



NHS Choices: delivering for the NHS

NHS

choices

your health, your choices

www.nhs.uk

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Policy	Estates
HR/Workforce	Commissioning
Management	IM&T
Planning	Finance
Clinical	Social care/Partnership working

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Foreword

Information and choice are indispensable if we are to achieve a truly patient-centred NHS in which standards and quality are constantly improved.

The public who pay for the health service have a right to know how the performance of their GP or local hospital compares with others and the right to go elsewhere if they wish.

From April people can now choose any hospital in the NHS or independent sector for their treatment.

People should also be free to choose their GP.

NHS Choices already provides an unprecedented wealth of information on the health and social care system. This vision describes how NHS Choices will change over the next months and years to give people much more information to help them make decisions about their care.

For example, people will, for the first time, be able to compare the mortality rates at individual hospitals and the performance of individual surgeons. They will be able to compare the opening hours and performance of GPs.

This heralds a major shift in the balance of power in health and social care to the patient.

I hope you find it useful and I would welcome any suggestions on how we can improve NHS Choices further.

Ben Bradshaw

Minister of state for health services

The NHS Choices vision

NHS Choices is the NHS's online service for the public – the digital wing of the NHS.



NHS Choices is a response to the 21st-century challenges of achieving better health and wellbeing and delivering high-quality personalised services for all, amid ever-increasing demands on a resource-constrained system.

NHS Choices will become:

- A trusted and comprehensive information service: the single most important source of practical guidance and motivation on all aspects of health and social care.
- A way to connect people to services and each other.

- A digital health and wellbeing service that re-engineers the way the NHS and Social Services deliver care.

The aim is to create networks of virtual care that help people make better decisions about their health and wellbeing, and help transform the delivery of health and care services.

NHS Choices will be at the heart of a new relationship between commissioners, providers and the communities they serve. It will empower people to make informed decisions about their health and social care. It will be their personal health and wellbeing partner throughout their lives.

For its users, NHS Choices will be their:

- **Personal health manager**, providing the information and tools they need to take control of their health and wellbeing throughout their lives.
- **Online navigator**, helping them access the services they need, when they need them.
- **Social network for health**, linking them up with other people with common health interests and giving them opportunities to comment on their own experiences of health and care services.

For the NHS and social care services, NHS Choices will be a:

- **Shop window**, providing the opportunity to inform and engage with patients, people who use services, carers and the public.
- **Driver of improvement**, enabling free choice and a unique source of insight into people's experiences of health and social care.
- **Source of personalised digital services**, improving the quality and efficiency of patient and carer services.

“The NHS of the future needs to be more than a universal service. It will be a personal service, too. It will not be the NHS of the passive patient: the NHS of the future will be one of patient power, patients engaged and taking control over their own health and healthcare”

Prime Minister's speech on the National Health Service, January 7 2008



Strategic goals

Better access

Using technology to reduce inequalities and offer a personalised service

NHS Choices will use new technology to deliver personalised services in ways that ensure they reach those who need them most, whether directly or through a carer, a health professional or GP. It will operate via online, print, mobile, interactive kiosks, digital TV and radio channels. It will provide users with easy access to the NHS's current online services by integrating with services such as NHS Direct, Choose and Book and NHS HealthSpace.

Better health

Maintaining and improving wellbeing

NHS Choices will enable people to take greater responsibility for their own health and wellbeing so they can enjoy longer, healthier lives. Innovative tools will allow individuals to assess their own lifestyle and health risk, and provide practical

information and plans to help reduce these risks (and facilitate earlier diagnosis).

Better care

Help to navigate the system

NHS Choices will be the front door to the NHS and social care. It will help people to understand the right treatment and care options for themselves or those for whom they are caring, and to access those services more easily. Providers will take control of their own online profiles, allowing them to promote the quality and availability of their own services. Individuals will be able to create an interactive care pathway. Such pathways will be specific to their situation and will cross organisational boundaries to cover social care, voluntary and privately provided services.

