

# **NEWMARKET ROAD SURGERY**

## **Policy for Patient Online Access**

### **Introduction**

In order to support the 2014/15 and 2015/16 GP Contract, this procedure relates to patients requesting access to elements of their record via online services (Patient Access). As stipulated on the 2014/15 GP Contract, contractual obligations for Patient Online Access were to allow patient the ability to:

- Book/cancel appointments
- Order Repeat prescription
- View Summary Information (allergies, adverse reactions and medications)

The 2015/16 GP contract has been enhanced and now stipulates that practices are also to allow patients:

- Detailed Coded Records Access (DCRA)

Patients accessing their records online will have access to limited information. As a result of this, the patient continues to have the right to submit a Subject Access Request under the Data Protection Act 1998. However, as this differs from access via online services the patient must submit this request in writing to the practice. The practice still have the right to charge a fee for providing the information in a printed form, though should Patients accessing their Coded Data online are able to copy and paste or print the information from the screen thus there is no fee for this.

### **Registration for online services**

This practice accepts applications from patients as well as their proxy. Proxy access refers to access to online services by somebody acting on behalf of the patient with the patient's consent.

The appropriate application form must be completed prior to any online access being enabled. Application for online access to my medical record should be used for patient's wanting to access their own detailed coded information held within their medical record..

- The application form includes: Password confidentiality is the responsibility of the patient.
- Advice on unexpected bad news and/or abnormal results.

The practice reserves the right to review and remove access at any point in the future if it is thought that it is in the best interests of the patient or if the services are being misused.

### **ID Verification**

ID verification is required to ensure access is granted to patients/proxy users that have a legitimate reason to access a record. This will prevent access being granted to the wrong person and support the practice to adhere to information security guidelines. ID verification is required for all including

children (normally in these circumstances a birth certificate will be appropriate). There are a number of options for identification verification including:

### **Documentation**

Current practice is that should there be a request for Online Access, two forms of documentation must be provided as evidence of identity, one of which must contain a photograph. Acceptable documents include passports, photo driving licences and bank statements. If none of the above is available household bills may be accepted at the discretion of the Practice Manager or Office Manager. For children a birth certificate will be appropriate

### **Self-Vouching**

Vouching for a patient's identity requires an authorised member of the practice staff who knows the patient well enough to verify that they are who they say they are, and that no deception is taking place. Self-vouching will not be considered as usual practice and will be at the discretion of the Practice Manager.

Documentary evidence that confirms identification checks have taken place will include:

- the nature of those checks
- who did them and when
- Completed registration form. (To avoid non-clinical information being stored in patient records, copies of bank statements, passports and other personal documentation will not be scanned into those records.)

At the point of request for Patient Online Access provide patients with the Patient Access Registration Form and a Patient Information Leaflet.

### **Timescales**

Practice receptionists will be able to grant access to patients who present with the correct identification, for appointments and medication within 7 days.

If patients request access to their detailed coded information they will be notified that it may take the practice up to 40 days to review their application and grant access if appropriate. This is a guide only and in some circumstances may be shorter.

### **Access for children, parents and guardians**

- Child access will automatically be disabled when a child reaches the age of 11
- For children between the ages of 11 and 15 competency will be assessed on a case by case basis by a GP.
- A competency assessment will be carried out, regardless of outcome a parent/guardian/carer will re-apply using the Proxy Access Registration Process, where a competent child must authorise the request for Proxy Access. This will be at the discretion of a clinician.
- A child deemed competent may have access to their online record or authorise a parent/carer to have Proxy Access
- Where a child is deemed not to be competent, a parent will apply for access but will be registered as a Proxy Use. This will be reviewed by the practice annually, or when the child attends a further appointment – whichever is the sooner)

## **Proxy Access**

A competent patient can choose and consent to allow access to relatives and/or carers. These individuals do not have to be patients of the practice but their identification must take place in a face to face transaction in the same way as patients must to access their own records.

