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| --- | --- |
| <<Patient address>> | <<Practice address>><<Date>> |

Dear <<Patient name>>,

**Information on accessing new entries made in your GP records**

As your GP practice, we have been instructed by the government to provide you with access to view new entries made in your GP medical record. Since 1 November 2023 you should be able to do this via the NHS App and NHS website. If you do not want access to your medical records please contact the practice to opt-out, you can opt back in at any time. If you decide that you do want to view your records, we want to ensure that you do this in a safe and informed way.

Prior to viewing your records, there are some risks we think you should be aware of and would ask you to consider, so you are able to make an informed decision regarding access:

* **Abnormal results or bad news** - You may see something that you find upsetting and this could occur before you have spoken to your doctor or while the practice is closed and you cannot contact them.
* **Choosing to share your information with someone** – It is your choice if you share your information with others or not – perhaps family members or carers but it is also your responsibility to keep the information safe and secure. See section 4 of the [NHS App terms of use](https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-app/nhs-app-legal-and-cookies/nhs-app-terms-of-use/).
* **Coercion** – If you think that you may be pressured into revealing details from your patient record to someone else against your will, you can contact your practice and ask to opt out of your records being available via the NHS App or website. You can read more on the British Medical Association (BMA) and domestic abuse charities’ concerns on [the BMA website.](https://www.bma.org.uk/bma-media-centre/bma-and-refuge-highlight-medical-record-access-concerns-for-survivors-of-domestic-abuse)
* **Proxy access** - Proxy access lets patients access medical services for someone in their care. Proxy access is unaffected by these changes, as we are only providing each patient access to their own record. If you require proxy access to another person’s record, you will need to contact us to discuss this.

When you view your records, you may have further questions, some of which we have covered below:

* **I moved to the practice recently and I can only see new entries from when I joined the practices as a new patient, but I cannot see my records from my last practice.**

At present, when you move from one practice to another practice, your records are transferred with you, but you will only be able to view new entries made by your new practice.

* **Some information is not correct in my record, I want this deleted.**

Under data protection legislation (UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018) and General Medical Council guidance, patients have a right to ask for factual inaccuracies in records to be rectified or deleted. This is termed a ‘right to rectification’. Should you request any corrections or redactions we will review your request and then contact you to either confirm it has corrected, deleted or added to the data. Alternatively, if the decision is not to alter the data, we will explain why the practice believes the data is accurate and ensure we add details of your request to your record and the reasons why we have not been able to comply. Please make any such requests in writing to us via the contact details at the end of this letter.

* **I do not understand something in my record.**

Your medical record is designed to be used by clinical professionals to enable them to communicate effectively to ensure you receive the best possible care. This does mean that some information within your medical record may be highly technical, written by specialists, utilising medical language and abbreviations. This is very different from a patient held record which would be written using everyday language. You may find the [NHS guide of commonly used abbreviations](https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-app/nhs-app-help-and-support/health-records-in-the-nhs-app/abbreviations-commonly-found-in-medical-records/) useful in understanding some of what is in your record.

* **I can see some new information that might need some action, but nothing has happened yet.**

The practice cannot always act immediately when a decision has been made, a result received, or a specialist direction is given. Decisions are made based on clinical priority and safety, and response times can depend on staffing and workloads.

* **Information about someone else**

If you see something in your record that is not about you, please log out of the information immediately and contact the practice as soon as possible.

* **I am under 16, can I view my record?**

This change to records access will only apply to people aged 16 years or older. If you have an online account, then you will receive access to records entered after your 16th birthday. If you request access to your records before you are 16, the GP will assess as to whether it is appropriate, in your best interest and if you have the capacity to consent or to keep your access secure. The Royal College of GPs has produced detailed guidance relating to [access for people aged 11-16 years](https://elearning.rcgp.org.uk/pluginfile.php/179161/mod_book/chapter/770/Children%20and%20young%20people.docx).

* **I cannot see my record in the NHS App**

The practice may not be able to offer online access due to a number of reasons such as concerns that it could cause harm to physical or mental health or where there is reference to third parties. If it is felt that it would be harmful or put you at risk to access the information, the practice may remove online access to either all, or parts of your medical record. Please contact us to discuss this further if this applies to you and you would like to view your records or opt-out of having access.

If you have specific queries in relation to records access, please contact us in writing and we will liaise with the clinical team and respond within an appropriate time frame – as with most administrative requests this can be up to 28 days. Whilst we will endeavour to respond to any queries about your records, please bear in mind that we must prioritise our clinical workload and deal with patients that are unwell and need us.

You can book a routine appointment should you wish to discuss a particular issue relating to your care, but please do not use appointments purely to request something is removed from or changed within your notes.

If you decide you do not want access to your record via the NHS App or website, please contact us via << this should be an email address, link to an online form or some other way of getting the request in writing>> and we can disable the access at your request.

<<Practice sign-off>>

*With thanks to Dr Imogen Brunner, Paddington Green Health Centre, Nic Kirwan-Williams and Amy Elliott, Londonwide LMCs for the content of this template.*