Better quality through insight

Understanding the patient, client and carer experience

NHS Choices will be the place for the public to comment on their

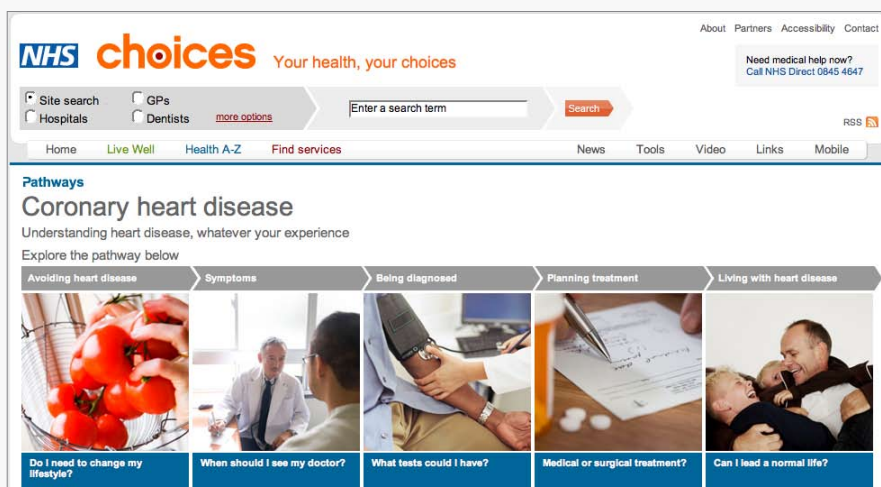
experiences of care and the quality of services, providing valuable feedback to ensure services are more responsive to local need. User-generated content will help others understand more about their conditions and local services, as well as promoting social networking between patients, people who use services, carers and clinicians.

Better lives

Improving community partnerships to deliver better health

NHS Choices will build relationships by working with local and national non-NHS partners. The service will support partnerships in employment, education, culture and sport. It will involve national and local government and voluntary sector agencies, as well as in the high street, through private sector partnerships with pharmacies, retailers and others.

NHS Choices is a **personal health manager**, providing people with the information and tools they need to take control of their health and wellbeing throughout their lives.



Left: NHS Choices helps people with long-term conditions make decisions every step of the way

Right: A mother and her baby try out the Early Years LifeCheck at Stockingford Children's Centre in Nuneaton in January 2007

Welcome to NHS Early Years LifeCheck

www.nhs.uk/earlyyearslifecheck



NHS choices Your health, your choices

Need medical help now? Call NHS Direct 0845 4647

Site search Hospitals GPs Dentists [more options](#) Enter a search term Search

Home Live Well Health A-Z Find services News Tools Video Links Mobile

Planning treatment for: Arthroscopy

Step 3 - Where can I go to see a specialist for my first appointment?

You can compare hospitals on a range of important areas. Click the name of the hospital to read full information about its services. The indicators and scores for hospitals and the organisations (e.g. Trusts) that run them are for adult procedures only and do not cover paediatric treatments.

More choice
You can choose from a wider selection of hospitals. [Compare more](#)

Information about the hospitals that you could go to

Summary	Questions to consider	Patient respect	People's opinions	Hospital locations	Contact and travel
<p>Click on the questions below to link to a full explanation of what they mean</p> <p>How far is the hospital from me?</p> <p>2.02 miles</p>	<p>Click on the questions below to link to a full explanation of what they mean</p> <p>How long will I have to wait to see a hospital doctor?</p> <p>Patients are having to wait an average of 31 days to see a doctor at this hospital</p>	<p>Click on the questions below to link to a full explanation of what they mean</p> <p>What was the overall rating of this hospital by NHS Choices users?</p> <p>Very poor Very good</p>	<p>Click on the questions below to link to a full explanation of what they mean</p> <p>How far is the hospital from me?</p> <p>1.26 miles</p>	<p>Click on the questions below to link to a full explanation of what they mean</p> <p>How long will I have to wait to see a hospital doctor?</p> <p>Patients are having to wait an average of 365 days to see a doctor at this hospital</p>	<p>Click on the questions below to link to a full explanation of what they mean</p> <p>What was the overall rating of this hospital by NHS Choices users?</p> <p>Very poor Very good</p>
<p>Click on the questions below to link to a full explanation of what they mean</p> <p>How far is the hospital from me?</p> <p>2.69 miles</p>	<p>Click on the questions below to link to a full explanation of what they mean</p> <p>How long will I have to wait to see a hospital doctor?</p> <p>Patients are having to wait an average of 33.8 days to see a doctor at this hospital</p>	<p>Click on the questions below to link to a full explanation of what they mean</p> <p>What was the overall rating of this hospital by NHS Choices users?</p> <p>Very poor Very good</p>	<p>Click on the questions below to link to a full explanation of what they mean</p> <p>How far is the hospital from me?</p> <p>0.85 miles</p>	<p>Click on the questions below to link to a full explanation of what they mean</p> <p>How long will I have to wait to see a hospital doctor?</p> <p>Patients are having to wait an average of 40.5 days to see a doctor at this hospital</p>	<p>Click on the questions below to link to a full explanation of what they mean</p> <p>What was the overall rating of this hospital by NHS Choices users?</p> <p>Very poor Very good</p>
<p>Click on the questions below to link to a full explanation of what they mean</p> <p>How far is the hospital from me?</p> <p>0.81 miles</p>	<p>Click on the questions below to link to a full explanation of what they mean</p> <p>How long will I have to wait to see a hospital doctor?</p> <p>Patients are having to wait an average of 31 days to see a doctor at this hospital</p>	<p>Click on the questions below to link to a full explanation of what they mean</p> <p>What was the overall rating of this hospital by NHS Choices users?</p> <p>Very poor Very good</p>	<p>Click on the questions below to link to a full explanation of what they mean</p> <p>How far is the hospital from me?</p> <p>2.02 miles</p>	<p>Click on the questions below to link to a full explanation of what they mean</p> <p>How long will I have to wait to see a hospital doctor?</p> <p>Patients are having to wait an average of 365 days to see a doctor at this hospital</p>	<p>Click on the questions below to link to a full explanation of what they mean</p> <p>What was the overall rating of this hospital by NHS Choices users?</p> <p>Very poor Very good</p>

