

Patients invited to update contact details using NHS login

Background information

NHS Digital has developed the ability for the public to update their phone number and email address held by the Personal Demographic Service (PDS) through NHS login. This is the first time that patients will be able to update this information without involving a member of NHS staff who has smartcard access.

NHS login has been chosen because it holds verified email and phone numbers for its users. These are likely to be current (they are required to authenticate a user when they access any NHS login integrated service) and NHS login can access the telecoms data stored about a user within PDS.

Patients will be prompted to update their contact details on the fourth occasion they go through NHS login authentication – a clear request that user testing has shown people will act upon. This is the ideal opportunity to confirm the details held by PDS are valid if they differ from those held by NHS login.

If a patient updates their information directly into the PDS it is available to health and care settings and it will be automatically passed through to GP practice and other PDS connected systems.

The outcomes of this work are:

- For the first time, patients will be able to directly update PDS with verified contact details
- Users confirming or updating their phone number will have a valid, confirmed primary phone number in PDS
- Users confirming or updating their email address will have one active, valid, confirmed primary email address in PDS
- Both pieces of information will have been verified and in use by the patient
- The source of the update will be held in PDS
- The new or confirmed phone number and email will be available to down-stream systems (such as EMIS & TPP) during synchronisation

The PDS update process

If users meet certain criteria whilst logging in to NHS login, they will be shown an interruption card and asked to update their contact details.

The criteria are as follows:

- The user has successfully completed the NHS login Prove Your Identity journey (P9-verified).
- The user has successfully authenticated (2-factor auth) using NHS login at least three times previously (they will be presented with the opportunity to update on the fourth time)
- The email and/or telephone number held by NHS login are different to those currently held by PDS
- The patient's record is not flagged as sensitive, invalid or under investigation
- The patient has not seen the interruption card in the previous six months (this number can be changed post-pilot)

Suggested text for your practice websites

You could now be asked to update your email address and phone number when you access [digital services](#) using NHS login if it varies from that held by the NHS. The ability to check your own contact information using your mobile device reduces the need to phone or come into practice to update your details.

You will be invited to update your details only if you have successfully used your NHS login to access digital services such as the NHS App a few times. Please try to take the opportunity to update your information - it is particularly important at the current time that we have your up-to-date contact details and this option will not automatically present itself for a number of months.

If you have a new number or email address and you don't receive a notification digitally via NHS login, please call to update us as you usually would.

FAQs

What happens if there is a mismatch?

The user will be informed that their change has been rejected but they won't know specifically why. However, they will have been told it is being checked by their GP on the interruption screen inviting them to update their details.

What are the benefits of people being able to update their own contact details?

Allowing the public to check the Personal Demographic Service (PDS) holds the correct email address and phone number reduces administrative burden for staff and is useful to the COVID-19 response. This is the first time that patients will be able to update this information without involving a member of NHS staff who has smartcard access. GP practices and other healthcare professionals will be asked to accept the details the patient has submitted using NHS login in the usual way. The service has been created by the NHS to improve access to digital health and social care and includes a full identity check following industry and government standards for security and identity.

What if patients don't get the interruption card?

If patients don't receive a notification digitally via NHS login, they should contact their practice to update their email address and phone number as they would have prior to the introduction of this new functionality within NHS login.

Is there a new process for updates?

We're not introducing a new process for PDS updates. Practices should already be familiar with the current process and will be asked to accept the details in the usual way.

Whose responsibility is it to ensure GP practices are informed about keeping the PDS up-to-date?

Guidance is issued to the system supplier as part of the Common Assurance Process (CAP). It is the system supplier's responsibility to issue guidance for the users. This is in part due to the fact that each system supplier has different functionality.

Why are people just invited to update email and phone number?

We are focusing on email address and phone number while we assess the impact of patients being able to update their own information for the first time. Address changes for example can have knock-on effects; such as a patient being de-registered from their GP

Why NHS login?

NHS login has been chosen because it holds verified email and phone numbers for its users. These are known to be in use as they are required to authenticate a user when they access any NHS login integrated service. NHS login can access the telecoms data stored about a user within PDS.

Patients are prompted to update their contact details during the fourth occasion they go through NHS login authentication – a clear call to action that user testing has shown people will act upon. This is the ideal opportunity to confirm the details held by PDS are valid if they differ from those held by NHS login as the user is already verified.

Does a PDS request via NHS login look different to others?

A request made this way won't look any different to any other, which is why it is important GP practices and other healthcare professionals are aware of the existing guidance around PDS updates.

Where should I go if I have a question about contact updates?

Please could you email your query to england.nhsximplementation@nhs.net with the subject 'NHS login contact updates'