

Online GP services for people with dementia



When you care for someone with dementia, it is likely that at some stage, you will need to help them manage appointments, prescriptions and other services with their GP, particularly if they have other health conditions and/or are taking medication.

The majority of GPs offer online services where you can use your computer, tablet or smartphone to manage your own healthcare and that of the person you care for (if you have consent from them and their GP). You can access these services 24 hours a day.

Using online GP services

Online GP services can allow you to:

- book, change or cancel GP appointments without having to phone the practice. You can see if any face-to-face or telephone/video appointments are available in the coming days, and choose to see a particular doctor or nurse
- see a list of your regular medications, the prescribed dose, and when your next prescription is due
- request repeat prescriptions
- look up test results and compare new and past results
- see an abridged version of your medical notes, such as your diagnoses, any allergies, immunisations, and past surgery. You should be able to see information that was added recently, but may not be able to see older medical records; if you would like access to these, you will need to request them through your GP
- see your medical notes wherever you are. This can be useful if you require medical attention when you are on holiday or away from home
- have a remote consultation with a GP by phone or video call



Online GP services may be available via a website and/or an app. The most widely used is the NHS app, which is available to anyone over the age of 13 in England.

As well as the actions listed above, the NHS app allows you to:

- manage referrals and appointments
- book Covid and flu vaccinations
- manage organ donation preferences
- receive messages from healthcare professionals

In Wales, there is a similar app called NHS Wales; in Northern Ireland, it is called My Care. The Scottish app, NHS 24 Online, only allows you to find your nearest healthcare service and assess symptoms and does not include the full features of the NHS app in England.

Using online GP services on behalf of a person with dementia

If you care for someone with dementia, using online GP services can help you manage their appointments and repeat prescriptions. They can also act as a record of the person's previous appointments, prescriptions and test results.

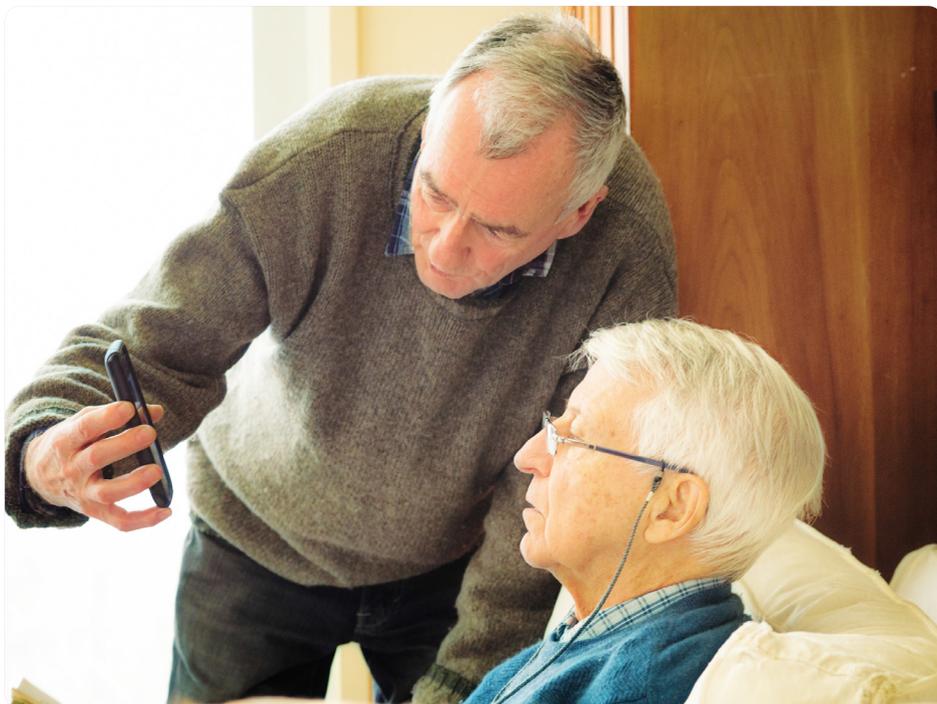
To set up an online GP account for the person you care for, or to access an online account that they already have, you must be named as a 'trusted person' by the person and their GP. This is also known as 'proxy access'.

To set up proxy access or become a trusted person, you will need the person's consent. To give their informed consent, they must have the capacity to do so under the Mental Capacity Act. This means they must be able to:

- understand the information relevant to the decision
- retain that information for long enough to make a decision
- use or weigh up that information as part of the decision-making process
- communicate their decision to others

Mental capacity is not a fixed concept. For example, a person may have the capacity to make some decisions (eg what to buy at the shops) but not others (eg whether to sell property). It can also change over time – for example, a person may lose capacity if they develop delirium (sudden confusion, often related to illness) but regain it once they recover.

The GP can offer guidance on whether the person you care for has capacity to consent to the sharing of information and/or proxy access. You can also read our leaflet on capacity and decision-making – see Sources of support on p10 for details.



