



# Identity checking

## What you need to know

## March 2018

# Introduction to identity checking

There are three approved methods for checking a patient's identity. It is likely that a practice will need to use all three, but may have a preferred method for most patients.

- Vouching
- Vouching with confirmation
- Identity documents

It is essential that before giving a patient access to their record, their identity is checked by a responsible person within the practice and that they confirm they are giving access to the correct record.

Any authorised person within the practice can check and approve, this should be specified in your patient online process and procedures document.



# Vouching

Vouching gives practices flexibility, enabling patients to be signed up when they are at the practice. Rather than requiring them to remember to bring in identification at a later date.

Vouching for a patient's identity requires an authorised member of staff, who knows the patient, to verify that no deception is taking place and that the patient is who they claim to be.

***The staff member must know that the person presenting is the patient***

## It is essential for

- patients who do not have the required ID documents.

## It is useful for

- patients who attend regularly, such as those with long term conditions (asthma, diabetes)
- GPs and nurses giving access as part of the patients ongoing care during the consultation

# Vouching with confirmation

In a situation where the applicant is not known sufficiently well by an authorised member of staff to vouch for them. The patient's identity can be verified by obtaining responses to questions from information held in the medical records.

This should take place discreetly. It is extremely important that the questions posed

- do not incidentally disclose confidential information to the applicant before their identity is verified.
- include a range of questions not only based on demographic information, for example
  - *When did you last see a doctor/nurse at this surgery?*
  - *Do you take any prescribed medicines? Can you tell me what they are?*
  - *Have you had an operation in hospital? Can you remember when and what it was for?*

This is particularly useful for

- GPs and nurses giving access as part of the patients ongoing care during the consultation. Patients respond well to their clinician encouraging them to access and use their records in their own care.
- Confirming a patient's identity over the phone. Please note that this option should only be considered for patients wanting access to booking/cancelling appointments and/or ordering repeat prescriptions. It should not be used for giving a patient access to their electronic medical record.

# ID documents

Most patients are able to prove their identity using documentation

Just as with DBS checks, two forms of documentation must be provided as evidence of identity and one of these must contain a photo.

Acceptable documents include passports, photo driving licences and bank statements, but not utility bills.

NHS England has produced **Good Practice Guidance on Identity Verification**, the full list of suitable documents is in **Appendix 3 – Acceptable identity evidence**

Click to download  
Good Practice Guidance  
on Identity Verification

This is the most commonly used method for identity checking. The benefits are that practices will have documentary evidence that the person is who they say they are. However, it is not flexible and requires patients to remember to bring their ID with them.

To have this as the only method,

- prohibits patients without ID from accessing online services
- restricts GPs and nurses from giving immediate access to patients who they think will benefit
- is a lost opportunity for registering a patient

# RCGP best practice guidance

RCGP  
guidance

## About the guidance

The Royal College of General Practitioners has produced guidance across the remit of GP Online Services.

The identity verification guidance was produced in conjunction with NHS England Information Governance and complies to the Cabinet Office requirements.

During production the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), British Medical Association (BMA) and medical defence unions were consulted.

## RCGP introduction

*Most general practice services rely on varying levels and methods of identity verification. But access to online services demands a more consistent and robust approach to ensure patient confidentiality while providing them with secure access to personal and sensitive data.*

*Patients may book an initial appointment online as soon as they have completed a simple online registration process. However, a more secure identity verification process is required before full access to appointment, repeat prescription ordering or record access services may be enabled for a patient.*

*Every practice is required to verify patient identity documentation, or individually vouch for each patient requesting access to online services. These processes need to be simple, quick, patient-friendly and not overly demanding for the practice. Please see NHS England guide [Patient Online Services in Primary Care | Good Practice Guidance on Identity Verification](#), and links below for an overview of the process within the guidance and material.*

# RCGP elearning courses

RCGP  
guidance

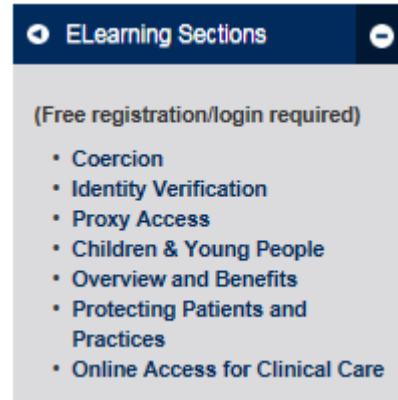
## About the elearning

Courses are designed for all members of the practice team, and anyone else interested in the topic. They are based on the best Practice guidance and give scenarios

Each course lasts between 10-15 mins, and are suitable for use in practice meetings and training sessions.

