

## Online Patient Access Policy – Proxy Access for Children

### At what age is proxy access possible for children?

Parents/guardians who have legal parental rights and responsibilities for a child are able to request proxy access to their child's record up until the child's 11th birthday.

The age at which children are deemed to be able to make their own decisions can vary greatly. For this reason, NHS England's policy states when a child reaches 11 years old the electronic access to their record becomes automatically disabled. **This means that parental access to their child's online services is switched off at the 11th birthday.**

Between their 11th and 16th birthday most children will become competent to make the decision about whether anyone should have proxy access for them.

People aged 16 or above are assumed to be competent to make an independent and informed decision and can access online services for themselves.

### What services are available for proxy access?

- Booking appointments
- Ordering repeat prescriptions
- Demographics
- Detailed coded records – allergies, medication, immunisations.

### Procedure

The correct form must be completed by the person wishing to gain proxy access.

Applicants for proxy access must have their identities verified in the same way as applicants do for access to their own record. Where proxy access is requested with the consent of the patient, the identity of the person giving consent for proxy access must be verified too.

### Refusing proxy access

Patients may be put under pressure to permit proxy access. If a GP or other health professional suspects that a patient is being coerced, they should try to establish the true position with the patient. If after discussion with the patient they still believe they have good grounds for suspicion that the patient is not giving access freely, they should tell the patient that they are not going to authorise or will withdraw proxy access. Practice staff registering a proxy must also be aware of signs to look out for.

Proxy access should not be granted in other circumstances, after discussion with the patient, if:

- Practice staff members believe a patient aged under 16 is competent to make a decision on access but that child has not given consent for proxy access to the person who is seeking it
- There is a risk to the security of the patient's record by the person being considered for proxy access
- The patient has previously expressed the wish not to grant proxy access to specific individuals should they lose capacity, either permanently or temporarily; this should be recorded in the patient's record
- The patient's GP judges that it is not in the best interests of the patient.

This policy has been written with reference to the following articles;

<https://www.rcgp.org.uk/patientonline>

<https://www.rcgp.org.uk/-/media/AB9C8ED1A836432FA5A0FC5E892F3F85.ashx>

<https://www.lmc.org.uk/visageimages/guidance/2016/POL/PatientOnline-ProxyAccess-guidance.pdf>

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*The current General Practice Systems of Choice (GPSoC ) contractual requirements for system suppliers, which requires the suppliers to make automatic changes to the proxy access available to children's records at these birthdays. The GPSoC contract requires GP system suppliers to make automatic changes to the proxy access available to children's records at these birthdays.*

- *On the child's 11th birthday, GP computer systems will automatically restrict the scope of existing proxy access unless the child has already been assessed to be competent and has given explicit consent to the proxy access*
- *From 11-16, a parent with proxy access will be able to manage certain elements of the young person's record, such as demographic data, and make appointments and order repeat prescriptions, but they will not be able to see the young person's past appointments or clinical record, although they would still be able to see the current repeat prescription record*
- *On the 16th birthday the systems will switch off all the remaining proxy access except where the young person is competent and has given explicit consent to the access.*