Dementia is a progressive condition, so a person with the diagnosis is likely to reach a stage where they no longer have capacity to make some decisions. In this situation, it might be possible for the GP to name you as a trusted person without the person's consent if it is considered to be in their best interests.

How to apply to become a trusted person

To appoint you as a trusted person, the person with dementia will be asked to fill in a form from their GP surgery. The form has three important parts:

- Part one names the trusted person
- Part two states which online services you will have access to – appointments, prescriptions and/or GP records. You can be given

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access to one, two, or all three of these. The GP can advise you on which will be most useful in your situation

- Part three is for the person with dementia to sign to confirm that they want you to have access to their online GP services, now or in the future. You can help them fill in the other parts of the form, but they must sign it themselves. If they are unable to sign the form, please ask the GP or practice manager for advice

You will then need to visit the GP along with the person with dementia. You will both need photographic ID such as a passport, driving licence or bus pass. If you or the person with dementia do not have any of these forms of ID, there are other ways to prove your identity. The GP practice can advise you about this.

The GP may ask to see the person with dementia alone before giving you online access as a trusted person. They may wish to ask whether there is any information in their medical file that they would like to be kept private. The GP can decide not to give you access to any or all of the person's online services if they feel it is not in their best interests.

The decision on whether to appoint you as a trusted person may take around two weeks, depending on how busy the GP is – the practice should be able to indicate the timescale. It may be possible to make the decision more quickly if the need is urgent. If this is the case, ask to speak to the GP.

Access to online services with a lasting power of attorney

A lasting power of attorney (LPA) is a legal document that appoints a person (or persons) to make decisions on someone's behalf if they are unable to do so themselves. There are two types of LPA: one for health and welfare, and another for property and financial affairs. See Sources of support on p10 for details of our leaflet on LPA.



If the person you care for has capacity but has not made an LPA nominating you as their attorney, you should encourage them to do so as soon as possible. As well as supporting your application to become a trusted person, it will allow you to make other important decisions in the person's best interests if they become unable to make these decisions themselves.

Being named as an attorney for health and welfare is not a guarantee that the GP will nominate you as a trusted person, so it is a good idea to talk to them about this as early as possible, preferably while the person with dementia has capacity to consent.

It is also helpful to register as a carer with your own GP by completing

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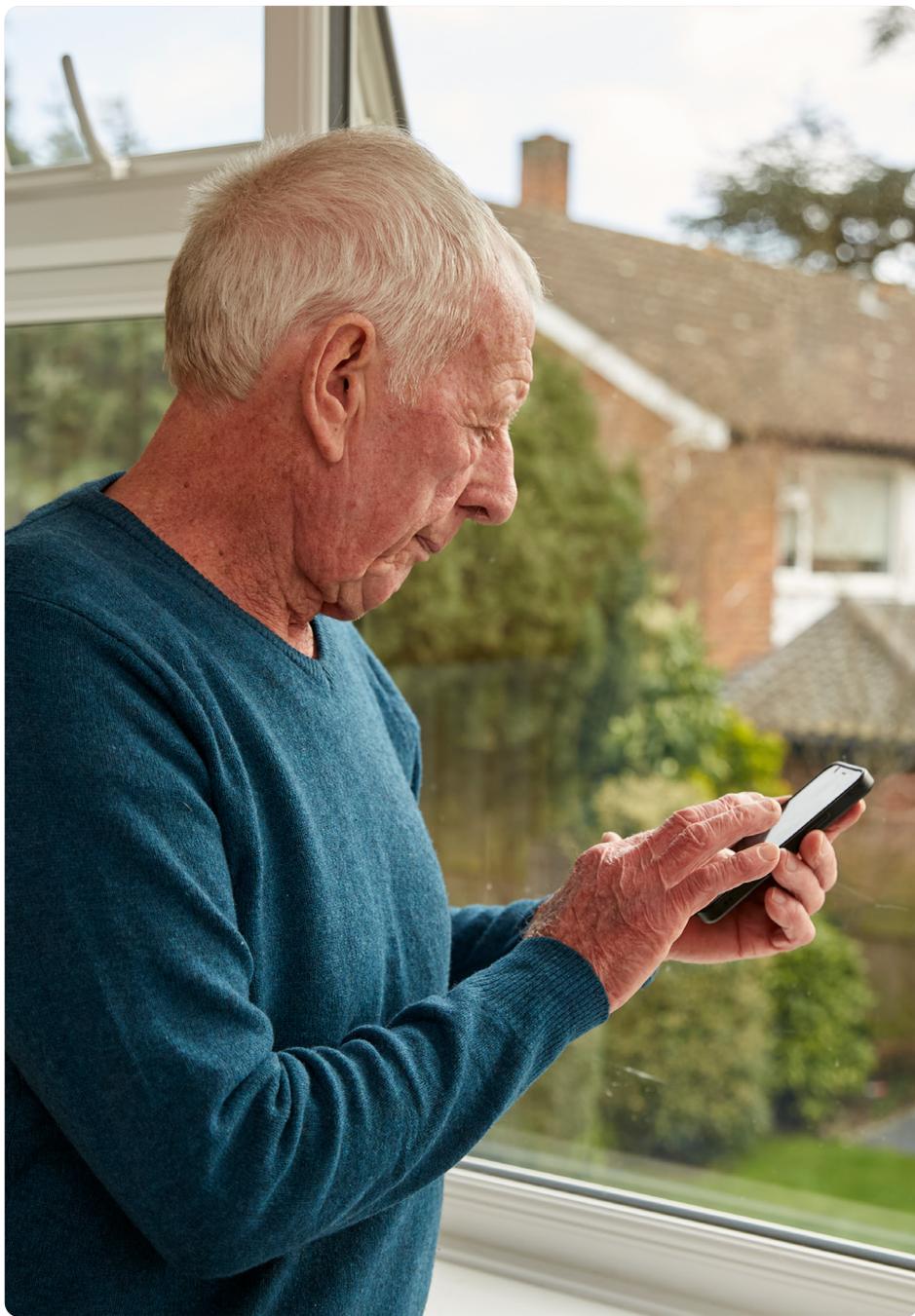
a carer registration form, which the practice can provide. See Sources of support on p10 for details of our leaflet on the importance of registering as a carer with your GP.

