



GP online services

Promoting to students

A guide for Universities, GP Practices and CCGs

September 2018

An introduction to GP online services

Did you know that you no longer have to wait on the phone to speak to your GP surgery - or make an appointment to receive your test results? GP online services is the quick, easy and secure alternative for people to get in touch with their practice, order repeat prescriptions and view their GP record.



How can students start using GP online services?



If you are registering with the GP practice for the first time you will be asked to complete a new patient registration form. As part of this, you can also request to register for GP online services at the same time.



If you are already registered with a GP practice and wish to start using GP online services then take photo ID (passport or driving licence) and proof of address (such as a bill or bank statement) to your GP practice and tell them you want to start using their online services. If you do not have ID, there are other ways for GP staff to confirm the students identity.



Once you have signed up you will receive a letter with your unique username, password and instructions on how to log in and access online services.

Who is this guide for?

This guide has been developed to show you how GP online services can benefit university students as well as giving you ideas of how to promote and increase awareness of GP online services among students.

This guide provides suggested content for a range of communication channels and can be tailored to make it relevant to your style and way of communicating.

Use the navigation buttons on the right to move to the section relevant for you.

University

GP practice

CCG

What are the benefits of GP online services for students?

It's quick, easy and secure and meets students expectations about being able to do more online.

Repeat prescriptions can be ordered outside of normal working hours, 24/7.

It avoids any embarrassment about having to discuss a health problem with the receptionist first.

Can have a positive impact on students mental health, helping students access their GP more easily.

Having access to their GP record means students can check their own immunisations for holidays or studying abroad.



Students can check their test results any time with no need to call the practice, or wait for the practice to call them.

Students with additional access needs can particularly benefit from using online services.

Having access to their GP record means they can check their own history when applying for jobs.

When travelling patients can take their information with them and access it any where, any time.

Using GP online services will save time and inconvenience for students and put them more in control of their health care

What are students saying?

“Ordering repeat prescriptions online saves me a lot of time. If I realise I’m running low and the practice is closed on the Saturday, all I do is login, request the relevant medication from the drop down list and then pick it up a few days later”.

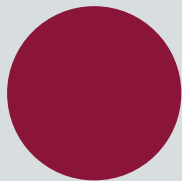
Adam, University Health Centre.

“I have two children and I study. Having appointment online saves me valuable time – I don’t have to wait for the phone to be answered”.

Anonymous, Tower Hamlets College

“Using this service helps me to track the results of tests and medication for my long-term health condition, giving me insight and control over my health”.

Tirun, University of Plymouth



University communications teams

University communication teams are in the front line in communicating with students, so have an important role to play in promoting the benefits of GP online services to them. Our aim is to work with you and ensure students (and staff) are aware how GP online services can quickly and easily help them while at university.





Example: social media messages

For many students, social media is now a way of life. This makes it a good place to promote GP online services.

We have created a number of tweets and Facebook posts appropriate for university owned social media channels.



1

Starting university in Sept? Students should be immunised against Meningitis and MMR. Book yours online with you GP www.nhs.uk/GPonlineservices

2

Stay healthy! Use GP Online Services to check you've had your two key vaccinations – Meningitis and MMR – before you start university. www.nhs.uk/GPonlineservices

3

Moving to [university name] in Sept? Don't forget to register with a local GP and sign up for GP Online Services to help you manage your health. www.nhs.uk/GPonlineservices

4

Trouble remembering to contact your GP during the day? GP Online Services is an alternative way to book and cancel appointments and request repeat prescriptions online – 24/7

5

Coming to [university name] and want to know more about health support services available to you? Find out more about how local NHS services work by visiting [university health page or NHS choices]



Example: student newsletter

Student newspapers are used across UK campuses. In recent years they have started to appear as **blogs, newsletters, websites and other digitised channels**. They are still a trusted and widely read source of news on campus.

