

# Frequently asked questions

## What is the patient portal?

The West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust's patient portal is a secure online NHS system that allows you to look at information from your hospital record, manage hospital appointments and receive test results and messages from your hospital care team. It is available around the clock on a computer, tablet or smartphone.

## Who is the patient portal for?

At present, the patient portal is available to West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust patients aged 18 and over. In time we want all our patients to have access to the portal. We also want to enable people's authorised carers and the parents of younger patients to access the patient portal on their behalf.

## How far back will the information go?

Information goes back to 12 February 2018 when the patient portal went Live.

## Registering for the patient portal

### How do I sign up for the patient portal?

We will ask you to choose a security question and answer. We will then send you an activation email with instructions on how to complete the registration process following sign-up usually at the time of a clinic appointment. As part of this process, you'll set up your own username and password. Please keep these details safe.

### What do I need to register for the patient portal?

To register you will need a working email address. At the point of registration you will be requested to provide proof of identification; the portal is a secure system so we will need you to provide a form of photo identification with you and proof of your address.

### Can someone else register for the patient portal on my behalf?

Because of legal requirements concerning confidentiality of health records, the patient portal is currently only available to those patients who are able to manage their own account. However, we know that many patients rely on people close to them to help them manage their healthcare. We are working to develop secure processes so that authorised representatives can manage an account on a patient's behalf. We are also looking at ways for children and young people between the ages of 13 and 17 years to access their information through the portal.

### Can I register online without attending the hospital?

We take the confidentiality of your health records very seriously. Due to COVID-19 we have made it possible for you to enrol for the portal online.

### Why haven't I received an email to complete my registration?

It may take up to five days to receive your email inviting you to complete your registration. Don't forget to check your junk or spam folders in case it has been received there instead of your inbox.

## **Logging in to the patient portal**

### **How do I access the patient portal?**

Patients that have enrolled for the portal can access the login page by going to <https://westsuffolk.healthlifeapp.co.uk/> on your PC or mobile device. The portal is available around the clock on a computer, tablet or smartphone.

### **I've forgotten my username/password or cannot log in**

If you've forgotten your username, try logging in with the email address that you gave when you signed up for the patient portal. If you have forgotten your password, click on the 'Forgot password?' link and follow the instructions to reset your password.

Make sure your 'caps lock' key is not on and that you do not enter extra spaces in either the email address/username or password boxes and try again.

If you are still unable to access the portal, please call the support team on 0800 279 3178. Support is provided around the clock by Cerner, the company that built the portal. They cannot see your health information. The support team are based in Dublin and Kansas but calls are free.

### **How often should I log onto the Patient Portal?**

That is entirely up to you. It is your record and so you can use it as little or as much as you find helpful to monitor and manage your condition(s). Usage will very much depend on the individual. Some people use the portal facility once every few weeks, whereas others may only use it when they have a recent or upcoming appointment.

## **Using the patient portal**

### **I am not a clinician – how will I know what my results and information means?**

The documents and test results have been produced by clinicians and used to communicate with your GP and/or other health professionals. They therefore contain necessary medical terminology. If you do not understand any of the content, we recommend you raise this with the next health professional you see, as part of your care. There is also a useful website that provides information in plain English on what various tests are for, and what the results indicate. This can be accessed by [clicking here](#)

### **How can I change or cancel an appointment?**

You can send a message to the appointments team through the portal to request to reschedule or cancel an appointment. Requests will be dealt with within five working days.

### **Can I send messages or attachments to my care team?**

You can only respond to messages sent by your care team. Currently, the portal does not support the sending of any attachments (such as scans from other healthcare providers) in your reply, but we are working to enable this in the future.

### **What software is needed?**

The patient portal can be accessed using the Google Chrome, Safari, Internet Explorer and Firefox web browsers. If you have trouble viewing the portal, you might need to get an updated version of your web browser. A PDF reader is needed to view some documents within the portal. The portal can be viewed on a tablet or smartphone and is designed to adjust to the mobile device you are using. There is no app for the patient portal at this time.

### **What should I do if I spot information that is not correct?**

If you believe the error relates to something important then please contact our patient advice and liaison service (PALS) in the first instance to get this corrected on 01284 712555 or email [Pals@wsh.nhs.uk](mailto:Pals@wsh.nhs.uk). If the error is not critical then please raise this next time you are visiting the hospital, so that your clinician can correct it when they see you.

### **Will information and letters still be posted to me?**

Yes, for now. Once we have a larger number of people using the portal we will review the sending of paper letters unless you wish to continue receiving them. Paper letters take much longer to reach you than they do to appear on the portal. There is also a financial and environmental saving to stopping posting letters if you do not need them.

### **If I update my personal information on the portal, will it update my Hospital record?**

Any alterations made to your personal information will not be pulled through to your hospital record. If your details have changed, please contact your GP practice.

### **What should I do if I change my email address?**

Your email address is stored in two places in the portal. Firstly as the email address for managing the account and secondly as the email address to receive notifications when new information is added. You should change it in both these places:

- 1) Click the settings icon on the home page and select notifications. On the notifications screen, enter your updated email in the email address field and save.
- 2) Click the settings icon on the home page and select account. On the account screen, click the update account settings link, then click the email link and follow the instructions to update your email address.

### **Can I delete my patient portal account?**

You can request to delete your account at any time by emailing: [Patientportal@wsh.nhs.uk](mailto:Patientportal@wsh.nhs.uk)

### **If I want to know more, who do I contact?**

Email the team at [Patientportal@wsh.nhs.uk](mailto:Patientportal@wsh.nhs.uk) or speak to your care team.

### **Who should I contact if I need help using the patient portal?**

If you have any other problems using the patient portal, please call the support team. Support is provided around the clock by Cerner, the company that built the portal. They cannot see your health information. The support team are based in Dublin and Kansas but calls are free: 0800 279 3178.

## **Patient portal security and access**

### **How can I be sure my information is safe on the Patient Portal?**

We are using security systems such as those used in internet banking, so as long as you keep your log-in details secure, the information is safe. Make sure you log-out properly every time you leave portal and be careful with your log-in information. The portal site is protected and compliant with web security policies. All messages are encrypted to ensure the safety of your information. For further information on Cerner's commitment to keeping your information secure please see <https://www.cerner.com/gb/en/solutions/your-information-security>

### **Will I be able to see my GP records through the site?**

At this stage you can only see information contained within the hospital record. Your GP record is on a different system and therefore not included in the patient portal currently. A single patient record is something that we are exploring with other organisations, however this is some time off from being developed.

### **Will my clinician or GP be able to see what information is included?**

The portal is your record. Clinicians will not be able to see what is included within the portal. However, clinicians involved in your care in the hospital and at your GP surgery will be able to see the same information within your hospital record. You can of course choose to show the information to anyone because it belongs to you.