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Aneurin Bevan
University Health Board

Guidance on your SMS Appointment Reminders and Patient Portal

Frequently Asked Questions

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Introducing the Patient Portal and Appointment Reminders

Appointment text reminders have been used in the Health Board for several years. We have introduced a new system that can deliver enhanced appointment reminders and digital letters through a Patient Portal.

This will allow us to:

- Improve how we communicate with you
- Provide you with the option to receive communications in Welsh or English only or bilingually
- Deliver letters to you faster
- Reduce confusion from lost letters or letters arriving in the wrong order
- Save the NHS money by reducing the amount of paper and postal costs.
- Reduce our environmental impact

Please keep your contact details up to date so we can send you reminders and digital letters. If you prefer to receive letters and reminders only in Welsh or English, let us know. This will reduce costs and prevent sending bilingual messages and letters, which can make text messages and letters longer.

You will need to update or confirm your mobile phone number at your appointment or by speaking to a member of staff via the telephone number on your letter

1. About Appointment Reminders

When your appointment is scheduled, you will receive a text message confirming your appointment date, time and location. Prior to your appointment you will receive a reminder text message.

Through the text message, you can conveniently cancel or reschedule your appointment if required, when you receive your appointment reminder.

[Can I reply to a text message to cancel or rebook my appointment?](#)

To reply to the message, you must respond with the 4-digit code next to the options. For example, the 4-digit code next to REBOOK is '2751', so you would respond to the message with 'REBOOK 2751'

How do I know the message is from the NHS?

You will receive text messages from: 'ABUHB NHS' or a mobile number with your appointment details. All messages will contain 'Aneurin Bevan University Health Board' or 'ABUHB'.

The NHS would never require payment or ask you to provide personal details by responding to a text.

If you receive a message you are concerned about, do not reply or click on any links. If you need to check an appointment, you should contact the telephone number on your appointment letter. The message you receive will give you the option to respond if you need to reschedule or cancel your appointment.

Will I be charged for responding to the message?

Text message replies will be free if you have a text message bundle with your provider. Otherwise, you will be charged at your provider's standard rate.

How can I stop receiving text message reminders?

You can opt out of text messaging at any time by speaking to a member of staff when attending your appointment or you can contact the telephone number on the text message you have received.

About Patient Portal

By using this Patient Portal you can view, interact with and manage your ABUHB appointment letters quickly and efficiently. You will be helping the NHS save money and reduce administration times because instead of sending you a physical letter in the post, which can take days and costs more, you can view a digital letter faster. As a result, staff will have immediate access to your responses and details.

To receive a digital letter, all you need to do is ensure we have an up-to-date mobile telephone number for you. If you receive a letter digitally, this will be sent by a secure text message from 'ABUHB NHS'. Simply, click the link and follow the instructions to access the letter. A standard mobile phone will not display digital letters, you will need a smartphone to view and interact with the Patient Portal

Rest assured, if you do not access the link within 24 hours or encounter issues with the Patient Portal, the letter will be mailed to you, ensuring you receive it.

2. Benefits and Features of using the Patient Portal


- You can access your letter on your smartphone faster by following the on-screen instructions. Simply enter the unique 4-digit PIN and your date of birth to enter the Patient Portal where you can view your letter. Once you have accessed the Patient Portal, you will have the option to register with an email address and password.
- By registering for your own Patient Portal account, you can access all your hospital letters sent through the Patient Portal and appointment information, for 2 years after your appointment.
- You can easily cancel or request to reschedule your appointment through the Patient Portal, without the need to telephone the hospital. This will be available when you receive an appointment confirmation letter.

A member of staff will be in touch to reschedule your appointment. Please note, this may impact your waiting time due to availability of clinic slots.

- You can automatically add the appointment to your phone calendar with a reminder notification, reducing the likelihood of missing your appointment.
- You can plan your hospital journey with a real-time (live) traffic map.
- You can easily and securely send an email copy of your appointment letter direct to another person, such as an employer as proof of attendance.
- You will have access to NHS choices tools and services to help manage conditions and support healthier lifestyles

3. Using the Patient Portal

Is there any help for me to use the Patient Portal?

