats – patients can ask for a letter to be sent by post if they:

- need Braille, audio, big print
- need information in another language
- have no digital access

Here's a video about the COVID-19 vaccination letter in British Sign Language

Patients with issues getting their pass may need the GP surgery to check their vaccination details are up to date. Find out more here.

Find your NHS number

- Anyone registered with a GP in England has an NHS number. An NHS number is a unique 10-digit number which helps healthcare staff identify people correctly and match their details to their health records. It links all their records together, creating a fuller, more accurate health history.

How it works

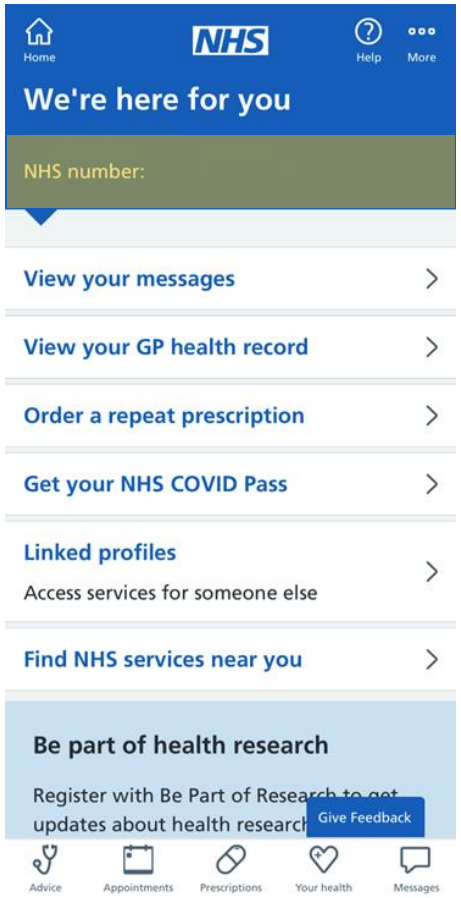
Once logged into the NHS App, patients can view their NHS number at the top of the 'Home' page

Other ways patients can find their NHS number

Documents and letters – prescriptions, test results, hospital referral letters, appointment letters

Online – patients can enter their name, date of birth and postcode using the Find your NHS number service online. Their NHS number will then be sent by text message, email or letter to the contact details held by their GP.

GP surgery – patients can call or visit their surgery with proof of identity



Benefits:

Makes it easier for people to complete forms and access services, e.g. appointment booking, COVID-19 vaccinations

Fewer requests from patients which reduces workload for GP practice staff

Carbon neutral service due to fewer journeys to the practice and less notifications sent by letter

Supports joined-up healthcare across the various services

Find NHS services near you

- Patients can use the NHS App to view a list of NHS services near them, such as local GP surgeries, dentists, pharmacies and more.

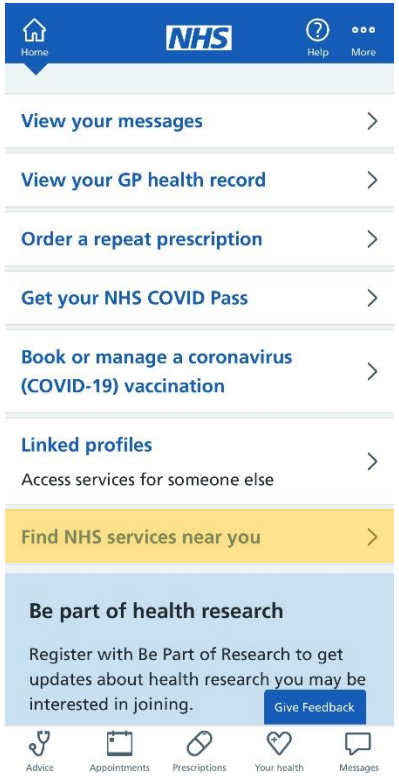
How it works

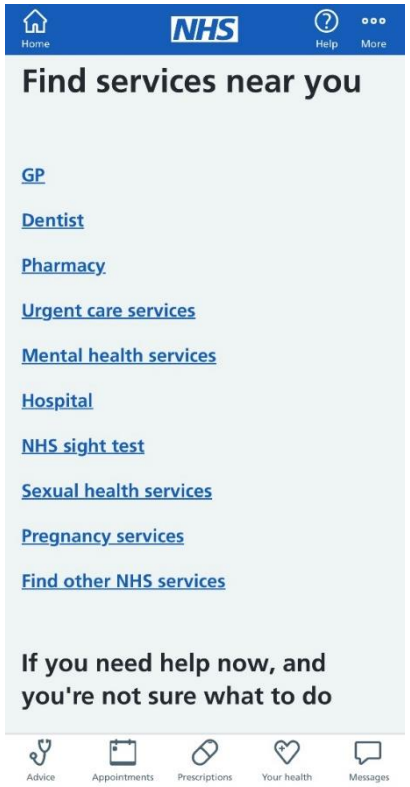
Patients can access this feature by clicking on the 'Home' icon at the top left and selecting 'Find NHS services near you'

They will then be able to view a list of NHS services and asked to enter their postcode to find these services near them

As well as this, within each section there is some great advice and information, like how to register with a GP and a link to mental health helplines and support

If patients need help immediately or are not sure what to do, they can go to 111.nhs.uk or call 111





Benefits:

Patients have easy access to accurate service information

Increased awareness of available services, directing patients to the right service first time

Shift to lower acuity services where appropriate, reducing GP surgery demand

★★★ Improved patient experience

Patients with a medical emergency should always be advised to ring 999 or go to A&E instead.

Get health advice via 111 online

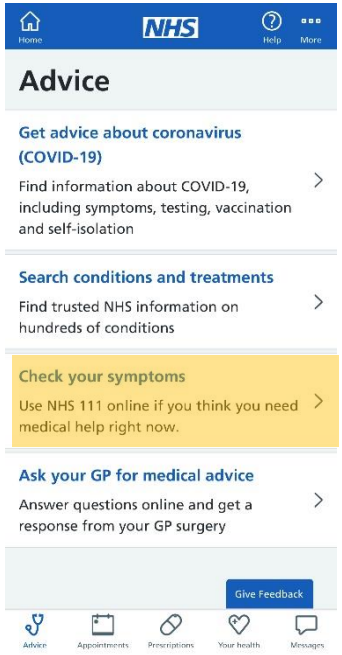
digital first London Region NHS

- Patients can use this digital triage service to answer questions and get instant advice or medical help near them. It is available 24/7 and is for those aged 5+. It can direct patients to the best place to get help if they cannot contact their GP during the day, or if their GP is closed (out-of-hours).

How it works

Patients can access this feature by clicking on the 'Advice' icon and then 'Check your symptoms'. After entering their age, sex, postcode and main symptom, they are then asked a series of questions about their health problem. They can:

- be signposted to the right healthcare in their area, such as whether they need to see a GP, dentist, consult with a pharmacist or seek urgent care
- get advice on self-care to manage their condition at home
- get advice on what to do if their condition gets worse
- be referred to their local 111 service for a call back from a nurse, doctor or other trained health professional if they need it
- request a limited emergency supply of regularly prescribed medicine they've run out of



111 online cannot:

- Issue fit notes – patients need to contact their GP
- Make or cancel appointments in other parts of the NHS

Patients can call 111 to speak to someone if they:

- have urgent care needs that require help immediately or are not sure what to do
- need medical advice for a child under five

Benefits:

- Makes it easier for patients to get the treatment they need in the right place
- Empowers people to manage their own health and care
- Manages demand on NHS 111 telephone service

Patients with a medical emergency should always be advised to ring 999 or go to A&E instead.

Access the Health A-Z for health advice

- The NHS App enables patients to check their symptoms using the Health A-Z on the NHS website. This feature provides information and advice about a wide range of health conditions, symptoms and treatments.