Getting an article, advert or regular feature into the student newspaper can be a great way to promote GP online services. It is especially useful to promote it at the start of the year when new students are registering, preparing to study abroad, or before the summer holidays when immunisations might be required for international travel.





Example: noticeboards or student accommodation



Placing communication in an area where students already seek out information can be beneficial.

GP online services have designed a range of branded posters, in A4 and A3 size, which can be placed on noticeboards in communal areas and within student accommodation to help raise awareness of GP online services.

Order free posters



Good practice: The University of Leeds

The wellbeing team at Leeds University Union, who represent students at The University of Leeds, saw the benefits that GP online services could offer their students and knew just the opportunity to promote it.

Students attending information events about spending a year abroad at another university were targeted. There was a particular focus on reminding students to check they were up-to-date on their vaccinations before travelling abroad, obtaining information needed before booking travel insurance and ensuring they had enough of any repeat medications until they could get set-up with local health providers.

Leeds University Union made use of the free promotional material available from NHS England to support the event and provide students with sign-up information. Due to its success, this material was then reused at a “Refreshers’ fair” later in the year.



Health and wellbeing / student support team

We know that you see a range of students, all with different needs, who require expert advice on issues affecting their ability to study – including their health. Sometimes you will need to direct these students to their GP, which is where GP online services can help.

Students may feel embarrassed or hesitant to speak to a receptionist about their health problem when making an appointment, have limited availability to call the GP surgery during normal opening hours, or have a disability which makes contacting the GP surgery more challenging.

The following students have been identified as particularly benefiting from GP online services

- Blind or partially sighted students
- Students with a hearing impairment
- Students living with long-term medical conditions (e.g. diabetes)



Example: blog

Here is an example blog you can use in your newsletter or website:

“Becoming unwell at university happens to almost everyone. However, being away from home, family and friends can make it that much more difficult. But there is no need to worry as there are a range of places you can turn to for help.

If you become unwell and need to see a doctor you should visit a GP surgery. GPs deal with a wide range of health problems, as well as providing health education, offering advice on smoking and contraception, giving vaccinations and carrying out simple surgical operations. You should register with a GP close to where you are living within the first few weeks of moving to University.

Some students have difficulty finding the time to call their surgery during its opening hours. Some may also have difficulty getting through to speak to someone if their surgery is very busy. That is why it's important that when you register at a GP surgery you also sign up for GP online services.

GP online services allows people to book and cancel appointments, order repeat prescriptions, and access parts of their GP record online without calling or visiting the surgery. It's quick, easy and secure.

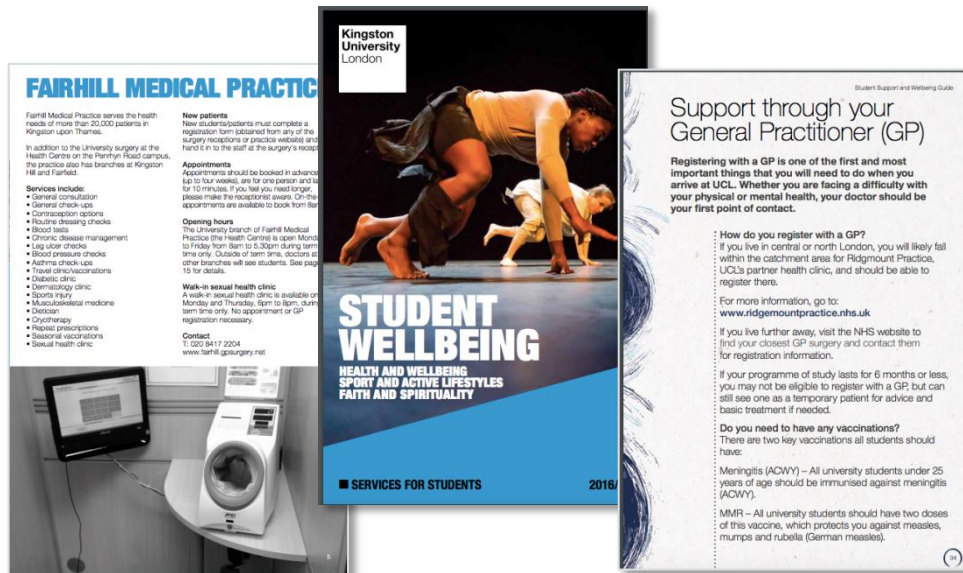
By managing your health, as part of your overall wellbeing, you can reach your full potential and have a happier time at University.”

