

BRIEFING: IMPROVED GENERAL PRACTICE PROFILES ON NHS CHOICES

Gateway Reference: 17719

INTRODUCTION

NHS Choices is the primary public facing website of the NHS and regularly receives more than 14 million visits a month. It launched in June 2007 to provide a comprehensive and trusted source of reliable health information to help people make the most of their health and get the best out of the healthcare system.

Its pages include directories of local health services, information on a wide range of conditions and treatments, and accessible clinical information related to primary healthcare.

The site also shows comparative data about healthcare providers, to help people make informed choices about their healthcare. This includes feedback on services. One of the guiding principles of NHS Choices is that a modern, taxpayer-funded NHS should provide the public with the opportunity to comment publicly on the services they receive.

Since its launch, patients have been able to post online feedback about their hospital experience. This functionality extended to GP practices in October 2009 and the public are now able to comment on all NHS services. We currently have more than 78,000 comments online, approximately 39,000 of which have been posted on GP profiles.

MANAGING YOUR PROFILE ON NHS CHOICES

Every General Practice in England has a profile (a mini-website) on nhs.uk. Close to one million visits are made to these profile each month to access a wide range of information, including opening hours, staff, services, performance data and facilities.

The information on these profiles has been managed by the majority of Practices or PCT staff through a bespoke system on NHS Choices since 2008, but in line with enhancements in web technologies the GP profiles are being moved into the NHS Choices Provider Information Management System (PIMS). All of the information on your practice's current profile will be transferred automatically to the new system. The new PIMS system has the advantage of straightforward editing functions and a what-you-see-is-what-you-get (WYSIWYG) display that helps the user to create the best possible profile pages.

Described below are the practical steps to start editing your profile. However, we recommend you navigate around the sections to explore the different opportunities the site offers practices and visit nhs.uk/gp to access more resources to assist you.

Obtaining your log on details:

- **If your practice already has access to the current GP editing system** an email containing the new log on details will be sent to the account registered against the current profile. If this email does not arrive by the end of June please contact our Service Desk – thechoicesteam@nhschoices.nhs.uk.
- **If your practice does not have access to the current GP editing system** you should contact the Service Desk and they will set up access for you and issue you with log on details via email.
- Once you have your login details, you can log in from any page that has the Log in link in the top right hand corner. Once you are logged in you will be presented with an administrative screen that shows the the NHS Choices GP profile(s) you can edit. Clicking on the name of a profile will take you directly to its pages, ready for editing.
- If NHS Choices needs to communicate with you about the editing system, this administrative area is also where you will see alerts and messages.

Updating information:

- The what-you-see-is-what-you-get (WYSIWYG) style of editing is applied across all eight pages in your profile. The information is organised into modules and where you are able to edit a module, it will have a clearly marked edit button for you to click.
- Clicking the edit button will make fields editable.
- Once you have made changes just select 'Save' and your changes will be applied, or 'Cancel' if you no longer wish to proceed.
- In the event that you have saved your changes but you are unhappy with your edits, the system will offer an undo function on the module for your most recent change.

- Some modules are not editable – such as centrally managed NHS Choices data – and will be marked ‘This cannot be edited’. If the data is editable through a different page or process, this will be marked “How do I edit this?”
- If you believe any of the information that is not editable is incorrect you can use the ‘Report an issue with the information on this page’ link at the bottom right of the profile pages. This notifies the NHS Choices Service Desk of your query.
- You will be able to see any changes you make immediately so you can judge how your pages look both for presentation and accuracy with the information populated.

What information can be displayed?

- General practice information such as address, contact details, prescription and appointment information, and opening hours.
- Information about patient vacancies and how to register with your practice
- Information about facilities and services provided, including out-of hours and showcasing specialist services and how to access them
- All staff profiles
- Facilities available including accessibility information
- Practice surveys and Patient Participation information
- Images and videos
- Links to external websites, including your practice website

Why you should update your profile regularly:

- NHS Choices is becoming the key website for members of the public to find information on their current or potential future GP practice.
- NHS Choices gives people the opportunity to select a GP practice by comparing those in their area. They can look at opening times, services provided, patient ratings or the practice location as criteria. Every month, nearly a million visits are made to [compare practices](#) using this functionality.
- The number of practices that edit their data on NHS Choices continues to grow, with three quarters of all practices in England now managing their own profiles. This helps not only to improve the accuracy of the data but also to enrich the level of information available to patients.
- In the *Rate and Comment* section, people have the ability to rate GP practices. One of the questions they are asked is whether they feel the information on the profile page is correct.

- You can tailor the information you want to display and have control of what members of the public see as you update your profile.
- The majority of information on NHS Choices, including organisation profiles and services, is published on over 300 partner websites across the country. These include Boots, Co-op, Channel 4, PCTs, Local Authorities and the providers of many GP websites.
- Mobile applications are now being made available by Microsoft, Nokia and Blackberry that offer full GP profile information including opening times, facilities and services offered.

If you have any questions regarding your profile or the available functions, please go to www.nhs.uk/gp where key information and an illustrated copy of this briefing can be found or email the NHS Choices Service Desk at thechoicesteam@nhschoices.nhs.uk.

PRACTICE FEEDBACK ON NHS CHOICES

As they can currently, visitors to the site will also be able to leave feedback on their practice experience. As patient information plays an ever-important role in the delivery of healthcare, it is essential that practices and, where relevant, commissioners ensure local information on services is accessible and accurate by editing their own profiles and managing patient feedback. The purpose of this section is to explain how practices can manage their patient feedback.