How it works

Patients can access this feature by clicking on the 'Advice' icon at the bottom left and selecting 'Search conditions and treatments'

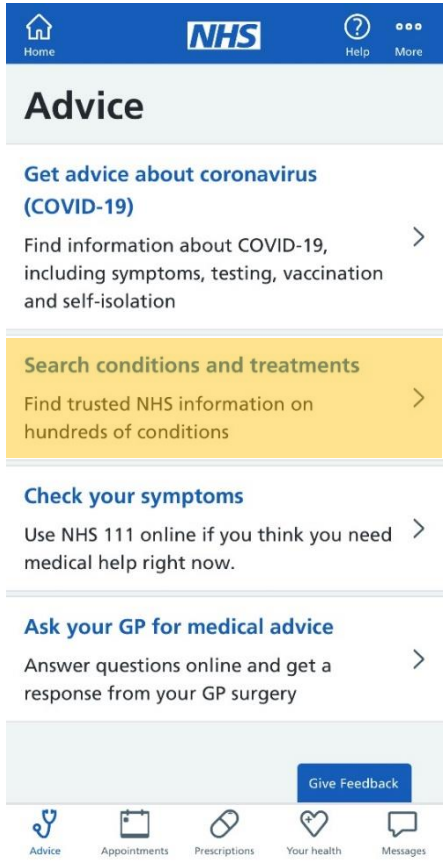
It is a useful resource to find out about a current diagnosis and to get information on your treatment

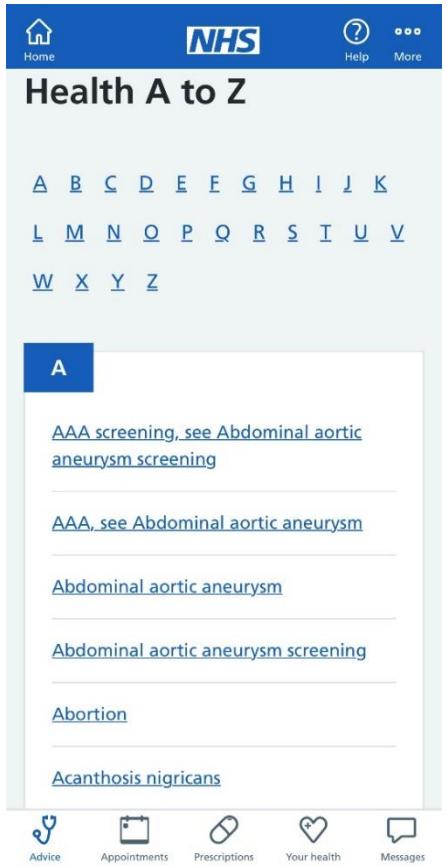
It can also help patients to self-diagnose non-serious medical conditions

Benefits:

Empowers patients to manage their own health, directing them to high quality, trusted information

Can reduce the number of calls/visits to the practice as well as potentially avoidable appointments, releasing time for practice staff to deal with more urgent cases





Patients with a medical emergency should always be advised to ring 999 or go to A&E instead.

Update data sharing preferences

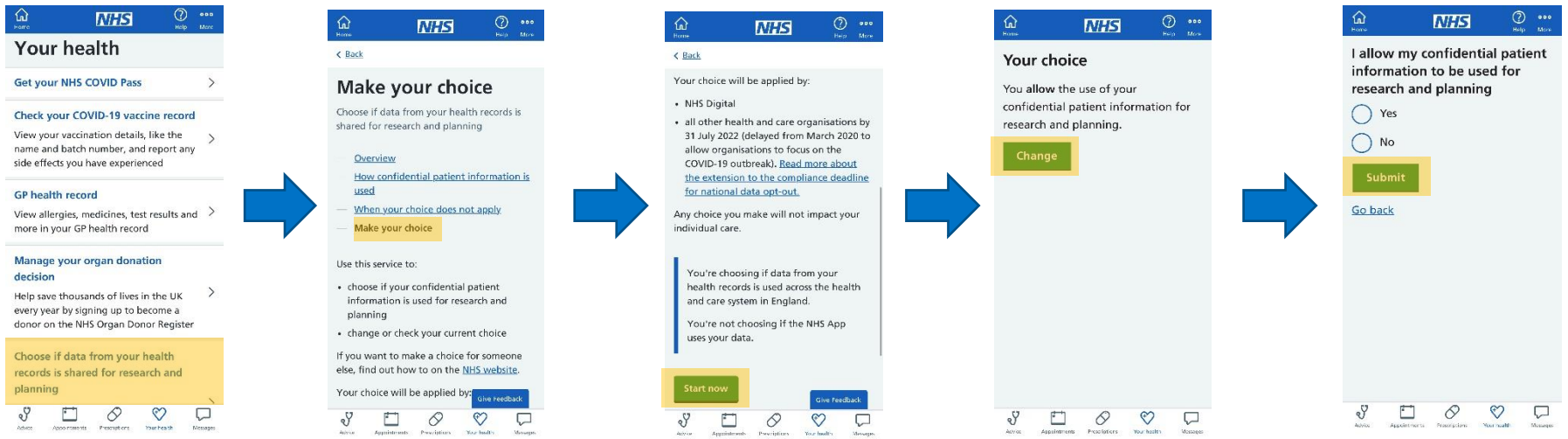
- Health records contain confidential patient information, which can be used to help the NHS with research and planning. Find out more here. Patients can opt out if they do not want their data to be used in this way. Their confidential patient information will still be used for their individual care.

How it works

Patients can view or change their current preference at any time by clicking on the 'Your health' icon at the bottom and selecting 'Choose if data from your health records is shared for research and planning' > 'Make your choice' > 'Start now'. They can view their preference and/or update their choice by clicking 'Submit'.

Patients do not need to do anything if they are happy with their confidential patient information being used for research and planning.

Patients **cannot** manage data sharing preferences on behalf of someone else using the NHS App or NHS website, but they can make a choice for someone else (e.g. children under the age of 13 or on behalf of another adult if power of attorney) by email or post. Click here for more details.



Benefits:

Quicker and easier way for patients to amend their data sharing preferences

Provides further information, enabling patients to make an informed decision

Helps build the public's trust and confidence in the use of their data

Register to take part in health research

- The "Be Part of Research" online service, which encourages members of the public to get involved in health research, is available through the NHS App. Patients can search for trials and studies taking place for particular health conditions they are interested in – or sign up as a healthy volunteer.

How it works

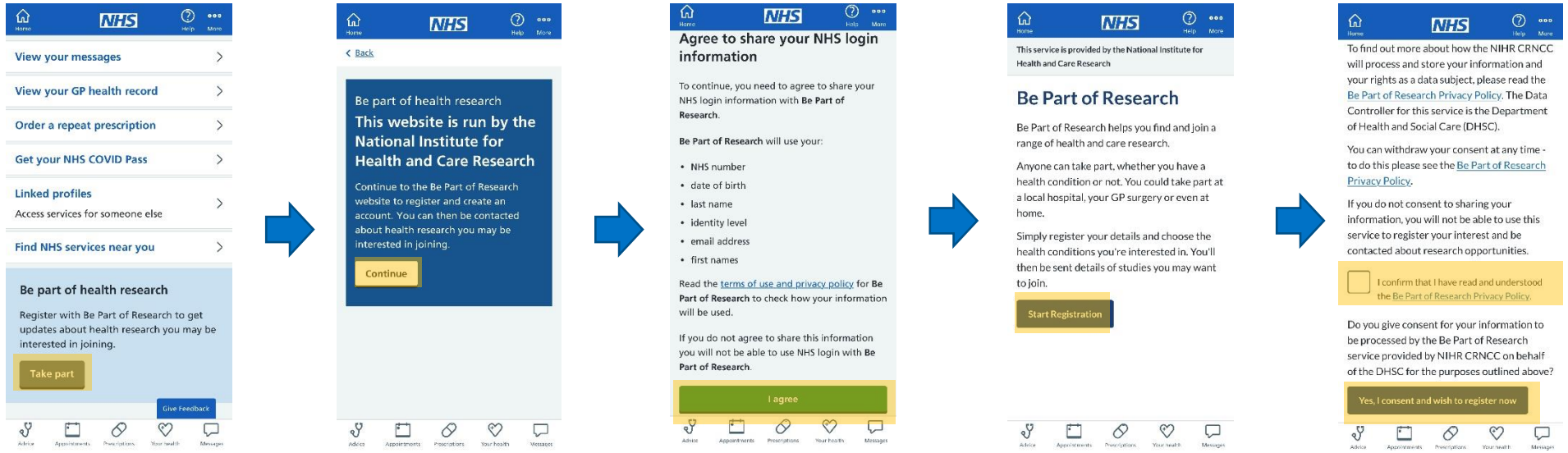
Patients can access this service by clicking on 'Take part' in the blue banner at the bottom of the Home screen and clicking 'Continue'. Patients are asked to agree to share their NHS login information with the service and can then begin the registration process by consenting for their information to be processed.

