

14 February 2009



## National programmes linked to information prescriptions

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### 1. Online information resources

#### [NHS Choices](#)

NHS Choices have developed plans to produce NHS Guides and linked information prescriptions for all long-term conditions by late Spring 2009. This programme of work is designed to support local delivery of better information and support services.

The first 6 NHS Guides and linked information prescriptions went live on 7 July 2008. If you click on the link above this will take you to the Health A-Z. The current NHS Guides are listed to the right of the front page of this section and information prescriptions are linked to each of these NHS Guides.

NHS Choices have also developed an [information prescriptions hub](#).

The national Patients' Prospectus was launched on NHS Choices on the 2 November 2008 - as [Your health, your Way - a guide to long term conditions and self care](#).

NHS Choices have also included medicines guides within each condition listed in the Health A-Z and are in the process of developing an online training package to aid navigation within NHS Choices – this should be available early in 2009.

#### [PAGB – Medicines Chest](#)

The Proprietary Association of Great Britain (PAGB) representing the consumer healthcare industry, have produced an online directory that is also available in booklet form. This directory provides a detailed guide to all the over the counter (OTC) medicines and food supplements available in the UK. The self-care guide linked to this directory provides useful support and advice for patients, carers and professionals alike.

#### [NHS Direct](#)

NHS Direct is at the forefront of 24-hour health care - delivering telephone and e-health information services day and night direct to the public. Over two million people now access NHS Direct every month.

It is now far more than a telephone health line - NHS Direct has an authoritative website and 2004 saw the addition of the NHS Direct digital TV service - one of the largest interactive services in the UK. The [self-help guide](#) is easy to use and provides additional help and advice so people can find the information they want more easily.

#### [DirectGov - Benefits and financial advice](#)

DirectGov brings together the widest range of public service information and services online. Produced by the Central Office of Information, DirectGov provides information from across UK government departments on topics ranging from travel safety and parental leave to special educational needs, [support for carers](#) and local NHS services. DirectGov also provides direct links to [directories of local advice and support services](#) that are available through local authority websites.

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### **Local directories of advice and support services**

There are a number of examples of comprehensive and easy to use local directories. [Evolve](#) is an interactive website listing community and voluntary sector organisations serving Hampshire and The Isle of Wight. [Merlin](#) is the online community information database for Wiltshire. [Community Base](#) provides a home for community and voluntary groups in Brighton & Hove.

[The Care Forum](#) in Bristol has developed [Room 102](#) – a comprehensive database that includes advice and information providers, support groups, social activities, health services, accessible venues, holidays, lunch clubs, transport, information for children and families, counseling services and much more. Room 102 includes facilities to generate an information prescription but at present is only available by subscription to professionals to support them offer information and advice to patients and carers.

### **Leaflets and booklets produced by local hospitals & Royal Colleges**

A number of local hospitals and Royal Colleges have produced comprehensive online directories of the leaflets and booklets they produce for patients and carers. Examples of these are [Birmingham Children's Hospital](#), [Salisbury District Hospital](#), [The Christie](#), [British Medical Association](#), [The Royal College of Psychiatrists](#) and [The Royal College of Radiologists](#).

### **Patient UK - Directory of websites**

This is an extensive directory of UK websites on health, disease, and related topics. Browse by A-Z, or search using the integrated search solution provided.

### **Patient UK - Patient support organisations and self-help groups**

Details of UK patient support organisations, self help groups, health and disease information providers, benefits and financial advice etc. Each entry is cross-referenced and details are checked annually. Browse by A-Z, by subject category, or search using the integrated search solution provided.

### **Carers UK**

Many of Carers UK's branches and members have been involved in establishing dedicated carers' organisations in their local area. These have provided support, information and in some cases centres where carers can meet face to face. Almost every area of the UK now has a dedicated [local carers organisation](#) providing much needed information and practical help to thousands of carers and these are all listed on the Carers UK website.

### **HealthSpace**

HealthSpace is a secure online personal health organiser. Anyone over the age of 16 and living in England can open a HealthSpace account.

### **Choose and Book**

Choose and Book is a national electronic referral service that gives patients a choice of place, date and time for their first outpatient appointment in a hospital or clinic. Patients can choose their hospital or clinic, and then book their appointment to see a specialist with a member of the practice team at the GP surgery, or at home by telephone or over the

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internet at a time more convenient to them. [The reference documents area](#) holds all documents on the website, including links to other important documents, published by other teams, that are particularly relevant to Choice and Choose & Book.

In their implementation guidance, Choose and Book have a complete section dedicated to [providing patient information and support](#). In this section they state that some patients may require additional support and PCTs need to understand the needs of their local population to ensure that there is targeted support and advice available for patients who are likely to need additional help in making choices. For example, through Patient Care Advisers, community advocacy groups or voluntary sector organisations.

Evidence suggests that the most effective way of providing information to patients is through existing channels, and this is particularly true for groups at risk of social exclusion. PCTs are urged to identify what information and support is currently available and build on existing good practice. For example the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) have extensive knowledge, experience and skills in supporting patients and have established links to the voluntary sector. In addition, libraries are skilled in directing and providing the public with information and have targets to deliver health information, so work with them to provide access to patient information.

If needed, consider additional investment through the voluntary sector, which already plays a key role in providing information and support to patients. Ensure that patients and community groups who will ultimately utilise the support and advice available are consulted on any commissioned support, so that their specific need is met.

### Connecting for Health

The National Programme for IT is creating a multi-billion pound infrastructure, which will improve patient care by enabling clinicians and other NHS staff to increase their efficiency and effectiveness. It is doing this by:

- Creating an [NHS Care Records Service](#) to improve the sharing of patients' records across the NHS with their consent
- Making it easier and faster for GPs and other primary care staff to [choose and book hospital appointments](#) for patients
- Providing a system for the [electronic transmission of prescriptions](#)
- Ensuring that the [IT infrastructure](#) can meet NHS needs now and in the future.