

choose and book

An introduction to Choose and Book for patients

“Choose and Book is great because it gives patients like myself the flexibility and choice to choose the hospital, the date and the time where I want to be treated.”

Breda Calenti Cambridgeshire
Choose and Book patient



What is Choose and Book?

Choose and Book is a new service that allows you to choose your hospital or clinic and book an appointment with a specialist.

Since summer 2004, Choose and Book has been introduced across England. It will eventually be available to all patients.

From 1 January 2006, when you and your GP agree that you need to see a specialist, you will be able to choose from at least four hospitals or clinics. You will also be able to choose the date and time of your appointment.

Why is Choose and Book being introduced?

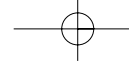
Research has shown that patients want to be more involved in making decisions and choosing their health care. Most of the patients who are offered a choice of hospital view the experience as positive and valuable.

So, the NHS is changing to give you more choice and flexibility in how you are treated. Choose and Book is one of the first schemes that brings about this change, allowing you to choose the hospital where you will be seen by a specialist.

“It’s patient-oriented and that’s what we’re all here for. We’re making the patient’s hospital journey easier.”

Helen Barrett

Choose and Book Project Manager, Harrogate



What are the benefits of Choose and Book?

- You can choose from at least four hospitals.
- You can also choose the date and time for your appointment.
- You experience greater convenience and certainty. With the old system, your hospital or clinic chose the date and time of your appointment. This may not have been convenient for you. With Choose and Book, the choice is yours.
- There is less chance that information will get lost in the post because more correspondence takes place through computers.

How does Choose and Book work?

When you and your GP agree that you need an appointment with a specialist, Choose and Book shows your GP which hospitals or clinics are available for your treatment. Your GP discusses with you the appropriate options which are available for treating your medical condition.

If you know where and when you would like to be seen, you may be able to book your appointment before you leave the surgery. You will be given confirmation of the place, date and time of your appointment.

You may want more time to consider your choices. If so, you can take the appointment request letter away with you and book your appointment later.



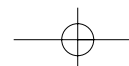
Your appointment request letter

Either your GP or a member of the practice team gives you an appointment request letter. This shows your appointment reference number and the list of hospitals and clinics available for you to choose from. Every appointment has its own reference number.



Your password for security

Before you make your first booking, your GP or one of the practice team will give you a password. This is used to make sure that only you or someone you have chosen to act on your behalf can make or change your booking. Do not keep your password and appointment reference number together, and make sure you keep them in places where other people cannot see them.



How do I find the right information to help me make my choice?

The NHS provides information on each of the hospitals or clinics on your list so that you can decide which one you would like to use.

This information includes local transport details and whether or not the hospital provides services such as car parking, disabled access, a visitor canteen and shops.

There are also star ratings or performance standards – these are based on the information collected to show how health services are doing in relation to some of the main targets set by the Government for the NHS as well as other broader measures of performance. They include information from surveys of patients and staff, and other measures useful to patients and carers.

There are a number of ways you can get this information to help you decide which hospital you want to go to. These are outlined opposite.



The Choose and Book Appointments Line is 0845 60 88888.

This is a phone line where call-centre staff give you information about your list of hospitals or clinics. They may also be able to tell you what dates and times are free for an appointment with a specialist. This will depend on which hospitals you are considering. Calls are charged at the local rate. The Appointments Line is open every day from 7am to 10pm.



If you do not speak English, translation services are available.

If you cannot use a phone, textphone services are available on 0845 850 2250.



You can get the same information by using a computer and going to www.nhs.uk/healthspace

If you go to Choose and Book, you can enter the website by giving your appointment reference number, year of birth and password. When you have given these details, you can book an appointment, change an appointment or view the status of your booking. You can also compare information between the hospitals or clinics on your list and print off copies. If you do not have access to a computer or printer, your local GP practice may be able to access the same information and print copies for you.

What other information and support is available to help me choose?

There will be extra support available to help you choose your hospital. This could include, for example, information from local voluntary organisations or library services. These services will vary from one area to another. If you want more support or information, your GP surgery will be able to tell you what other services are available in your area.