Data Source: NHS Choices

Data Source: Choose and Book

Data Source: NHS Choices

Hospitals run by [City And Hackney Teaching PCT](#):
[St Leonard's](#) (2.02 miles)

Hospitals run by [Camden PCT](#):
[St Pancras Hospital](#) (1.26 miles)

Hospitals run by [Barts and The London NHS Trust](#):
[The Royal London Hospital](#) (2.69 miles)
[St Bartholomew's Hospital](#) (0.85 miles)

Hospitals run by [University College London Hospital NHS Foundation Trust](#):
[University College Hospital](#) (0.81 miles)



Top, left: People can compare services before choosing where to have treatment

Bottom, left: People can find the nearest health services with their mobile phone

Above, top: People can find services by location

NHS services on your mobile

Use our text service to find local doctors, dentists, A&E services and more, or even check your body mass index

[More about the mobile service](#)

NHS Choices is an **online navigator**, helping people find the services they need, when they need them.

What is NHS Choices already doing?

NHS Choices is constantly developing and expanding its coverage and capabilities.

“NHS Choices reflects the information age – a world in which expanding amounts of data are distributed with increasing speed. People expect information to make decisions about many aspects of daily life. NHS Choices helps fulfil that need”

Choice Matters, Department of Health 2007/08

NHS Choices first went live in June 2007. It is a continuous process to maintain and enrich the information it provides, extend its technical capabilities and broaden its relationship with the NHS, the social care community and beyond. The first major upgrade went live in November 2007, with further improvements coming online throughout 2008.

As the online service for all health and wellbeing communication with the public, it has been designed specifically with the consumer in mind. The information on NHS Choices is all NHS accredited and written in plain English. It is accompanied by videos, user comments and a growing range of interactive tools, which allow users to test and monitor their health and wellbeing. The information held on NHS Choices is designed so that GPs, social workers and others can print pages for people who don't have internet access.

NHS Choices is already being used 1.5 million times a month and that's before any significant public promotion has taken place.

Pilots are under way in a number of PCTs to test the value of using alternative channels, especially mobiles. In common with other digital publishers, NHS Choices is also syndicating its content to other media so that the widest possible audience sees it. For example, The Life Channel will soon be showing NHS Choices videos in more than two thousand GP surgeries.

The next round of enhancements to the service includes the introduction of a series of pathways covering the key long-term conditions, a suite of life-stage planners, risk assessment and behaviour-change tools and a significant increase in user-generated content. This will lead to expert blogs, forums and the opportunity for people to have their say on every aspect of their health and care.

NHS Choices is also starting to bring together a range of existing NHS online services for the public so that they can all be accessed in one place.



What is NHS Choices already doing?

The screenshot shows the NHS Choices website interface. At the top left is the NHS logo and the text 'choices your health, your choices'. On the top right, there are links for 'About', 'Partners', 'Accessibility', and 'Contact', along with a box for 'Need medical help now? Call NHS Direct: 0845 4647'. Below this is a search bar with options for 'Full search', 'Hospitals', 'GPs', and 'Dentists', and a 'Search' button. A navigation menu includes 'Home', 'Live well', 'Health A-Z', 'Find services', 'News', 'Tools', 'Video', and 'Links'. The main content area is divided into several sections: a video player for 'Discover the dangers of illegal drugs' with a 'Click to play' button; a 'Search our Health A-Z' section featuring 'Organ donations' and 'Norovirus'; a 'Behind the headlines' section with a brain image and links to 'Radiation linked to heart disease', 'Breakfast keeps teens slim', and 'Cancer risk after combined HRT'; a 'Compare hospitals' section with a list of bullet points and a video testimonial; an 'Exclusive: Look Inside the Map of Medicine' section; a 'Calculators, quizzes and interactive tools' section; a 'Stop smoking' section with a 'SMOKEFREE' logo and a woman's image; an 'Understand antibiotics' section; and a 'Tell us what you think' section with a 'Feedback' link.