***You will need to register on the RCGP elearning site to use the courses.***

***Registration is free and open to all, not just RCGP members.***



## Available courses

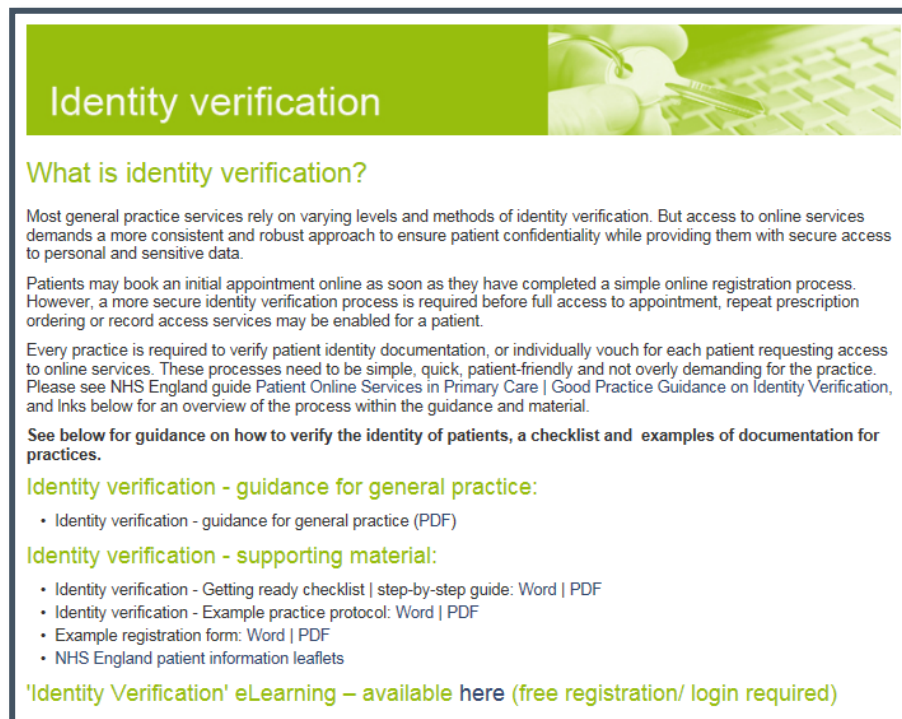
### Identity Verification

#### Other courses

- [Coercion](#)
- [Proxy Access](#)
- [Children and Young People](#)
- [Overview and Benefits](#)
- [Protecting Patients and Practices](#)
- [Online Access for Clinical Care](#)

## Guidance

- Identity verification - guidance for general practice ([PDF](#))



**Identity verification**

**What is identity verification?**

Most general practice services rely on varying levels and methods of identity verification. But access to online services demands a more consistent and robust approach to ensure patient confidentiality while providing them with secure access to personal and sensitive data.

Patients may book an initial appointment online as soon as they have completed a simple online registration process. However, a more secure identity verification process is required before full access to appointment, repeat prescription ordering or record access services may be enabled for a patient.

Every practice is required to verify patient identity documentation, or individually vouch for each patient requesting access to online services. These processes need to be simple, quick, patient-friendly and not overly demanding for the practice. Please see NHS England guide Patient Online Services in Primary Care | Good Practice Guidance on Identity Verification, and Inks below for an overview of the process within the guidance and material.

See below for guidance on how to verify the identity of patients, a checklist and examples of documentation for practices.

**Identity verification - guidance for general practice:**

- Identity verification - guidance for general practice (PDF)

**Identity verification - supporting material:**

- Identity verification - Getting ready checklist | step-by-step guide: Word | PDF
- Identity verification - Example practice protocol: Word | PDF
- Example registration form: Word | PDF
- NHS England patient information leaflets

'Identity Verification' eLearning – available [here](#) (free registration/ login required)

## Supporting material

- Identity verification - Getting ready checklist | step-by-step guide: [Word](#) | [PDF](#)
- Identity verification - Example practice protocol: [Word](#) | [PDF](#)
- Example registration form: [Word](#) | [PDF](#)
- [NHS England patient information leaflets](#)



# Good Practice Guidance on Identity Verification



Patient Online Services in Primary  
Care

Good Practice Guidance on  
Identity Verification

NHS England Information Governance Team developed Good Practice Guidelines on Identity Verification.

This guidance complies with Cabinet Office requirements. It was used and is referenced in the guidance developed by the RCGP.

# Identity checking

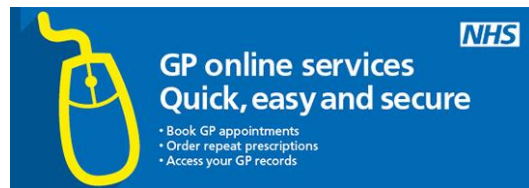
## *What you need to know*

Date issued | 16 March 2018

Version | 1.0

Status | release

Contact | [england.patient-online@nhs.net](mailto:england.patient-online@nhs.net)



@ crown copyright, 2018