www.nhs.uk/GPonlineservices



Example: health and wellbeing guides

To ensure advice and support service information is located in one central place some universities have taken to developing health and wellbeing guides. Most include a page on what support a student can receive from their GP and how to access GP services.



Example: GP online services

When registering with a GP we also recommend you sign-up for GP online services.

Once you have GP online services you'll be able to

- book or cancel appointments online with a GP or nurse
- order repeat prescriptions online
- view parts of your GP record online, including information about medication, vaccinations and previous illnesses.



Example: health and wellbeing events

Increasingly, universities are holding health and wellbeing events aimed at educating students in making positive choices around their own health and wellbeing through activities such as exercise, health screenings and informative workshops. Why not include details and advice on GP online services at your next event? There's a range of free promotional materials available.





Good practice: The University of Hull

The University of Hull is committed to helping students adjust to life at university. As a result, they have implemented a series of e-learning modules that all undergraduate students complete, irrespective of their course, to help introduce them to independent living.

One of the modules includes helping students remain healthy during their time at university. As well as giving advice on registering with a GP and accessing local NHS services, students are also introduced to GP online services.

Inclusion within the e-learning modules was arranged by the university's Health and Wellbeing team, who recognised that students would benefit from an online approach to booking their appointments and requesting any repeat prescriptions.

The screenshot displays a web-based e-learning module titled "Remaining Healthy at University". The interface features a light blue header with navigation icons. A sidebar on the right, titled "Student Experience - N", contains a list of menu items: "Welcome", "Your Campus", "Being in a New Place", "Your Transition to University" (highlighted with a magnifying glass icon), "Academic Matters", "Personal and Social Matters", "Personal and Social Matters" (with sub-items: "Personal and Social Matters", "Alcohol and the Student Experience", "Remaining Healthy at University" (selected with a radio button), "Personal Safety", "Healthy Relationships", "Money Matters", and "Health and Safety").

The main content area has a header image showing three capsules (two green and white, one red and white) and a thermometer. Below the image, the title "Remaining Healthy at University" is followed by the text: "The University of Hull is committed to ensuring that our students remain healthy during their time at university. Below are our key tips on how to remain healthy at the University:". Three tabs are visible: "Vaccinations", "Doctors" (active), and "Support".

Under the "Doctors" tab, there is a section titled "Important" with a red border, containing the text: "You should register with a GP as soon as you arrive at University. Registering with a GP will give you access to healthcare when required. Do not wait until you are ill!". Below this, there are two bullet points: "How do I choose and register with a GP?" and "Find GP Services".

Further down, there is a section titled "GP Online Services" with a blue background and a yellow magnifying glass icon. It includes the text: "GP online services Quick, easy and secure" and "NHS". Below this, there are three bullet points: "Book GP appointments", "Order repeat prescriptions", and "Access your GP records".

At the bottom, there is a section titled "Sign up to GP online services and you'll be able to use a website or app to:" followed by three bullet points: "book or cancel appointments online with a GP or nurse", "order repeat prescriptions online", and "view parts of your GP record, including information about medication, allergies, vaccinations, previous illnesses".

International students

Being an international student can be overwhelming; students need to settle into their new university as well as become accustomed to a new country. To ensure a smooth transition many universities provide practical information, including information on health services, via a newsletter, new starter pack or on their website.