“I am personally committed to making information about the clinical performance of the NHS more accessible, not only to inform patients but to drive improvement where necessary. NHS Choices is a huge step forward in this regard and its power lies in the fact that clinicians and patients alike are informing its development”

Professor Sir Bruce Keogh, NHS medical director and NHS Choices Clinical Information Advisory Group chairman

Driving improvement

Patients' thoughts and feedback

Patients can use the site to provide direct and immediate feedback on their experiences in hospital. NHS Choices publishes all comments, whether good or bad, subject to moderation rules. Hospitals also have a right of reply.

Health A-Z

An easy-to-use encyclopaedia of conditions and treatments. The A-Z draws together high quality, accredited and accessible content on more than 700 conditions from the National Library for Health and elsewhere, videos of real people, advice from named clinical experts and links to further information. The A-Z covers prevention, symptoms and treatment options, as well as questions to ask your specialist and information on managing and living with the condition.

Live Well

Magazine-style multimedia content designed to appeal to the interests and concerns of particular groups, from teenagers to 60-plus, or those with interests in a specific health issue. Live Well offers clinically approved advice on lifestyle-related health issues in the form of features, audio and videos, along with interactive tools and games. The service also uses experiences and stories from the public to support the advice, making it more personal and relevant.

Behind the Headlines

A daily, evidence-based news service that analyses and where necessary corrects the blizzard of health stories and claims that make the news.

Compare hospitals

People can compare performance and other data on all hospitals that provide the treatment they need. For the first time, NHS Choices brings together in one place data on issues such as waiting times, MRSA rates, the number of times a unit undertakes specific surgeries and the Healthcare Commission's annual health check scores.

Map of Medicine

People can now see the information many doctors use to plan their treatment. The Map presents visual decision trees, developed by experts in evidence-based medicine, for over one hundred conditions.

Find a service

People can enter a postcode to find their nearest medical service, including hospitals, GP surgeries, dentists, pharmacies, smoking cessation clinics, sports facilities and others. People can also text the service required to 64746 ("NHSGO").

Profiles of providers

Every GP and hospital trust in England can choose to edit its own NHS Choices profile with information about its staff, clinics and performance data. Dentists, pharmacists and opticians also have profiles on the site.

“We advise GPs to visit the NHS Choices site and to fill in their own profiles. We believe in developing online services, as long as they are reliable. This is a useful resource for GPs as it will allow patients to find out accurate information directly from their practice”

Dr Laurence Buckman, Chairman of the British Medical Association's GP Committee

NHS Choices is a **social network for health**, linking up people with common health interests and giving them opportunities to comment on their own experiences of health and care services.



Above: Diana Wilson shares her story of living with obsessive compulsive disorder

Far right, top: Community forums connect users

Far right, bottom: A patient comments on his experience in hospital



choices your health, your choices
forums and expert advice

Join our Community
It only takes a few minutes to join. Please fill in the information below to create your account

Name, email and password (required)

Name:

Choose Password:

Re-enter Password:

Email Address:

Re-enter Email Address:

Timezone:

Join Now

Bob (patient) said on 25 Mar 2008

What you liked:

I visited Homerton as a patient for day surgery in August 2007. I have to be honest and say I was very pleasantly surprised at how efficient and trouble free the whole experience was. I was seen very quickly, didn't have to wait too long, and when I did have to wait the reasons why were explained to me. Some of the staff smiled and were friendly. I was asked, after the surgery if I was comfortable. I was admitted at 7.30am and out at 1pm - amazing! The after care advice was good and I was given an out of hours phone number "just in case". Thank you Homerton

What could be improved:

Most people smiled and said hello and introduced themselves to me and explained everything. If everyone could have done the same it would be perfect.

Also there is no waiting area for relatives.

Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust

Overview

Other Sites



Who we are

Chief Executive: Mr David Dalton

We are a major teaching Foundation Trust which has been confirmed as the best performing North West hospital and among the top 4% of Trusts in England by the Healthcare Commission. We are also one of only two Trusts in England to receive a prestigious accreditation for patient safety and quality. This means that patients can be confident when they choose our services that we are providing safe, clean and personal care. A large and busy teaching hospital, we care for an average of 320,000 people a year and provide a range of medical, surgical, maternity and emergency services to the people of Salford. We also offer specialist

Patient

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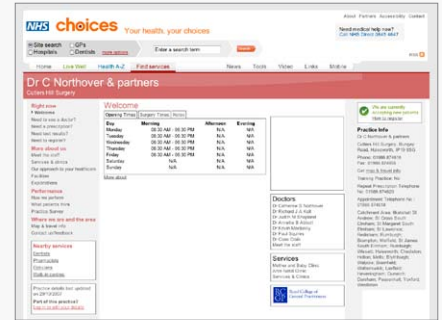
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Patient

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Tel: 016

Patient &
involved
commun



Left and above, top: *Hospitals and GPs can take control of the information that appears on their NHS Choices pages*

Above, bottom: *Expert views are encouraged on the site*

NHS Choices is a **shop window**, providing the opportunity to inform and engage with patients, people who use services, carers and the public.

Putting people in control

NHS Choices will equip people to make informed choices and to get what they need from the health and care system.

NHS Choices has just got started.

The next three years will see its services develop to help people take control of their health and wellbeing.

A personal health manager

NHS Choices aims to build a lifelong relationship with individuals, equipping them with information and interactive services to stay as healthy as possible throughout their lives. NHS Choices will provide people with a personalised virtual health manager, and will enable secure access to their medical records and other services through NHS HealthSpace.

Find out the risks

Whether an individual wants to look at specific issues (smoking, diet or hereditary conditions) or get a general picture of the risks they face, NHS Choices will offer a range of evidence-based interactive tools, health checks and games. Each will be followed up with clinically appropriate information and advice, including signposting to relevant local services. NHS Choices will also be the online platform for a series of NHS LifeCheck tools enabling users at different ages and stages of life to assess their behaviour, identify what they could change and access support to maintain healthier lifestyles. These tools will be available in 2008.

“As clinicians, we want our patients to stay healthy. To do so, they need the right information in an easily useable form. Online tools grounded in solid research and testing will do this as well

as providing an important source of support for GPs in the task of improving the health of their patients”

Dr Michael Dixon, NHS Alliance chairman and NHS LifeCheck Programme Board chairman

The health account

By summer 2008, a patient will have the option to create an online account in which to record their preferences, save a profile and bookmark useful content. NHS Choices will help people to create and monitor their own health action plans and give them the option of receiving email newsletters, RSS services and motivational messages. The health account will become the route into NHS HealthSpace, the only fully secure, free online environment giving people access to their medical records and a range of personalised services.

The health statement

NHS Choices will generate personal health and wellbeing statements on a quarterly or annual basis. The statement will summarise simply and visually a patient's health over the previous year, including the health services they've used, the results of any risk assessments they've taken, and a recap on goals set and actions taken. If they have been diagnosed with a long-term condition or are facing a major operation, NHS Choices will also create a personalised information prescription for either them or their GP, social worker or carer to download. This will include reliable information about the condition and treatment options, and details of support groups and local services.

The online navigator

NHS Choices will create a new era of transparency about the quality and availability of health and care services. It will equip people to make informed choices and get what they need from the health and care system.

“Access to good quality information about health and social care services is essential if people want to have control of their lives, care and support. NHS Choices provides the opportunity to access such information”

David Behan, director general for social care, Department of Health

The journey planner

Whether someone is facing diagnosis of a condition or simply entering a new phase of life, such as pregnancy, NHS Choices will equip them to make decisions at every point along the way. A series of pathways and planners will present: easily navigable information on symptoms, treatments and lifestyle; comparative data on providers; other people's experiences; decision aids; expert advice; and directories of services, including social care. Patients will be able to design (and redesign) their own journey, either alone or with their carer or health professional. Pathways will cover the top 40 conditions by 2009.

“NHS Choices is a good example of an online ‘navigator’ that can help people find their way around the health system”

Professor the Lord Darzi of Denham KBE, parliamentary under secretary of state at the Department of Health

“Even when we are healthy we should have access to information about our risks and advice on how we can maintain our health. That is the kind of real control the NHS must give us all if we are to have a service fit to meet the challenges of the 21st century”

Prime Minister's speech on the National Health Service, January 7 2008

Informed choices

NHS Choices enables people to make informed decisions about their health and care, providing the single most comprehensive, validated and easily searchable source of comparative data on the quality and availability of services. NHS Choices will help patients and their

carers to decide whether they need treatment and, if so, to choose the treatment that is right for them, as well as where and when to get it.