They are then matched to suitable studies in the UK based on the areas of interest they select, as well as age, ethnic group, sex, location and condition. This can range from lifestyle questionnaires to clinical trials taking place at local hospitals, GP practices or at home.

Benefits:

Helps researchers quickly find suitable participants

Can advance care and treatment for disease and improve the quality of care provided by the NHS



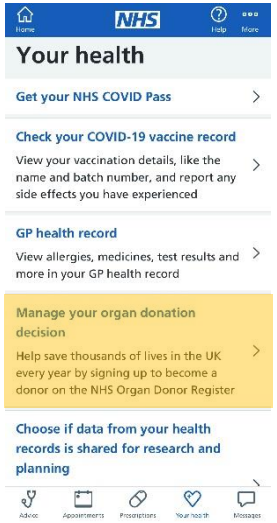
Manage your organ donation decision

- Patients can register their decision to be an organ donor on the NHS App. The law around organ donation in England has recently changed, with the introduction of an 'opt-out system'. This means that all adults are now considered to have agreed to be an organ donor when they die unless they specifically record a decision not to donate. Find out more about organ donation law here.

How it works

Patients can access this service by clicking on 'Your health' > 'Manage your organ donation decision'. They will be able to see their current decision, and confirm or change this, if it has been registered previously. If a decision has not yet been registered, they will be able to do so by following the on-screen instructions.

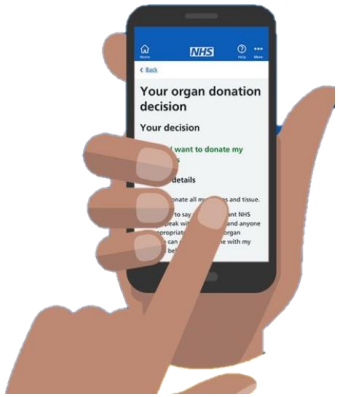
Patients can choose whether or not to donate their organs and select which organs they would be willing to donate. They can amend their decision at any time. If organ donation is a possibility, their families will still be consulted before this goes ahead. Find out more here.



Benefits:

Helps NHS specialist nurses to quickly understand people's wishes, which can ultimately save lives

Helps a patient's family to understand their wishes so they can support their decision



Tracking your practice's NHS App data

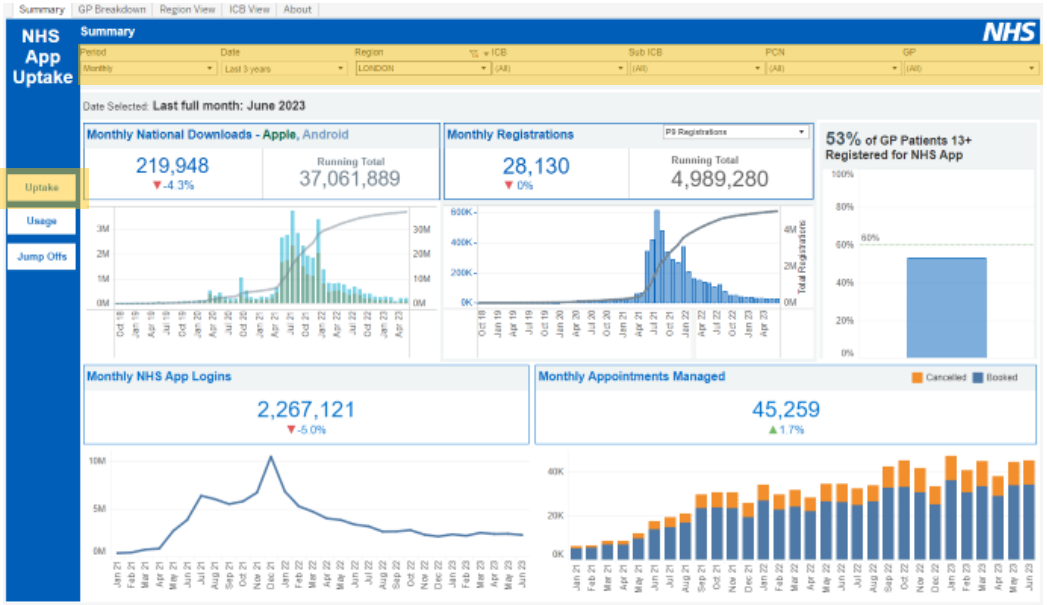
- Practices can see how many of their patients have downloaded the NHS App and which features they are using by accessing the NHS App Reporting Dashboard.

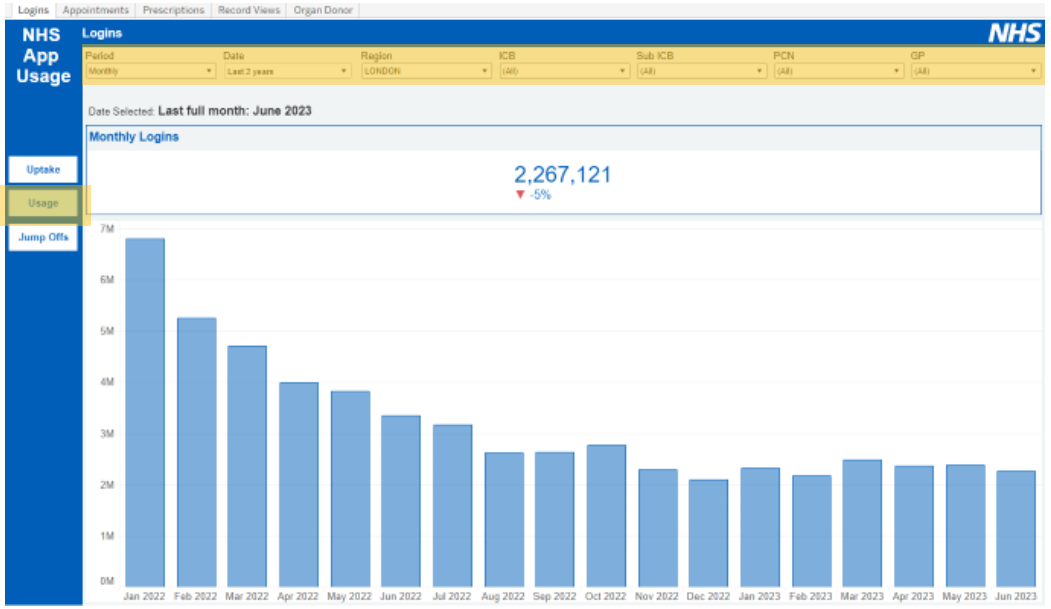
What your practice needs to do to access this platform

You will need an OKTA account to access the dashboard. This is available to anyone with an NHS email address. You can register for an OKTA account by clicking here.

How it works

- You can filter the data by time period (monthly/weekly), date and area, which can help to monitor your various promotion ideas
- Click on 'Uptake' to view the number of downloads and registrations. The tabs provide a breakdown by region, ICB and GP.
- Click on 'Usage' to view activity such as logins, appointments booked/cancelled, repeat prescriptions ordered and records viewed





Examples of good practice

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Case studies

- NHS App Innovation Projects – examples of local initiatives and materials produced to improve awareness of the NHS App
- Reducing calls to order repeat prescriptions - Southlands Medical Group, North East & North Cumbria
- Relieving pressure on primary care services – Solihull PCN
- Making better use of digital tools - PHGH Doctors, Barnet
- Encouraging usage of the NHS App - Boundary House Practice, Enfield
- Increasing NHS App uptake amongst young people – Somerset ICB
- NHS App animated videos in community languages - North East London

Tips for practices

- Brief your staff and encourage them to download/use the NHS App to help them to confidently promote it
- Discuss the NHS App during practice meetings
- Configure your systems where appropriate
- Update your practice website
- Ask clinicians to promote the app after a consultation, e.g. tell patients they can use it to view their results
- Signpost patients to help and support online
- Ask reception and admin to promote, check and verify numbers and emails at every contact
- Have a tablet/other device in reception to share information with patients and to support those who may not have confidence or digital access
- Promote the app on the practice website and social media
- Promote the app on the telephone as an alternative while patients wait
- Tell patients that order a repeat prescription that they can do this via the app next time