Becoming unwell, especially when they are so far from home, can be a particularly stressful time for an international student. That's why it is important that they register with a doctor while they are studying. At the same time they can also sign-up for GP online services to ensure they receive the benefits of booking appointments online and requesting repeat prescriptions.





Example: international student guides

Many universities understand that a move to the UK can be daunting for international students and therefore put together an international student guide. These often contain everything that a student needs to know before moving here, including practical matters such as healthcare.



Example: GP online services

When registering with a GP we also recommend you sign-up for GP online services.

Once you have GP online services you'll be able to

- book or cancel appointments online with a GP or nurse
- order repeat prescriptions online
- view parts of your GP record online, including information about medication, vaccinations and previous illnesses.

It's not just students who benefit from GP online services. The benefits of GP online services to GP practices and the NHS are also significant, saving time while offering improved convenience to practices and patients. Three major benefits realised by patients using the service include a 'Did Not Attend' rate for appointments that is 30% lower among those who booked an appointment online, safer and more accurate ordering of prescriptions and a reduction in the number of phone calls to the surgery about test results. Additionally, by making it more convenient for people to make, and keep, appointments with their GP, we can help to prevent unnecessary visits to an A&E or minor injuries unit.

The benefits that this publicity aims to get across are that GP online services are:

- quick – you can use the service anywhere and anytime
- easy – easy access for people who want to contact their GP practice online
- secure – available only to patients who signed up for it and received their login details

New patient registration

As a practice, embedding registration for GP online services into the 'new patient registration' process is really important, as this is when patients are more likely to have their two forms of identification with them. It also helps patients (including students) develop good online habits from the onset.

The RCGP have developed an example new patient registration form which can be tailored to any practice.

Registration form

Practice name	
Application for online access to my medical record	
Surname	Date of birth
First name	
Address	
Postcode	
Email address	
Telephone number	Mobile number
I wish to have access to the following online services (please tick all that apply):	
1. Booking appointments	
2. Requesting repeat prescriptions	
3. Accessing my medical record	



Example: website

Your practice's website is a good place to promote GP online services, as people who visit it will already have the skills to make use of them. You can also the page on your website for accessing the services, to the information on the NHS Choices website, and further instructions on the website of your clinical system provider.

Example website copy:

Have you heard about GP online services?

Over 14 million people use an app or website to:

- book GP appointments
- order repeat prescriptions
- view their GP record

Our practice is pleased to offer our patients the opportunity to book appointments, request repeat prescriptions and view their GP record and test results online. If you are a new patient registering with us, please let a member of the practice team know you would like to use this service. It's quick, easy and secure to use. Once you have registered you can choose whether to phone or visit the surgery, or save time and go online to book your appointments, order your repeat prescription and view your GP record.



Example: Freshers' / Refreshers' week

Freshers' week is a really good week for practices based near universities and colleges to recruit more people to register for GP online services. Students who are new to the area and looking for a GP, are often tech savvy and used to getting many services online.

To get the most of this opportunity you could

- Contact your local university and see whether you can promote your services (including GP online services) at their Freshers' fair
- Ask the student services and pastoral care teams at the university to display GP online services posters in their student spaces
- Display posters promoting GP online services around your practice during and after Freshers' week
- Use Facebook messages and Tweets to promote the benefits of GP online services to students (remembering to tag the local university in the post – hoping for a retweet or a share)