Information on quality, in relation to specific medical and surgical treatments, will take into account NICE guidance, clinical evidence and the models of care outlined by the NHS Next Stage Review. It will be clear about whether a treatment is clinically effective or where there is uncertainty and whether a provider meets defined standards for supplying that treatment. Measures of other patients' experiences complement these clinical indicators.

People will be able to tailor their searches according to their knowledge, experience, location and what matters to them. This means that the service can be useful to both an expert patient looking for the latest research and an everyday user looking for some basic facts. The range of data available through NHS Choices is constantly and rapidly expanding.

The portal to the NHS

People will be able to use NHS Choices to make their dealings with the NHS and social care work better for them. Through NHS HealthSpace, the service will in time

enable them to book appointments online, email their clinicians, access their personal health records, order repeat prescriptions, get test results and complete checklists of questions in advance of an appointment. They will also be able to record their care preferences so that they are available wherever they are treated.

The social network for health

Health-focused web forums, blogs and social networks are a rapidly growing resource for people sharing their experiences and seeking advice. Many already exist and can be made available through NHS Choices. More will also be created, utilising expert input from NHS professionals and the Expert Patients Programme.

When people want to comment directly on their experiences of particular services, whether positive or negative, NHS Choices will become their first port of call. This service is already available for hospital care but will be extended in 2008 to allow comment on GPs and other services.

“Designing and delivering services that fit with people's lives will help to reduce inequalities in health and social care outcomes”

Our NHS, Our Future, October 2007

Bridging the digital divide

Digital technology has the potential to widen health inequalities. However, it also has the potential to open up access to health services and information to groups that have traditionally been underserved. NHS Choices intends to demonstrate this.

Analysis of health inequalities and research into how people prefer to receive and use information is informing the development of a strategy for tackling health inequalities. NHS Choices will:

- Deliver information and services through alternative channels, including mobiles, digital TV, radio and kiosks.
- Train health professionals and other intermediaries to use NHS Choices services with their clients or print key information for them.

A programme of local pilots is under way in Humber, Derby, Warwickshire, Coventry and London to test these approaches. For example:

- Giving young people access to information about sexual health

and services through mobiles and Bluetooth technology.

- Making NHS Choices available through workplace intranets and creating online communities around smoking and exercise, aimed at those who are more likely to access the internet at work.
- Training staff in children's centres to help parents undertake LifeCheck assessments focusing on their babies' wellbeing.
- Linking up with community radio to make health-related audio packages available to non-internet users.

NHS Choices is a **driver of improvement**, enabling free choice and providing a unique source of insight into people's experiences of health and social care.



In the Patient Choice video, members of the public say why they would choose where to be treated



Yvonne Bennett talks about discovering her right to choose and how it put her in control

NHS choices Your health, your choices

Site search Hospitals GPs Dentists more options Enter a search term Search

Home Live Well Health A-Z Find services News Tools Video Links Mobile

Nearby hospitals
Maudsley Hospital
The Lambeth Hospital
Marie Stopes International Sou...
Marie Stopes International Sou...
Compare hospitals >

King's College Hospital (Denmark Hill)

This hospital is managed by/provides services for **King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust**

About this hospital Treatments offered Read Comments Add Your Comments About the trust

Welcome More information

King's College Hospital (Denmark Hill)

Microsoft [A2218]
Tel: 020 3299 9000
Fax: 020 3299 3445

Denmark Hill,
London,
Greater London,
SE5 9RS

People's comments
Overall satisfaction:
Very poor Acceptable Very good

Read what people think
Tell us your thoughts

King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
Healthcare Commission overall rating: **EXCELLENT**
Find out more

Users can read what people think of a hospital

Serving the 21st century NHS

NHS Choices will be at the heart of the new relationship between the NHS, Social Services and the communities they serve.

This relationship will bring new opportunities and new challenges for both individuals and organisations.

The NHS shop window

NHS Choices will reveal the quality and availability of services across the country. Every doctor, dentist and NHS provider will have their own profile page by 2009, allowing them to take control of how they present themselves and how they communicate the quality and relevance of their services.

At local, regional and national level, the NHS will also be able to use the service to improve the quality and depth of its engagement with local communities, from online consultations to coordinated public health campaigns.

