



WHAT IS PATIENT PROXY ACCESS?

Patient proxy access refers to access to online services by somebody acting on behalf of the patient with the patient's consent.

A person given access to another person's online services does not need to be a registered patient of that practice but must apply to the practice to be granted proxy access.

A patient does not need to know how to use the online services or have a computer themselves to give another person access.

Access can be granted to anyone of the patient's choice – e.g. partner, family member, carer etc. and access can be granted to more than one person. Every person with access will need to go through the same application and approval process.

The patient can choose which online services they want the person(s) to use. The choice of online services is usually booking appointments, ordering repeat medication and looking at GP records.

WHY WOULD A PATIENT WANT TO GIVE PROXY ACCESS?

A patient may wish to allow another person to use online services for different reasons, including:

- ❖ The patient is unwell and needs help in managing their condition.
- ❖ The patient has a long-term condition and would like additional support in checking test results, ordering repeat medications and understanding how to manage the condition.
- ❖ Speech or memory difficulties so require additional support.
- ❖ The patient has learning difficulties and may need support in understanding their health requirements.
- ❖ The patient may be planning for the future and may have appointed someone to hold lasting power of attorney for health and social care.

(this is not an exhaustive list)





WHAT DO PRACTICES NEED TO DO?

Practices need to ensure they have a process in place to support and respect proxy access requests.

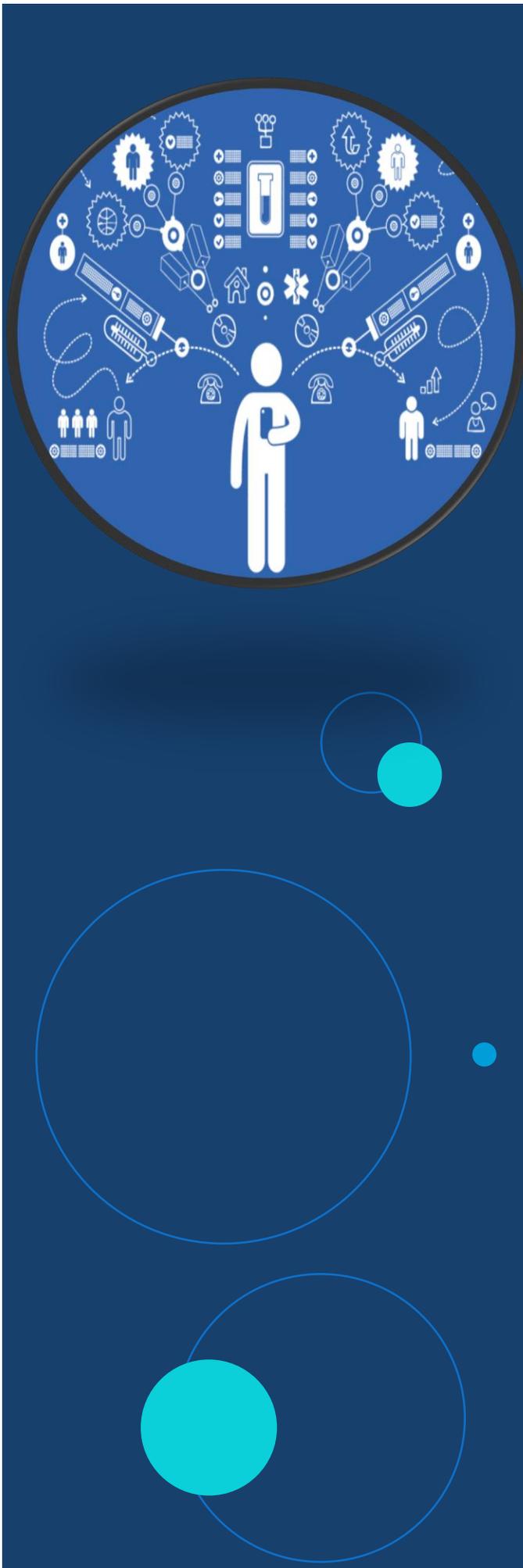
The process must be reviewed in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 to ensure the principles behind consent are clearly captured.

The process should include a method of capturing consent, so a proxy access form needs to be produced. The form should include an authorisation by signature, and what areas access is required for (i.e. online booking, medication requests and online GP records).

The chosen person will need to show the surgery photographic identification and proof of address (i.e. passport, driving license, utility bill, bank statement etc.).

The practice will need to review every request on a case-by-case basis and reach a decision on whether the chosen person can be granted access to the patient's online services. If approved, the chosen person will be issued with their own log on details.

There are benefits of patient proxy access including additional support in managing health conditions, support even if they are not comfortable when using a computer or do not have access to the internet, and ensuring family/friends are involved in their care.



THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE GRANTING ACCESS

When reaching a decision on whether to grant access the practice will work with the patient to ensure all aspects have been considered, including:

- ❖ Is there information in the patient's records they would not like anyone to see or know about?
- ❖ Can the patient trust the chosen person to keep information safe and not share it without permission?
- ❖ Is the patient being forced into sharing their online services?
- ❖ How long would you the patient like to grant access for? i.e. just for a short period of time when the patient is suffering from an illness, or will it be for a long or ongoing period of time?

WHEN PATIENTS ARE UNABLE TO MAKE DECISIONS FOR THEMSELVES

When a patient at the practice is no longer able to make decisions for themselves, another person, often a partner or close family member, can be given legal responsibility over decisions concerning their life by the courts. This called Health and Welfare Lasting Power of Attorney. If a person with LPA asks for access to the patient's online services, the patient's GP will reach a decision on whether this should be allowed.

There may be times when a GP could refuse the chosen person access. Whilst this rare, the GP must always put the best interests of their patient first. A GP must always discuss the reasons behind a refusal with the patient or in the case of impaired capacity, with their representative. Examples of reasons for refusal are:

- ❖ The GP does not think it is in the patient's best interest to have the chose person use the online services on their behalf.
- ❖ Online services have been abused by the patient or chosen person in the past.
- ❖ The GP is concerned that the chosen person will not keep the information safe.