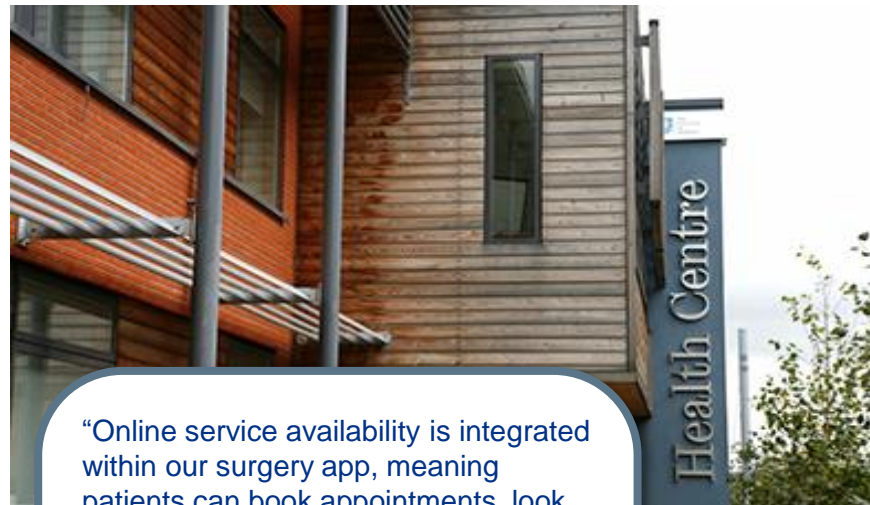
Case study: University of Sheffield Health Centre

32,891 patients

The University of Sheffield Health Centre realised early on that going online would be beneficial for its large student population, as well as its staff, – and so has been offering online access for the last 15 years.

GP online services is promoted heavily, including on screens within the surgery and via the website. Patients are also signposted towards using online services when booking routine appointments. In addition to this, online service availability has been integrated within the health centre's app.

These activities combined have resulted in 65% of all appointment bookings taking place either online or via an automated telephone system.



“Online service availability is integrated within our surgery app, meaning patients can book appointments, look at immunisations and test results and request repeat prescriptions via their smartphones. We believe this is particularly appealing for our students who expect such technology, and we feel this is why we do so well with online services”



Barbara Graham, Practice Manager



Case study: Brunel University Medical Practice

10,861 patients

The Brunel University Medical Practice decorated the reception and waiting area with GP online services promotional materials at a promotional event to raise awareness with patients and engage them in conversation on the day.

With the help of their local CCG, staff spent the day talking to patients about online services and registering those who were interested. The use of a tablet was found to be especially useful during this time as it allowed patients to finish their registration immediately as well show them round the website and app.

As a result of this one day event 119 people signed up to GP online services – a major success.



CCGs

Every September, as the new academic year starts, CCGs receive an influx of both local and international students. CCGs have an important role to play in encouraging GP practices that serve universities and colleges to engage with students. From registering with a GP and keeping healthy, through to accessing vaccinations and contraception, students will be seeking out information on your services and how to access them.

However, the benefits of GP online services extend beyond students to GP practices and the NHS, saving time, offering improved convenience to practices and generally improving the patient experience. As a result, using GP online services makes a positive difference not only to local patients, but to primary care staff within your CCG.





Example: social media messages

We have created a number of tweets and Facebook posts to help you get started.

Tweets or posts with images /videos have a higher level of engagement. On the following pages you will find a range of digital icons and infographics which can be used with the example tweets and posts.



1

Students just like you are using GP Online Services to book appointment and order their repeat prescriptions online – isn't it time you joined them? www.nhs.uk/GPonlineservices

2

Starting university in Sept? Students should be immunised against Meningitis and MMR. Book yours online [@university name] www.nhs.uk/GPonlineservices

3

Are you a student and a carer? It's the little things can make life easier for you. Find out more about #GPonlineservices for carers [@university name] www.nhs.uk/GPonlineservices

4

[@university name] Students travelling abroad soon? Don't forget they can check immunisations and medical history by access their GP record online using #GPonlineservices

5

Booking appointments, ordering repeat prescriptions and viewing your record online leaves you more time for [@university name] www.nhs.uk/GPonlineservices