NHS 111

NHS 111 is a telephone and online service that helps people get the right medical advice and treatment in an urgent situation. You can access it by dialling 111 for free from a landline or mobile number, or online via [▶ 111.nhs.uk](https://111.nhs.uk)

Whether you use NHS 111 online or by phone, you will be asked a series of questions. You can answer them yourself or on behalf of someone else. Depending on the situation, you may be:

- told to call 999 or go to A&E in an emergency
- advised to go to an urgent treatment centre
- given an appointment with an out-of-hours GP (evenings and weekends)
- called back by an NHS 111 nurse for further assessment
- advised to contact your own GP
- referred for specialist support for dental or mental health problems
- advised to speak to a pharmacist
- given advice on managing the problem at home



Sources of support

To speak to a dementia specialist Admiral Nurse about using online GP services or any other aspect of dementia, call our free Helpline on **0800 888 6678** (Monday-Friday 9am-9pm, Saturday and Sunday 9am-5pm, every day except 25th December) or email [▶ helpline@dementiauk.org](mailto:helpline@dementiauk.org)

If you prefer, you can pre-book a phone or video call appointment with an Admiral Nurse: visit [▶ dementiauk.org/book](https://dementiauk.org/book)

Dementia UK information

Capacity and decision-making

[▶ dementiauk.org/capacity-decision-making](https://dementiauk.org/capacity-decision-making)

Delirium

[▶ dementiauk.org/delirium](https://dementiauk.org/delirium)

Getting the best out of GP and other health appointments

[▶ dementiauk.org/getting-the-best-out-of-gp-and-other-health-appointments](https://dementiauk.org/getting-the-best-out-of-gp-and-other-health-appointments)

Getting the best out of a remote consultation

[▶ dementiauk.org/getting-the-most-out-of-a-remote-consultation](https://dementiauk.org/getting-the-most-out-of-a-remote-consultation)

Lasting power of attorney

[▶ dementiauk.org/lasting-power](https://dementiauk.org/lasting-power)

Medication and dementia

[▶ dementiauk.org/medication](https://dementiauk.org/medication)

Registering as a carer with your GP

- dementiauk.org/the-importance-of-registering-as-a-carer

Apps for accessing GP services

NHS app (England)

- nhs.uk/nhs-app

NHS24 Online app (Scotland)

- nhs24.scot/nhs24-online-app

NHS Wales app

- app.nhs.wales

My Care app (Northern Ireland)

- dhcni.hscni.net/my-care

Other resources

Mental Capacity Act

- nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/making-decisions-for-someone-else/mental-capacity-act

NHS information: using online services

- nhs.uk/nhs-services/gps/using-online-services

Learn My Way: improving your health online

- learnmyway.com/explore-the-subjects/managing-your-health-online

**To speak to a dementia specialist Admiral Nurse
about any aspect of dementia:**

Contact our Helpline:
0800 888 6678 or [📧 helpline@dementiauk.org](mailto:helpline@dementiauk.org)

Book a virtual appointment:
[📅 dementiauk.org/book](https://dementiauk.org/book)

**Our charity relies entirely on donations to fund our
life-changing work. If you would like to donate to help us
support more families:**

- Call **0300 365 5500**
- Visit [📍 dementiauk.org/donate](https://dementiauk.org/donate)
- Scan the QR code

Thank you.



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Helping families face dementia



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