Communications and promotional material

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NHS

Resources

- Promotional videos (embedded on the right), which can be added to your website, social media or presentations
- NHS App promotional toolkit
- General NHS App promotional materials – including leaflets, posters, images and message templates
- Promotional films for waiting room screens, social media and websites
- Promotional videos translated in other languages
- Promotional material for specific NHS App services
- Resources aimed at increasing uptake of the NHS App – North East London Primary Care Portal
- Support resources for volunteers, including easy read guides, translated guides and videos explaining how to register in other languages – Sussex ICS
- Bitesize videos on how to use certain features
- Example stakeholder toolkit - including social media copy and FAQs
- Step-by-step guides – patient leaflets

Further resources to support you

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Clinical system guidance

- EMIS step-by-step guide - Offering online appointment booking
- TPP step-by-step guide - Offering online appointment booking
- Appointment configuration
- Using a test patient
- EMIS and TPP configuration for enabling online record access
- Guidance on secure messaging: EMIS & TPP
- How to add a proxy user: EMIS & TPP

Measuring improvement

- Digital Journey Planner - Quality Improvement Action Plan
- Somerset – Blueprint for increasing NHS App uptake and utilisation

Translated materials

- Leaflet showing how to register with the NHS App: French, Italian and Portuguese
- NHS App Repeat Prescription Waiting Room Screens (Translated)
- NHS App explainer videos: Bengali, Romanian and Somali
- Videos to explain the NHS App in key community languages
- NHS App campaign poster: Arabic, Bengali, Gujarati, Polish, Punjabi, Romanian and Urdu

Further support and FAQs

- NHS App help and support
- Example FAQs for practice staff and digital champions

Offering Online Appointment Booking – EMIS (1)

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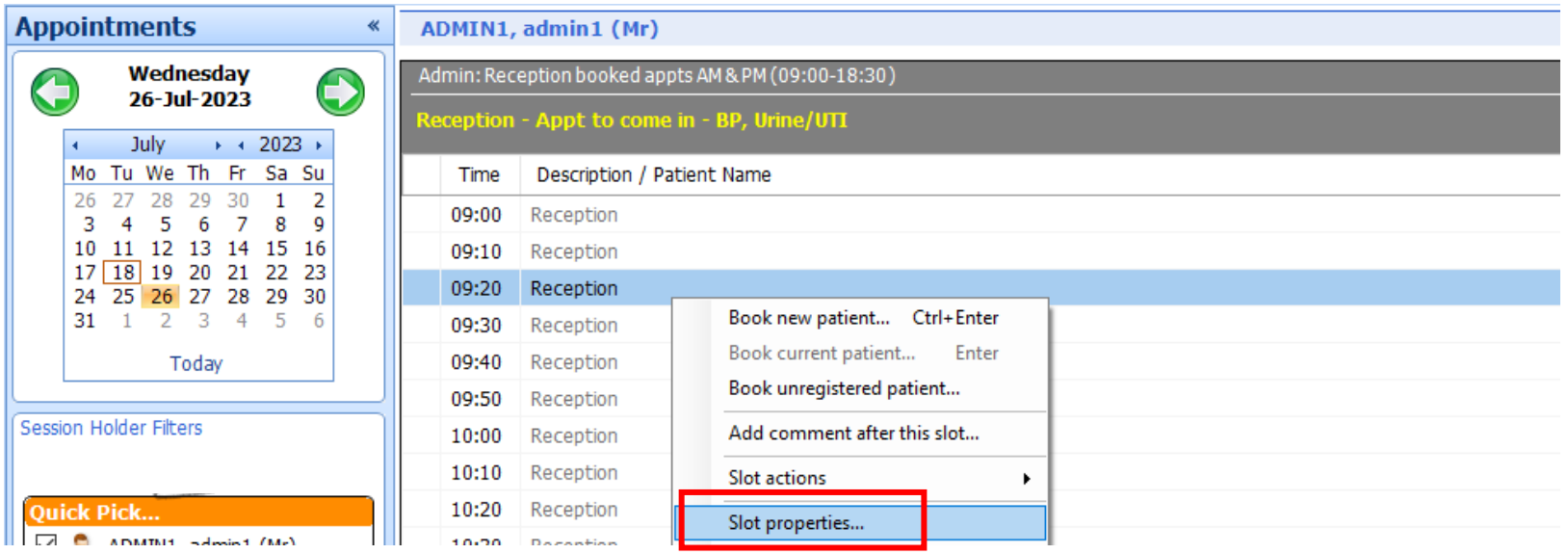
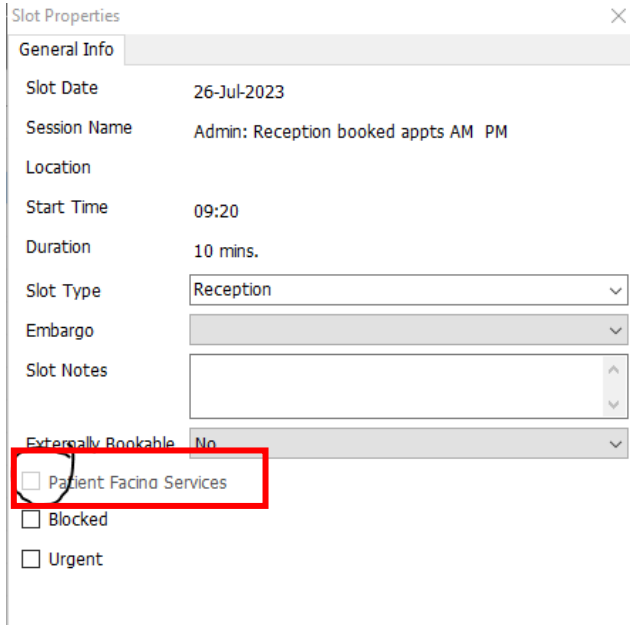
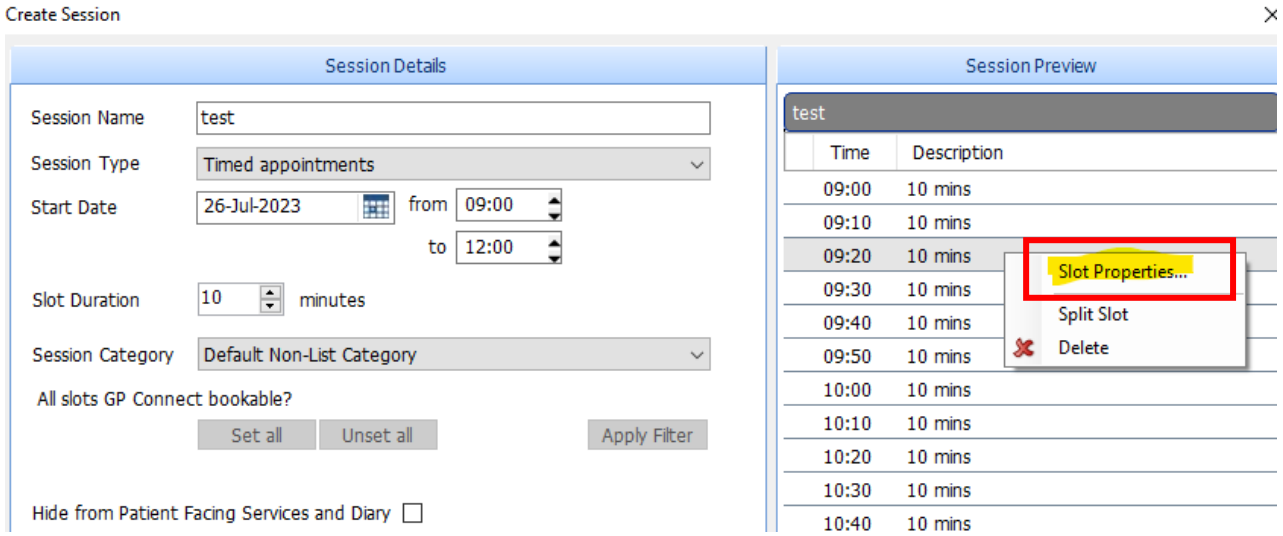
EMIS: instructions to make appointments bookable online