Patients that want to leave a comment will firstly locate the relevant practice on NHS Choices and click on '*Rate and comment*'. Patients will be asked to state whether, based on their overall practice experience, they would recommend the practice. They will then be asked to evaluate the practice in the following areas:

- I am able to get through to the practice by telephone
- I am able to get an appointment when I want one
- I am treated with dignity and respect by the staff
- This GP practice involves me in decisions about my care and treatment
- This GP practice provides accurate and up to date information on services and opening hours

Free text boxes also enable patients to describe their experiences in more detail

Patient comments will appear on the practice's profile page under the *Feedback* tab.

Practices' right of reply:

Each practice has the ability to reply to each comment. These replies appear directly beneath the original comment. When a comment is left on a practice profile, "comment administrators" will receive an email alert from NHS Choices. This email will have the title 'NHS Choices: content published' and the sender field will be populated with 'No Reply'

The email will say that a comment has been left against the practice's profile and provide a link to that comment on NHS Choices. It will also provide a link to the system, called 'organisation response', where you can login and write your reply.

- You will need to login using your email address and password. These details are the same as for your NHS Choices account and will have been provided to you by email when your comment administrator account was activated.
- Once you are logged in to the system, you will see all of the comments that have been made about your practice. Each comment will have a link to 'Enter a response'.
- When clicked, a box will open up into which you can write your response.
- Responses can be a maximum of 4,000 characters.
- When you have finished writing your response, click the 'submit response' button.
- Your response will then enter the NHS Choices moderation system. Once it has passed moderation, it will be published beneath the original comment.

Safeguards:

While people will be free to express their opinions, good and bad, about practices, a number of important safeguards will protect practices and members of staff from unwarranted threats to their reputation. These are as follows:

- All comments will be pre-moderated by trained staff. Comments that are libelous or offensive will not be allowed
- Individual staff (either clinical or non-clinical) cannot be named
- Whilst anonymous comments are allowed, users have to provide a validated e-mail address before a comment can appear on the site
- A 'report as offensive or unsuitable' button will enable practices to report comments to NHS Choices' if they have concerns about them. NHS Choices will then investigate these. If the moderation rules have been broken, the comment will be removed permanently. If not, it will re-appear
- Users are prohibited from using NHS Choices to campaign or make politically motivated comments
- Vexatious comments are not permissible
- Full details regarding the NHS Choices commenting policy can be found on the [Terms and Conditions pages](#).

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. What will happen to the information on our existing profile?

A. The information currently available on your profile pages will be migrated to the new profiles. Some migrated fields have not been migrated in their original state but instead with a different presentational feel or re-organised under a revised heading. Where new fields or areas of the profile to provide richer information about your organisation and services have been introduced, these will be left blank for you to complete.

Q. I have all this information on our own website and I don't want to duplicate. How can I avoid duplicating effort?

A. From later this year, you will be able to use all the information in your NHS Choices profile for publication on your own website. To get further details on this functionality please see our partner information at nhs.uk/partners. In the meantime, you can add hyperlinks on the appropriate NHS Choices pages, and direct patients back to your own site if you think this is the best approach.

Q. If I am not currently registered to manage my profile how is it updated?

Your profile's information will either be managed on NHS Choices directly by your PCT or via data sent to NHS Choices from the Primary Care Information Service. If you decide to self-manage your data the links to these providers will be broken.

Q. How do I obtain statistics to see how many people are looking at our profile?

Once you are logged in you can view the number of visits to your profile at the bottom of each page. This is split into the numbers for the current month and the last 12 months. These figures will only reflect usage from the first day of the new profiles.

Q. My practice is in London, why is there an additional news item on my profile?

A. If your practice is based in London you may be aware of the myhealthlondon service led by NHS London (<http://www.myhealth.london.nhs.uk/>). As part of an on-going data-sharing project with NHS London that focusses on GP information, we have added a news item to London GP profiles on NHS Choices. This highlights the profiles and additional indicators that are available at myhealthlondon. Practice or PCT Editors are free to edit or remove this item.

Q. Why is NHS Choices publishing patient comments?

A. In a modern, taxpayer-funded NHS it is right that people have the opportunity to comment on the services they receive. Patient feedback is an important source of information that, in conjunction with other practice details on www.nhs.uk, such as the available services and facilities, can help patients choose the right practice for them and their families. It is also an important source of information for practices to assess their current service and if necessary how and where to make changes.

Q. How long will comments remain on the website?

A. Comments and ratings remain on NHS Choices for five years. However, after two years the comments are clearly highlighted as being older postings and the rating values no longer contribute to the overall rating for the practice.

Q. Won't it just serve people with a grievance or those who simply want to moan?

A. The evidence from three years' worth of patient feedback on hospitals and GP practices suggests not. There are more than 78,000 patient comments on NHS Choices and the majority contain positive feedback. More than half of GP patients that express an opinion state that they would recommend their practice to a friend.

Q. Did NHS Choices consult with the profession?

A. Yes. We have been in discussions with the BMA since 2009 and it has helped us to draft the questions and design the moderation process.

Q. Although users will not be able to name individual GPs and other staff, what about single-handed practices?

A. All comments are pre-moderated to ensure that nothing malicious, libellous or defamatory will appear on the site. Moderators will be made aware where a comment is about a small or single-handed practice so they can take this into account.

Q. How do I log into the organisation response/comments tool?

A. Either connect from the email that is sent out notifying that a comment has been posted, or use <https://choicesmoderation.nhs.uk>. Your login details will be the same as your NHS Choices account that allows access to practice profiles.

FURTHER INFORMATION

If you have any questions regarding your profile information or functionality, or any aspect of practice feedback the available functions, please go to nhs.uk/gp where key information and an illustrated copy of this briefing can be found or email the NHS Choices Service Desk at thechoicesteam@nhschoices.nhs.uk