Digital icons for social media

Download
digital icons

NHS

Quick and easy
GP online services

www.nhs.uk/GPonlineservices



NHS

Why wait?
Book your appointment online

www.nhs.uk/GPonlineservices



NHS

See for yourself
Access your GP records online

www.nhs.uk/GPonlineservices



NHS

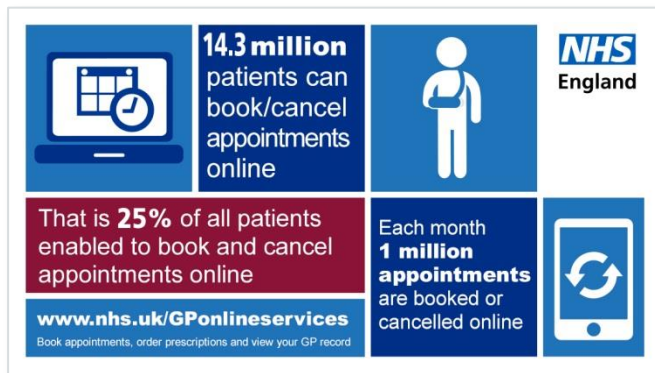
A helping hand
Order your repeat prescription online

www.nhs.uk/GPonlineservices

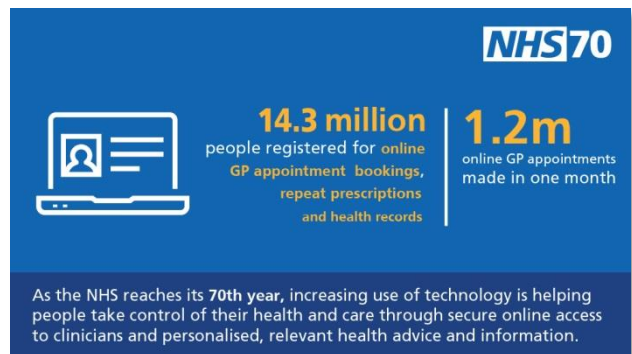




Infographics for social media



Download
infographics





Example: press release

ORDER YOUR REPEAT PRESCRIPTION WITH YOUR PHONE

More students than ever are now requesting their repeat prescriptions online - with over ten million requests across England now made via GP online services.

GP online services allows people to book and cancel appointments, order repeat prescriptions, and access parts of their GP record online. It's quick, easy and all information is secure.

This time-saving alternative to calling or visiting the surgery allows students who need repeat prescriptions to request them from lectures, seminars, the library, or the comfort of their own home. It also gives them the ability to review the medication they are taking - along with the dosage and frequency it should be taken – leading to an improved understanding of their medication.

[Named GP] said: “The service is making a huge difference, not only to our patients who are using it to order repeat medications online, but also to GP surgery staff who work incredibly hard and are extremely busy throughout the day. It offers our patients the choice of how they can order a repeat prescription with online requests complimenting the more traditional methods.

“Ordering repeat prescriptions online also improve patient safety as patients have more control and understanding of their medication. It puts them more in control of their health and well-being.”

[Named patient], who studies [course] and is a patient at [name of surgery] said: “[insert a quote here from a patient]”

You can register for GP online services by visiting your GP surgery, or find out more by logging on to the NHS Choices website at www.nhs.uk/GPonlineservices

Help for those who need support going online

There are a lot of places where people can learn how to use the internet. Many are provided by local authorities, colleges and charities. A good place to start is the local library, but there are many other places to learn for free, such as:



[Learn My Way](#) have UK online centres which help people learn how to use the internet and manage their health online. Find your nearest local venue by visiting their website.



[First Click](#) is a campaign running across the BBC encouraging the estimated 9.2 million people in the UK who do not have access to the internet to take the first steps to get online.



[Good Things Foundation](#) in partnership with NHS Digital is running a programme to ensure people have the skills they need to access relevant health information and health services online.

GP online services

Promoting to students

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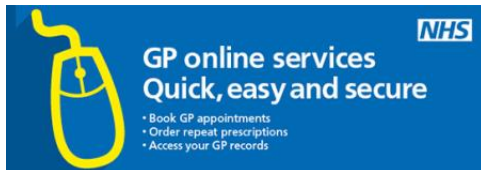
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