Any request for proxy access will be looked at on a case by case basis and should be referred to a GP for authorisation.

The patient will authorise a Proxy Application in the following circumstances:

A patient who has been deemed as competent has authorised and consented to online access.

- Circumstances when the practice will consider authorising proxy access WITHOUT the patient's consent will be when a child 11-15 has been assessed and is deemed as not being competent to make a decision on granting proxy access. Should there be such circumstances the practice will:
- Ensure the level of access granted to the Proxy is appropriate and does not exceed what has been agreed by the patient
- Contact families/carers of children approaching their 15<sup>th</sup> birthday to remind them that online access could potentially cease, and invite them to come to the surgery for a discussion regarding options available

## **Coercion**

'Coercion' is the act of governing the actions of another by force or by threat, in order to overwhelm and compel that individual to act against their will.

The practice will include the implications of Coercion during the patient application process for online services by way of issuing them with a patient leaflet detailing the implications.

The practice will consider the risk of Coercion on a case by case basis as requests for access are received, and if necessary will decline access.

The patient's named GP will discuss with the applicant the reasons for refusal of access.

If coercion is identified as a risk with regard to a patient previously registered for online services, then access will be immediately removed.

## **Levels of Access for Patients**

There are different levels of Access available to patients. All requests for Online Access will be dealt with on a patient by patient basis and the suggested access will be granted within the agreed timescales. All patients must be deemed competent to be granted access to Detailed Coded Data, however, some elements may be marked as sensitive/confidential and will not be shared via Online services. Access levels can be as follows:

- Appointments, Repeat Prescriptions and Summary Information
- Appointments, Repeat Prescriptions and Detailed Coded Record Access

Patient Access does not override a patient's right to submit a Subject Access Request which will be processed following our practice protocol in line with the Data Protection Act 1998.

The practice will not automatically grant access to Detailed coded Data to those patients currently with access to appointments, repeat prescription and Summary Information. Patients wanting access

to their Detailed Coded Information MUST complete and submit an additional Access Request form. This will be considered within the practice and granted if deemed appropriate within 40 days. At any point the practice can revoke Online Access to patients if the functionality is abused.

### **Appointments**

This practice will allow a patient to pre book online up to 3 appointments in advance with GPs. Online booking for nurses and healthcare assistant appointments are not available and need to be booked in the usual way, by telephoning the practice (01603 624486)

There is a process in place for any patient abusing the online appointment booking services, as follows:

- Practice will issue an initial warning letter
- If the action continues the Practice will suspend access for two calendar months
- The practice will then reinstate the functionality to the patient
- If the abuse continues the Practice will inform the patient that their ability to book/cancel online appointments will be removed on a permanent basis.

### **Hiding sensitive consultations**

All domestic abuse consultation will be highlighted as confidential and will therefore be removed from online viewing. This must be made clear to patients that anything they say in relation to this during a consultation will not be viewable online.

Any consultations of a sensitive nature may be highlighted as confidential. Access to online records will be on a patient by patient basis.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Party Information**

This practice will not share any information held within a clinical record that is deemed as 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Information without explicit consent from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Party. Any of our patients wanting access to these details must make the practice aware by submitting a Subject Access Request.

### **Contents of a medical record**

During the patient online registration process patients will be issued with a Patient online leaflet on which they are notified that their medical record may contain information that is historical and therefore forgotten, not relevant to themselves (including scanned letters), bad news or may show abnormal test results. If patients do identify any such information it is their responsibility to notify the practice immediately so we can take the appropriate action.

### ***Relevant reference documents to support policy:***

[Information Governance guide](#)

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

<http://elearning.rcgp.org.uk/patientonline>

<http://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/pe/patient-online/>

## **Promoting Patient Online**

This practice will promote the Patient Online service to all patients using a number of methods to raise awareness. Methods of promotion to be used include:

- Display of Patient Online posters within patient waiting areas
- Practice Website

Policy written March 2016, updated June 2016 and will be reviewed in line with the policy review timetable