

Keeping your online health and social care records safe and secure

By 2015, it is planned that everyone in England will be able to access their GP record through the internet. Many other health and social care organisations are opening up access to records too, and some people are creating their own personal health records online.

Each health and social care organisation that you have contact with keeps a record about you. If you sign up to access your record, you will be able to see it using a computer or a mobile device like a phone or tablet.

There can be great benefits from accessing your health and social care records online. But, your records contain personal and sometimes sensitive information, so it's important to keep them safe. You should take the same care with your health and social care records as you do if you use online banking.

To find out more about your records, talk to your **record provider** – the organisation that gives you access to the record they hold about you (such as your GP surgery, hospital or social care organisation.)

To read a longer version of this guide, go to www.nhs.uk/records

For more information about online safety, go to www.getsafeonline.org

1 Create a strong password and look after it

Record systems are designed so that your information inside them is very secure. However, your password is only as strong as you make it.

- Your passwords and other login information are important for keeping your records safe and secure. Set up a strong password and keep it secret. Never share your login information if someone requests them from you in an email.
- If you think someone might have seen your record without your permission, change your password straightaway and contact your record provider.

2 Get into good habits online

Get into some good habits to help make sure your online records stay safe. The Get Safe Online website (see the panel, below left) has more information.

- Protect the computer or mobile device you use to access your records – for example, by locking them with a password or PIN and keeping anti-virus software up to date.
- Be particularly careful about the security of your records if you're accessing them through a shared computer or while on the move.

3 Share your records safely, or not at all

One of the benefits of using online records is that you can share them with family members, carers or care professionals. However, sharing your record is something to think carefully about. Your record may contain sensitive and personal information that you don't want other people to see. And anyone you share your record with could keep a copy.

- Before you share your record with anyone, consider whether it's in your best interests and what they might do with the information, now or in the future. If you're in any doubt, don't share.
- If someone is trying to force you to share your record, tell your record provider.

A strong password is:

- A secret
- Easy for you to remember, or is kept somewhere safe
- At least eight characters long
- Changed regularly
- Only used for your health or social care record and nothing else.