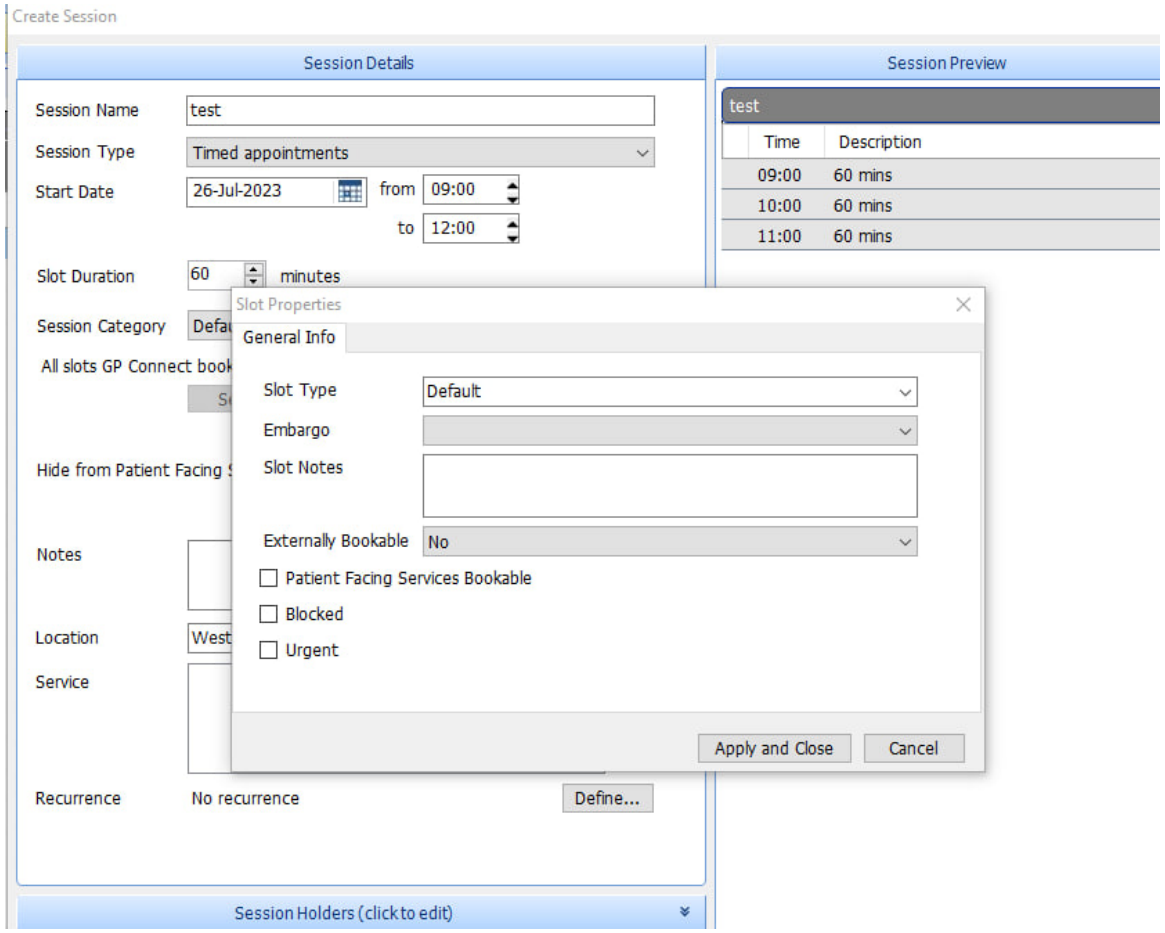
1. Check the settings in the Appointment Book tab.
2. Highlight the slots you want to make bookable online, by clicking and or dragging, or using ctrl-click.
3. Right click, select 'Slot Properties', and make sure the Patient Facing Services check box is ticked.
4. Make sure the appointments you have made bookable online match what is bookable over the phone, particularly for general appointments and daily emergency appointments.



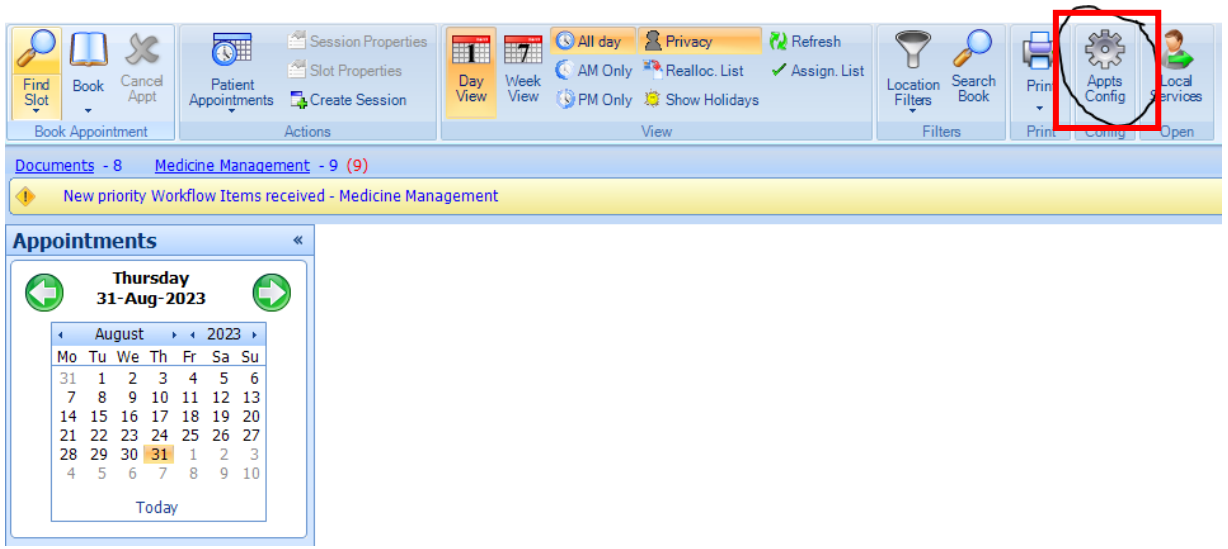


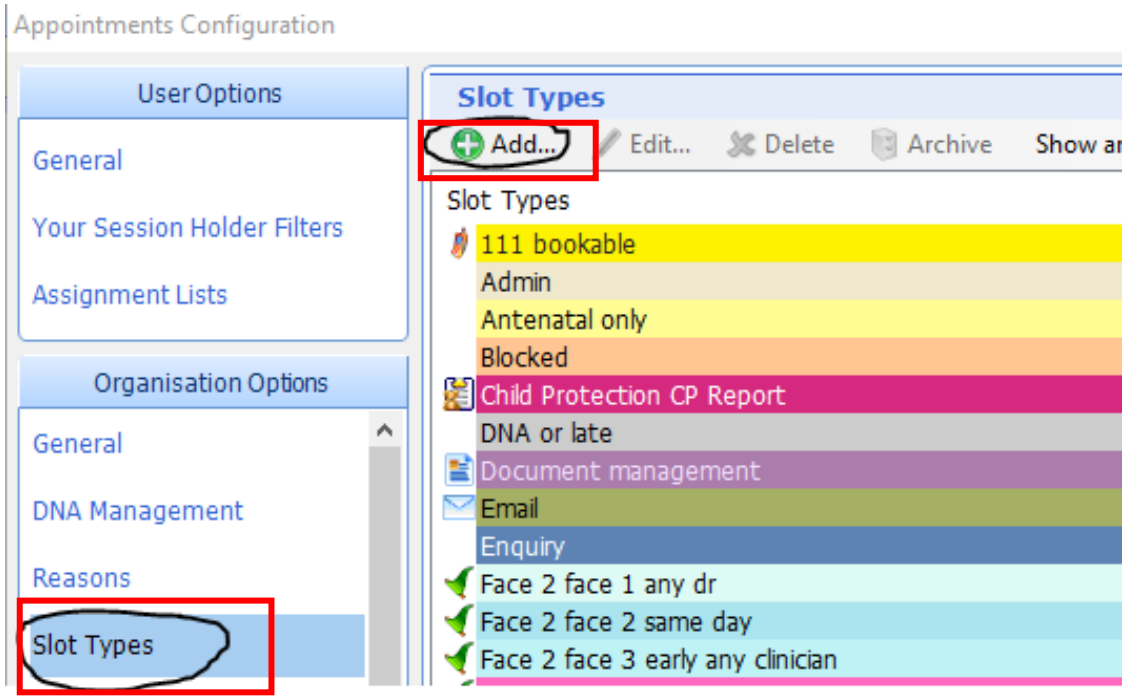
Offering Online Appointment Booking – EMIS (2)