“As a chief executive I am looking forward to NHS Choices delivering up-to-the-minute feedback from patients in a similar way to Expedia or eBay. That ‘customer insight’ is a powerful incentive for us to improve our services. Anything that helps us to get better is good news for the trust and great news for patients”

Gavin Boyle, chief executive, Yeovil District Hospital Foundation Trust

Driving improvements in health and healthcare

As the engine of free choice and the source of open feedback on NHS performance, NHS Choices will drive positive competition and require NHS

organisations to create and demonstrate continuous improvements in quality.

The feedback it gathers will be invaluable in supporting world-class commissioning.

“Working with NHS Choices has enabled us to pilot some innovative approaches using different communication channels and social marketing techniques to help people in North East Lincolnshire to make healthier lifestyle choices”

Jane Lewington, Chief executive, North East Lincolnshire Care Trust Plus

The service will support and enrich locally driven programmes to improve public health and reduce inequalities, providing a rich source of health information and evidence-based tools to support behaviour change that can be tailored to local priorities.

The NHS Choices service will be developed to give highly personalised advice to all on diet and activity levels, with clear and consistent information on how to maintain a healthy weight. NHS Choices will also become the online channel for national campaigns: Go Smokefree is already accessible via the NHS Choices site.

New opportunities will be created to involve employers, local government, voluntary organisations and patient groups in influencing people’s health and wellbeing ‘in the rest of their lives’. By syndicating services to employers’

intranets and community organisations, linking up with school curricula and other initiatives, NHS Choices will provide a focal point for health and wellbeing promotion.

“NHS Choices is a unique and vibrant resource of great value to voluntary organisations and charities concerned with health and care. Its interactive features allow patients to track their healthcare over time and make informed choices for their future wellbeing. The Users’ Council will ensure there

are opportunities for an active partnership between the creators and users of this resource”

Clive Evers, director of knowledge management, Alzheimer’s Society, and chairman of the NHS Choices Users’ Council

Personalising services

NHS Choices will provide personalised, digital services that help improve the quality and efficiency of interactions with patients. Pre-consultation questionnaires, online decision aids and email consultations will save clinicians time, improve consultations and support their relationships with patients.

Remote monitoring and other telehealth initiatives are already beginning to transform the experiences of people with long-term conditions. NHS Choices will support and facilitate the delivery of such services in its role as a secure online personal health manager.

“The future has already arrived. It’s just not evenly distributed yet”

William Gibson, writer, quoted in *The Economist*, December 4 2003

Individual patients, clinicians and others across the NHS are already creating local digital solutions to the challenges they face. NHS Choices aims to support and accelerate the take-up of these kinds of innovations, to appropriate clinical and governance standards, by both healthcare professionals and their patients.

Health information via YouTube

Patients of a rural GP practice in Wales can now view films to help them manage their health on www.builthsurgery.co.uk, and anyone can find them on YouTube. The videos include demonstrations of flu vaccination, using an inhaler and blood sugar testing.

GP Dr Richard Walters says, “We are in rural mid-Wales, with shops and other services often an hour or more away from where people live. Our patients do tend to use the internet for all sorts of things. Sometimes getting patients to watch a quick video on the computer screen is a lot easier than having them travel in to see us.”

Accessing patient records online

Access to their own electronic care plan is available to patients with chronic kidney disease who sign up to www.renalpatientview.org. The project is a partnership between professional and patient organisations, the Renal Information Exchange Group.

Patients can review their blood test results and clinic letters, check their diagnosis and access information. The data are updated at least once a day from the local unit’s own

computer system and patients are encouraged to contact their unit if they spot any inaccuracies.

GPs with patients who are signed up to the system are able to review their details. Patients can also opt to share their password with family or carers. One user says, “I felt like a pest because I kept ringing the hospital for my results after I had attended clinic. I now feel that my results belong to me.”

Social and health networking for teenagers experiencing cancer

Cancerbackup has developed a site aimed at teenagers at www.click4tic.org.uk. The site allows users to set up their own web page, communicate with other teenagers via the forum, add tips or ask a nurse a question. There are also games sections, blogs and links to Bebo, Facebook and MySpace.

Rebecca Grant, aged 15, was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukaemia in September 2005. She says, “It was a massive shock, for me and my family, when I was diagnosed with cancer. At first, I thought I was the only child with cancer, but being able to use the TIC website made me realise that I was not alone, and that others my age were living with cancer too. It really helped me and I got loads of tips on how to cope with hair loss and chemo.”

