

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/2017/09/nhs-england-launches-practical-guides-to-help-people-with-disabilities-access-gp-online-services/>

NHS England launches practical guides to help people with disabilities access GP online services

11 September 2017

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Practical guides to help disabled patients to access GP online services have been published by NHS England today (11 September).

Aimed at supporting people with sight loss, hearing loss, autism or learning disabilities, a series of new guides have been developed to help patients use GP services online such as book appointments, repeat their prescriptions and view medical records.

Bespoke guides have also been published to help people access online services, such as how to sign up to online services, how to keep accounts secure and how to request access for a carer.

Launched today at the [NHS Health and Care Innovation Expo in Manchester](#), the advice guides have been developed by NHS England's Patient Online Access Needs Group with support from the charities Change, the National Autistic Society, RNIB, Sense and Action on Hearing Loss.

NHS England is working to increase the number of services that can be accessed online by patients. Already more than 10 million people are registered for online services. Patient Online is offered in addition to traditional and face-to-face means of accessing GP services, providing more choice for patients.

Dr Masood Nazir, national clinical lead for Patient Online at NHS England, said: "As a GP I am aware of the barriers faced by people with disabilities when accessing services. GP online services offered through

Patient Online are particularly helpful for many people with disabilities, as they can use accessible technology such as screen readers to independently book their appointments, order repeat prescriptions and review the information in their health record.

“We are striving to make GP online services as user-friendly and as accessible as possible and these new guides have been carefully developed with input from both patients and disability groups. Together, these resources will support many more people with disabilities to benefit from Patient Online.”

Hugh Huddy, outgoing chair of the Access Needs Group is also registered blind and has asthma, said: “I think most people do realise that getting about when you are blind or partially sighted, or have another disability, is just more difficult and challenging than for the average person. What probably isn’t quite as obvious though is how online services can actually cut out the need to make some of those difficult and inaccessible journeys altogether.

“For me and many others using Patient Online to renew a prescription, without having to negotiate my way to the GP surgery along obstructed pavements and busy road crossings, makes a massive difference. Now only one journey is needed to the pharmacy and a chunk of difficulty has been removed from the business of managing personal health.

“Accessibility of the online system itself is key, because disabled people only benefit from online services when they can easily use them. This is why we all created the Access Needs Guides. The guides are designed to help ensure GP staff quickly get to grips with the disability adjustments they need to make, and so deliver a system that benefits everybody.”

The free guides can be [downloaded via NHS England’s website](#) – or can be requested by emailing: england.patient-online@nhs.uk

The staff guides are:

- [How to support people with hearing loss: A guide for GP practice staff](#)
- [How to support autistic people: A guide for GP practice staff](#)
- [How to support people who are blind or have sight loss: A guide for GP practice staff](#)

- [How to support people who have learning difficulties: A guide for GP practice staff](#)

The easy-read patient information guides are:

- [Getting started with GP online services](#)
- [Your GP online record](#)
- [What you need to know about GP online services](#)
- [GP online service: quick, easy and safe](#)

[Giving another person access to your GP online services](#)