Offering Online Appointment Booking – EMIS (3)



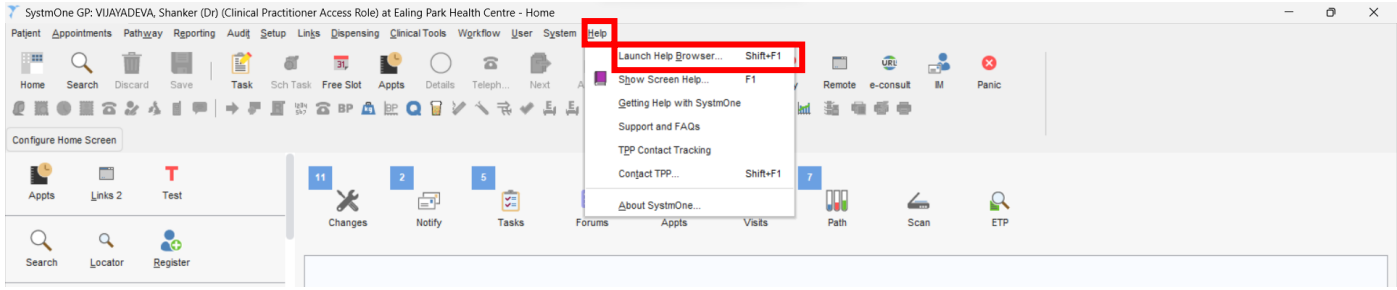


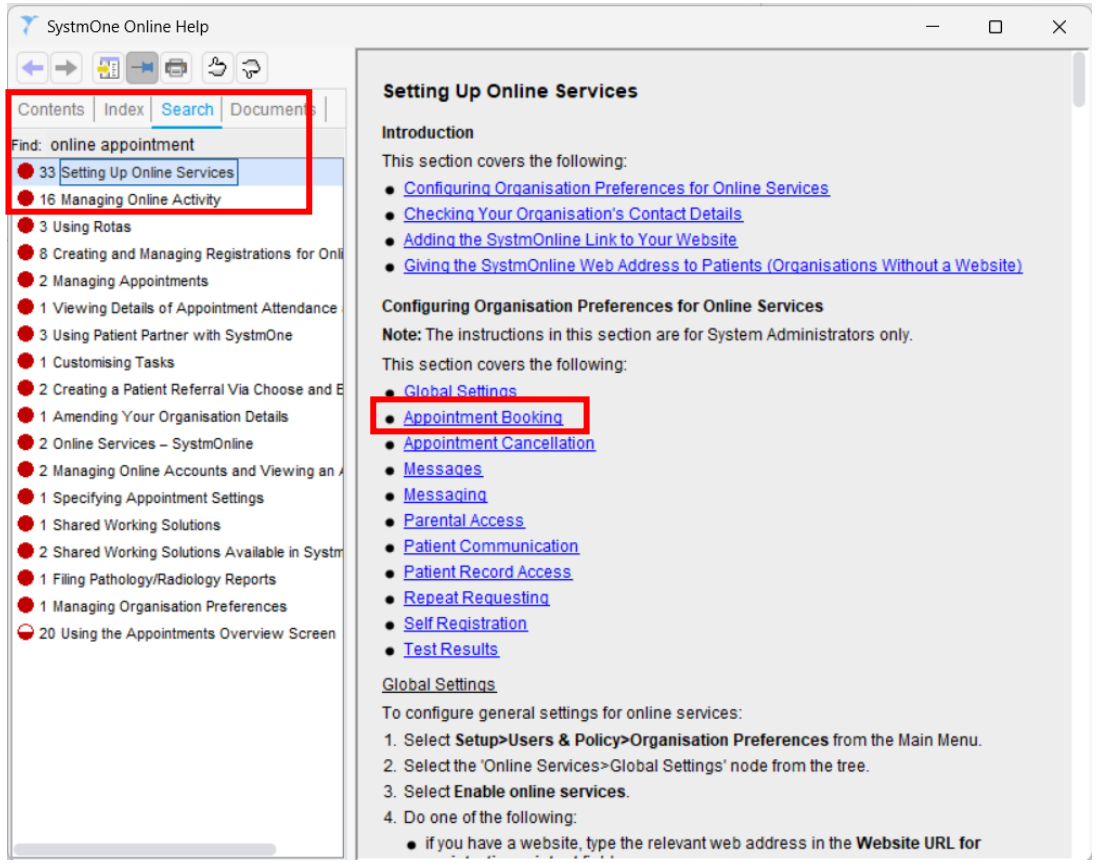
- To name appointments slots, go to the Appointments page and click on ‘Appts configuration’.
- Click on ‘Slot Types’ > select ‘Add’

Offering Online Appointment Booking - SystmOne (1)

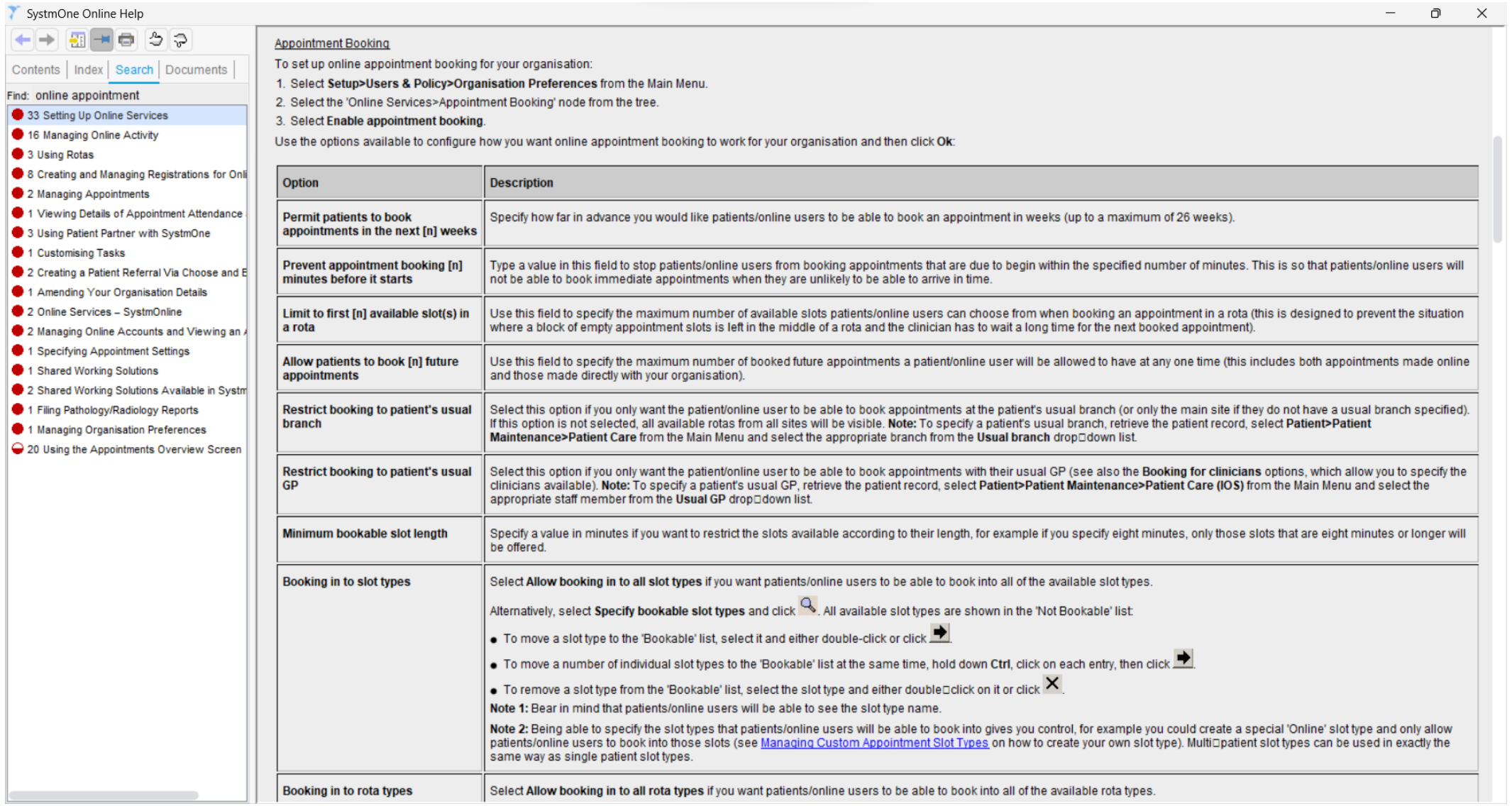
Access guidance from within SystmOne:

- Select 'Help' --> 'Launch Help Browser'
- Search for 'online appointment''
- Select '33 Setting up Online Services'
- Click on 'Appointment Booking'





Offering Online Appointment Booking – SystmOne (2)



Appointment Booking

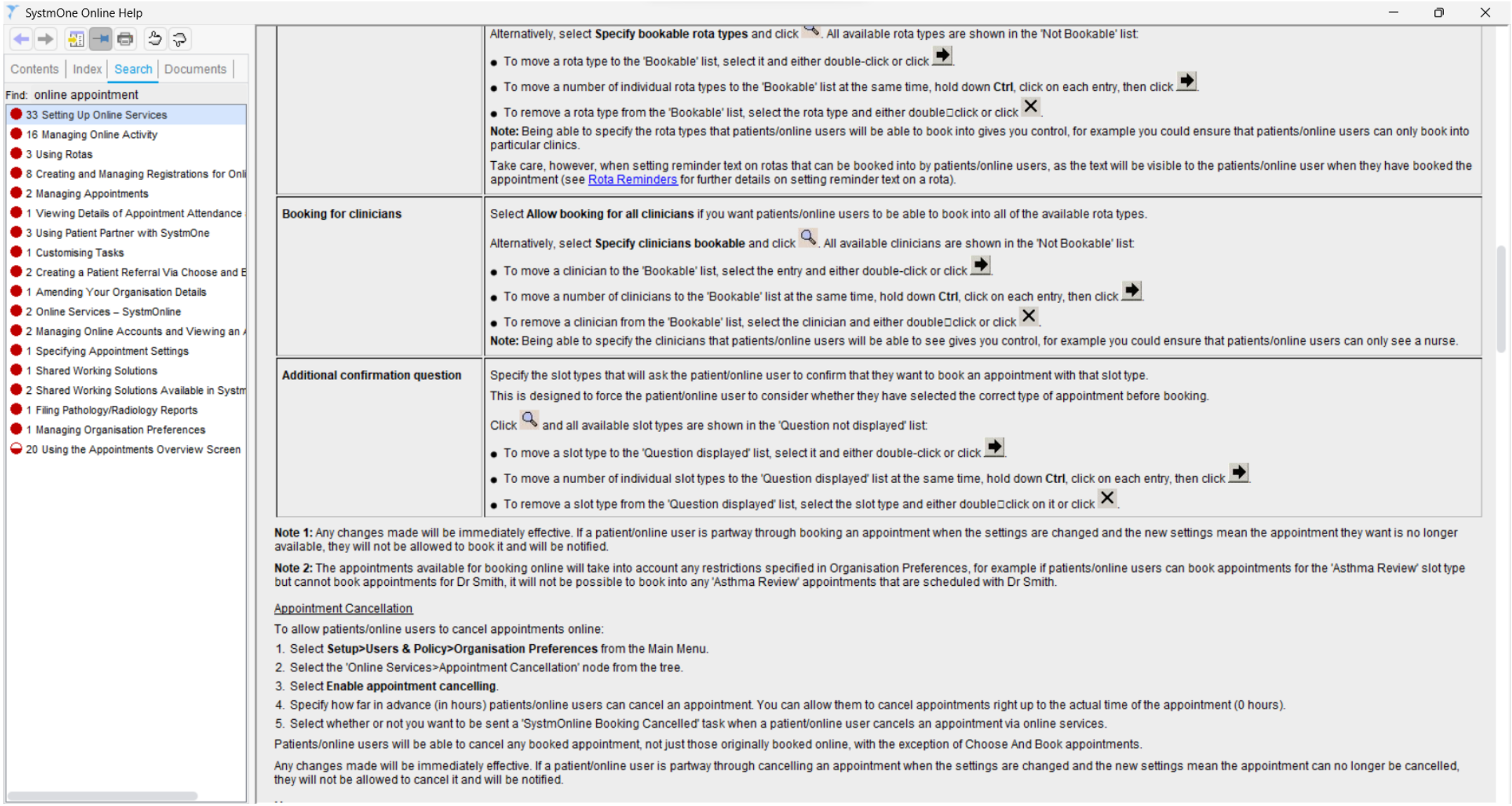
To set up online appointment booking for your organisation:

1. Select **Setup>Users & Policy>Organisation Preferences** from the Main Menu.
2. Select the 'Online Services>Appointment Booking' node from the tree.
3. Select **Enable appointment booking**.

Use the options available to configure how you want online appointment booking to work for your organisation and then click **Ok**:

Option	Description
Permit patients to book appointments in the next [n] weeks	Specify how far in advance you would like patients/online users to be able to book an appointment in weeks (up to a maximum of 26 weeks).
Prevent appointment booking [n] minutes before it starts	Type a value in this field to stop patients/online users from booking appointments that are due to begin within the specified number of minutes. This is so that patients/online users will not be able to book immediate appointments when they are unlikely to be able to arrive in time.
Limit to first [n] available slot(s) in a rota	Use this field to specify the maximum number of available slots patients/online users can choose from when booking an appointment in a rota (this is designed to prevent the situation where a block of empty appointment slots is left in the middle of a rota and the clinician has to wait a long time for the next booked appointment).
Allow patients to book [n] future appointments	Use this field to specify the maximum number of booked future appointments a patient/online user will be allowed to have at any one time (this includes both appointments made online and those made directly with your organisation).
Restrict booking to patient's usual branch	Select this option if you only want the patient/online user to be able to book appointments at the patient's usual branch (or only the main site if they do not have a usual branch specified). If this option is not selected, all available rotas from all sites will be visible. **Note:** To specify a patient's usual branch, retrieve the patient record, select **Patient>Patient Maintenance>Patient Care** from the Main Menu and select the appropriate branch from the **Usual branch** drop□down list.
Restrict booking to patient's usual GP	Select this option if you only want the patient/online user to be able to book appointments with their usual GP (see also the **Booking for clinicians** options, which allow you to specify the clinicians available). **Note:** To specify a patient's usual GP, retrieve the patient record, select **Patient>Patient Maintenance>Patient Care (IOS)** from the Main Menu and select the appropriate staff member from the **Usual GP** drop□down list.
Minimum bookable slot length	Specify a value in minutes if you want to restrict the slots available according to their length, for example if you specify eight minutes, only those slots that are eight minutes or longer will be offered.
Booking in to slot types	Select **Allow booking in to all slot types** if you want patients/online users to be able to book into all of the available slot types. Alternatively, select **Specify bookable slot types** and click 🔍. All available slot types are shown in the 'Not Bookable' list: • To move a slot type to the 'Bookable' list, select it and either double-click or click ➡. • To move a number of individual slot types to the 'Bookable' list at the same time, hold down **Ctrl**, click on each entry, then click ➡. • To remove a slot type from the 'Bookable' list, select the slot type and either double□click on it or click ✕. **Note 1:** Bear in mind that patients/online users will be able to see the slot type name. **Note 2:** Being able to specify the slot types that patients/online users will be able to book into gives you control, for example you could create a special 'Online' slot type and only allow patients/online users to book into those slots (see Managing Custom Appointment Slot Types on how to create your own slot type). Multi□patient slot types can be used in exactly the same way as single patient slot types.
Booking in to rota types	Select **Allow booking in to all rota types** if you want patients/online users to be able to book into all of the available rota types.