Online repeat prescription service

www.myrepeats.com was set up as an NHS limited company owned by a group of experienced general practitioners and pharmacists in Worthing, West Sussex. The service allows registered patients to place orders for repeat prescriptions, free of charge and delivered to their pharmacist or their house. The site sends users an email reminder when they are next due to order their medicines. Paul Howie, a pharmacist, says, “We processed over 1,000 scripts in December, just four months from

launch. Even customers in their 60s and 70s are using the service. Those that can’t use the internet ask a carer to sign up on their behalf.”

Enabling self-care

Marple Cottage Surgery, in Stockport, has pioneered an online monitoring service for asthma patients. Patients can complete regular reviews of their asthma at home, and share them with the asthma nurse securely online, rather than coming into the surgery.

Practice manager Johan Taylor says, “This service is an extension of the personalised self-management plans that are already offered in the surgery, but it is another way for patients to communicate with us. Online reviews are particularly beneficial for patients who find it difficult to attend the surgery during working hours.

“While it frees up appointment times for the practice, a far more important benefit is that it engages patients directly in their own healthcare.”

Hospital doctors using text messaging

Dr Badal Pal, a consultant rheumatologist at the South Manchester Hospitals NHS Trust, has been texting patients with their test results and information about follow up. Rather than waiting several weeks, patients often receive their results in only a few days. Text messaging is particularly attractive, because so many patients have mobile phones, even in lower income groups.

Dr Pal says, “I encourage patients to text me to report whether or not a treatment or intervention (for example, corticosteroid injections into joints or soft tissues) has been successful. If patients do not report the expected benefit, then I can offer further advice or, if necessary, arrange an earlier appointment. I have been able to discharge a sizeable proportion of patients following text message reporting.”



Secretary of State for Health Alan Johnson launches the NHS Choices sexual health information pilot in the Humber region in November 2007

NHS Choices is a
**source of personalised
digital services,**
improving the quality
and efficiency of patient
and carer services.

2010 and beyond

What will NHS Choices mean to people?

Fitting health into life

"I've got three teenage kids and barely have time to cook dinner, let alone think about looking after my health. Jay came back from school one day with a 5 A Day chart from NHS Choices, which he fills in religiously. I went on the site myself and did a questionnaire and they sent me a plan for healthy eating that I can fit into our lives. What's even better is that, as long as I record what I've eaten and how much I weigh, the NHS Choices Health and Wellbeing Club gives me points to spend on activities at the local gym. I've used them to do some fun things with the boys – I've even been up the climbing wall!"



Keeping track of my risks from home

"When I had my first baby, I had to go for blood pressure tests three times a week, which was a real pain. When the second one came along, they said I could use a home monitor that plugs into my computer. The results got sent straight to my GP and I could see them in my HealthSpace account. The couple of times it got a bit high they called me and I went in to get checked out. I felt much less anxious and Bo is now a happy three-month-old."



Simple access to simple messages

"I'm from Poland, my English is not good. I work in a hotel and I want to stop smoking. I saw a poster in the kitchen and texted 64746. This tells me I can get free gum from the chemist near by and now they send me texts to help me not to smoke."



Managing my pills

"I have to take several pills these days, all at different times. I get awfully confused but now my pharmacist puts it all into the computer. He prints me off a nice clear sheet that has pictures of all the pills and when to take them. He sends me regular updates – a bit like bank statements really. What's amazing is that my doctor can find my sheet on her own computer when I go and see her."



The health trainer

"I often use NHS Choices with my clients. People find it amazing when you show them how much higher diabetes rates are round here than they are in nearby boroughs. It's a great way of focusing minds, and I can then help them do a personalised risk assessment on the site there and then."



My online network

"One of the things about having MS is that the computer is a real lifeline. First, I discovered that, much as I liked my GP, there was another one in a practice nearby that had a real interest in MS. Secondly, I found the NHS Choices care planner, which has helped me look at my options all along the way, and talk to the doc about moving on to drug therapy. Then I got into the online forum. Telling my story on the site and having so much feedback has made me feel like I've really helped people. I can even bother the NHS Choices experts with questions in the middle of the night when I can't sleep."



Tell us what NHS Choices can do next

NHS Choices is ambitious for the future. We know that many individuals in the NHS and beyond not only share that ambition but also are already creating innovative solutions. NHS Choices aspires to harness that innovative spirit. Moreover, we know that meeting the needs of the local NHS is central to making NHS Choices a service that is integral to the NHS of the 21st century.



We want to know what we can do for you.

How do you think online or digital services can help you improve your services to patients? Are you already making use of such technologies?

Are there any specific types of information, tools or services you think would benefit patients?

Is there a specific challenge you want to set for NHS Choices?



Send your feedback on the future of NHS Choices to thechoicesteam@nhschoices.nhs.uk



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