From December, look out for the Choice patient leaflet in your doctor's surgery. This will give you the information you need to choose your hospital or clinic.

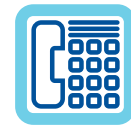
How do I book my appointment?

The way to book your appointment will vary depending on which hospital you choose. This is because it will take time before all hospitals are using the same computer system to manage their patient appointments. Your GP surgery will tell you how you can book your appointment.

In some cases, you can only book your appointment by calling the hospital or clinic directly. This is because not all hospitals are using Choose and Book's new computer system to make patient appointments. This will change in time. This will in no way affect the quality of care you receive.

The different ways to book your appointment are as follows.

You can:



- call the Choose and Book Appointments Line on 0845 60 88888;



- use the internet and go to www.nhs.uk/healthspace, and then go to Choose and Book (you will be asked to give your appointment reference number, year of birth and password);

- book your appointment with your GP or a member of the practice team; or

- call the hospital booking staff at the hospital or clinic you want to use.

If you call the Choose and Book Appointments Line, the GP practice or the hospital where you want to be treated, you will be asked to give your password and appointment request number which will be on your appointment request letter. This will help staff find your booking details more quickly.

If your appointment reference number is not available, the Choose and Book Appointments Line staff may still be able to help if you confirm your personal details, such as your name, address and date of birth. You will still need to give your password.

If you need more support in booking your appointment, your GP surgery will be able to help you.

The three simple steps for choosing and booking your hospital appointment

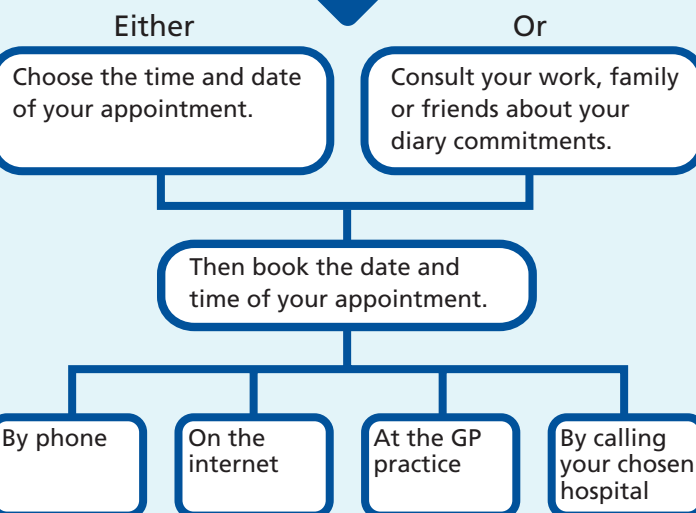
Step 1

You and your GP decide you need to be referred to a specialist.

Step 2

Choose from a list of hospitals that best suit you.

Step 3



What happens when my appointment is booked?

Once you have booked your appointment, you will receive:

- the details of the hospital or clinic;
- the date and time of your appointment; and
- any special instructions you need to know, such as not taking any food or water before seeing the specialist.

What do I do if I want to change the date or time of my appointment?

If you want to change your appointment, you can choose from one of the following options.

- Call the Choose and Book Appointments Line on 0845 60 88888.
- Use the internet and go to www.nhs.uk/healthspace, and then to Choose and Book. You will be asked for your appointment reference number, year of birth and password.
- If when you first made your appointment you had to phone your chosen hospital, you will need to call them again if you want to change your booking.

If someone else booked your appointment for you, the same steps outlined above would apply.

Can I book all my hospital appointments through Choose and Book?

At first, Choose and Book will only apply to your initial hospital or clinic appointment.

Will personal information about me be kept safe and secure?

Choose and Book has strict security measures in place to make sure your personal information is held and transferred to other people securely. Clinical information about you is only passed to other people involved in your care.

Where can I find out more information?

For more information and answers to the most commonly asked questions, go to www.nhs.uk/chooseandbook



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www.chooseandbook.nhs.uk