Offering Online Appointment Booking – SystmOne (3)



Alternatively, select **Specify bookable rota types** and click . All available rota types are shown in the 'Not Bookable' list:

- To move a rota type to the 'Bookable' list, select it and either double-click or click .
- To move a number of individual rota types to the 'Bookable' list at the same time, hold down **Ctrl**, click on each entry, then click .
- To remove a rota type from the 'Bookable' list, select the rota type and either double□click or click .

Note: Being able to specify the rota types that patients/online users will be able to book into gives you control, for example you could ensure that patients/online users can only book into particular clinics.

Take care, however, when setting reminder text on rotas that can be booked into by patients/online users, as the text will be visible to the patients/online user when they have booked the appointment (see Rota Reminders for further details on setting reminder text on a rota).

Booking for clinicians

Select **Allow booking for all clinicians** if you want patients/online users to be able to book into all of the available rota types.

Alternatively, select **Specify clinicians bookable** and click . All available clinicians are shown in the 'Not Bookable' list:

- To move a clinician to the 'Bookable' list, select the entry and either double-click or click .
- To move a number of clinicians to the 'Bookable' list at the same time, hold down **Ctrl**, click on each entry, then click .
- To remove a clinician from the 'Bookable' list, select the clinician and either double□click or click .

Note: Being able to specify the clinicians that patients/online users will be able to see gives you control, for example you could ensure that patients/online users can only see a nurse.

Additional confirmation question

Specify the slot types that will ask the patient/online user to confirm that they want to book an appointment with that slot type.

This is designed to force the patient/online user to consider whether they have selected the correct type of appointment before booking.

Click and all available slot types are shown in the 'Question not displayed' list:

- To move a slot type to the 'Question displayed' list, select it and either double-click or click .
- To move a number of individual slot types to the 'Question displayed' list at the same time, hold down **Ctrl**, click on each entry, then click .
- To remove a slot type from the 'Question displayed' list, select the slot type and either double□click on it or click .

Note 1: Any changes made will be immediately effective. If a patient/online user is partway through booking an appointment when the settings are changed and the new settings mean the appointment they want is no longer available, they will not be allowed to book it and will be notified.

Note 2: The appointments available for booking online will take into account any restrictions specified in Organisation Preferences, for example if patients/online users can book appointments for the 'Asthma Review' slot type but cannot book appointments for Dr Smith, it will not be possible to book into any 'Asthma Review' appointments that are scheduled with Dr Smith.

Appointment Cancellation

To allow patients/online users to cancel appointments online:

1. Select **Setup>Users & Policy>Organisation Preferences** from the Main Menu.
2. Select the 'Online Services>Appointment Cancellation' node from the tree.
3. Select **Enable appointment cancelling**.
4. Specify how far in advance (in hours) patients/online users can cancel an appointment. You can allow them to cancel appointments right up to the actual time of the appointment (0 hours).
5. Select whether or not you want to be sent a 'SystmOnline Booking Cancelled' task when a patient/online user cancels an appointment via online services.

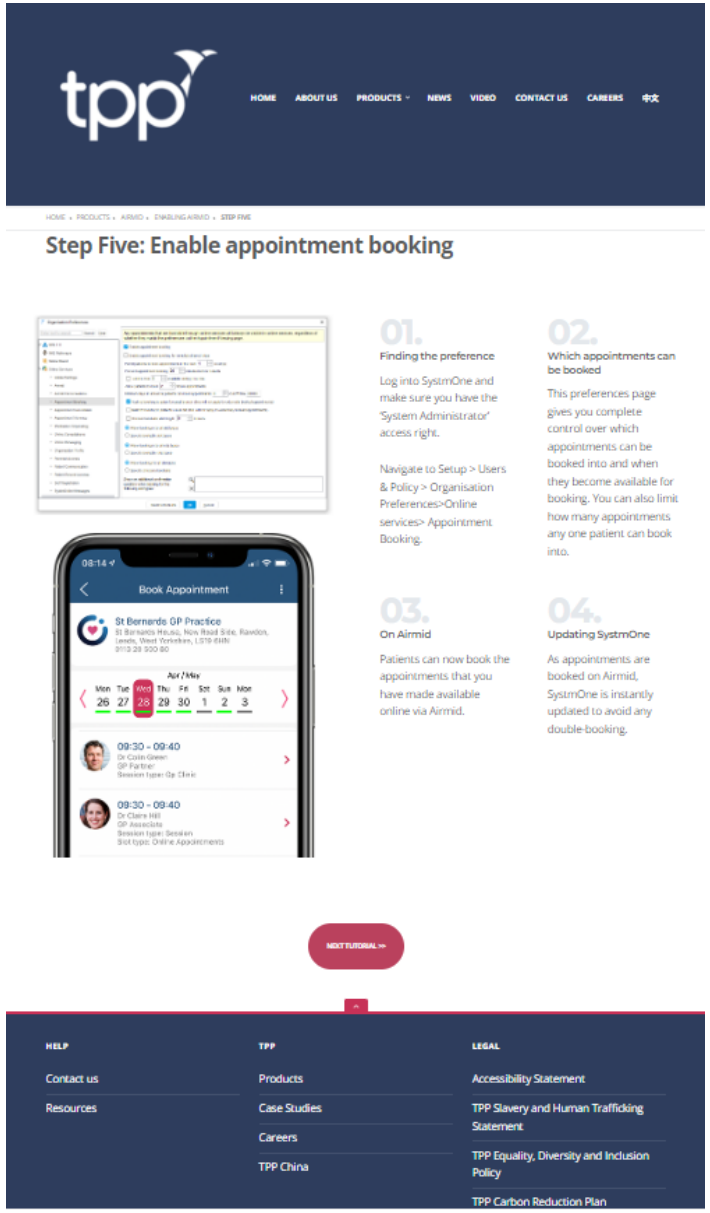
Patients/online users will be able to cancel any booked appointment, not just those originally booked online, with the exception of Choose And Book appointments.

Any changes made will be immediately effective. If a patient/online user is partway through cancelling an appointment when the settings are changed and the new settings mean the appointment can no longer be cancelled, they will not be allowed to cancel it and will be notified.

Offering Online Appointment Booking – SystmOne (4)

Access limited guidance from outside SystmOne:

https://tpp-uk.com/products/airmid/enabling-airmid/step-five/



Appointment configuration

digital first London Region NHS

Tips - Appointment Naming

Do:

- make it clear if the appointment is a telephone or online appointment - for example 'phone appointment - general'. Use simple language.
- make the purpose of the appointment clear
- state which group the appointment slot is for - for example 'women only: cervical screening'

Do not:

- do not use clinical terms - think 'blood test' rather than 'phlebotomy'
- do not use terms such as 'default' or 'embargo' - these will make no sense to patients
- do not include the clinician's name, time or location - these will be displayed separately

Whilst practices differ in how they manage their appointments, there are very few that are not suitable or adaptable for online booking. Therefore, any appointments that do not need to go through a triage process, could be available for patients to book directly online, by phone and/or by visiting the practice.

GP surgeries can use embargos so that appointments become available online at the same time as your telephone lines open, making it fair for all patients whether they use the NHS App or not.

Benefits:

Providing better access to specialist clinic appointments can help towards Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF) and Enhanced Services (ES) targets.

Using a test patient

- It's a good idea to set up a test patient so that you can check how your specific appointments and services appear to patients in the NHS App. This will not be a real patient.

How it works

The app works by connecting a patient to their GP record in your clinical system, so you need to set up a test patient in both the clinical system and the NHS App. Your test patient needs to be aged 16 or over and have an NHS number and account in your clinical system, with patient online services activated. You might already have a suitable account set up.

Record the full name, postcode, linkage key and account ID to use later. You need a test NHS number to use that's present on the central NHS system, Spine. If you don't have one, you can contact nhsapp@nhs.net to request one.

After you have set up your test patient, you can log in using these details to see what your patients see in the NHS App.

You will need:

- a smart mobile phone or tablet to download the app
- an email account (set up a free one if you don't want to use one you already have)
- a mobile phone number, so you can get a text message even if you're using a tablet
- the full name, postcode, linkage key and account ID of the test patient account the practice's ODS code