# Online services: Identity Verification

## Example practice protocol

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name(s)</th>
<th>Job title</th>
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## Appointments

Any patient registered with the practice may book an appointment `slot` online at any time by completing the system's online registration process. This does not require verification of the applicant’s identity.

## Identity verification and registration for online services

Before services in addition to online appointment booking are enabled, the patient’s identity must be verified either by vouching or presentation of appropriate documents (see Cabinet Office Good Practice Guide No. 45 (2013)). Ordering of repeat prescriptions, appointment booking and demographics are enabled by the practice when each patient is registered for online access following identity verification.

## Records access

Online records access must be authorised by a GP or other designated member of the practice team before this is enabled for a registered online user. A GP may wish to review the record and discuss the content with the patient prior to authorising access.

## Vouching

‘Vouching’ in the event of any patient’s inability to provide suitable documentary proof, takes into account:
- the period of time an individual has been known to the person designated for vouching
- the frequency of attendance
- the period of registration.

## Vouching – with records confirmation

When an applicant is not known sufficiently well by an authorised member of staff for them to be vouched for on this basis, their identity may be verified by obtaining responses to questions for information held in the medical records.

This should take place discreetly and ideally in the context of a planned appointment. It is extremely important that the questions posed do not incidentally disclose confidential information to the applicant before their identity is verified.

## Presentation of documents

Two documents need to be presented when a patient’s identity is verified, at least one of which should contain a photo of the individual. The documents should be checked for consistency, and the applicant compared to the image on the photo ID. Any two of the following three documents are acceptable: passport, driving licence, bank statement. Alternatives should be checked against the government approved list of acceptable documents.

## Recording of identity evidence

Identity verification follows legal, professional and ethical standards. The name of the person verifying an applicant’s identity, the method used and date should be recorded in the patient’s records. This can be achieved by scanning in the completed application form.
The following are practice staff with roles in enabling online services for patients:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
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| **Access verification Lead**                                         | - oversight of the access management process  
|                                                                     | - identification of other roles  
|                                                                     | - leading incident investigation.                                                |
| **Identity verification by presentation of documents**                | Individuals who are authorised to verify the identity of applicants by presentation of documents. |
| **Identity vouching**                                                | Individuals who are authorised to vouch for the identity of applicants.           |
| **Registration and consent for online services**                     | Individuals authorised to register users on the system for access to online services, and also manage credentials including passwords. |
| **Authorisation for additional online services including records access** | Individuals authorised to review applications for services in addition to appointment booking, repeat prescription and demographics. Records access is not enabled by default and requires a specific action on the system. |
| **Authorisation of proxy access**                                   | Individuals authorised to approve applications by carers or other third parties. |

*Proxy access is the inclusive term which describes provision of access to a patient's parents, relatives and/or carer(s) so they can book appointments, order repeat prescriptions and/or view the medical record on the patient’s behalf.*