Yes, there is a 'Take the Tour' Feature which will take you through the functionality available, step by step. This is always there for you. To access the  tour, click on the button in the top right corner of the patient portal.

Do I need internet/WiFi to view my letter?

To access the Patient Portal, you will require internet access, as you would to access any other website. You will need to be connected to WiFi or your mobile data (data charges may apply). If you do not have internet connectivity and cannot access the link, a paper letter will be sent to you after 24 hours of receiving the digital link.

How can I view my letter?

Your letter will be available when you first log in to the portal. If at any time you need to access your letter, you can find this in the overview section by selecting 'view letter'.

Can I let the NHS organisation know if I can't attend my appointment via the patient portal?

Yes, this functionality is available. You can choose to cancel or request to reschedule your appointment when you receive your confirmation letters; our booking teams will be notified who will then be in touch to reschedule. It is important to note that this may impact your waiting time. You can request to reschedule some appointments up to 3 days before the appointment date.

How can I add the appointment to my digital calendar?

You will have the option to add the appointment to your calendar. Use the 'Add to Calendar' prompt underneath the appointment summary.

How do I print a letter?

When viewing your appointment letter, you will see 'DOWNLOAD' at the top. Simply download the letter to your device and print the letter as normal.

How can I email a copy to myself or another recipient?

When viewing your appointment letter, you will see 'EMAIL' at the top. Simply click the option and enter the email address that you would like to pass a copy of the letter to. You will be asked to provide a password; this password will be required by the recipient before they can open the email.

How do I access my appointment details from the appointment overview?

To access your appointment details, you can click on 'OVERVIEW'.

What is location?

The location tab will show you on a map how to get from the address stored on your patient record to the location of your hospital appointment using Google Maps. This allows for real time, updated traffic information when you are connected to the internet.

What is the 'Before you Attend' tab?

Here you can access all the essential reading documents that your care provider would like you to read before your appointment. You can also view your appointment letter.


What is essential reading material?

The essential reading material will allow you to view any important documentation that you will need to read prior to your appointment.

What is NHS Wales?

NHS Information is a national website which provides information on all NHS services in Wales.

How can I access NHS Wales?

By clicking on the NHS Information icon  you will be redirected to the NHS Wales website.

How long after my appointment will I still be able to view the letter?

If you are registered on the Patient Portal, then your appointment letters will remain visible for 2 years. If you have not registered, your letter will be available to view up to 10 days after your appointment date.

When will a physical letter be sent out if I do not access my digital letter?

If you haven't viewed your digital letter within 24 hours a physical letter will be sent to you.

I've lost the link to the patient portal; how will I remember my appointment date?

If you don't have a physical copy of your letter printed out, downloaded or sent to your home address, you will need to contact your care provider who will be able to confirm your appointment details.

If you have registered, by logging into your portal you will see all the communications that the Health Board has sent to you.

I receive letters from more than one Health Board, will I need more than one account to access my letters from different Health Boards?

Yes, if you receive digital letters from Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB) and you are registered for our Patient Portal, your account is specific to us.

If you receive digital letters from another Health Board, you need to register for their portal separately if they use one.

You won't see our letters on another Health Board's portal, and their letters won't be visible on your ABUHB portal.

4 Registering for the Patient Portal

How do I register for the patient portal?

Once you have logged into your digital letter, you will see the 'REGISTER' function in the top right-hand corner. You will be asked to set up a username (your email address) and password. Please note that a different username (email address) is required for each patient. Two patient accounts for the same email address cannot be linked.

What are the advantages in registering for the patient portal?

If you register for the patient portal, you will be able to see all your communications in one place, rather than having a separate log in for each communication. It allows you to build up a library of documents relating to your attendances. Documents will be available on the portal for 2 years after the appointment, if you want to retain the documents beyond this period, you can download the documents and save them to your device.

Do I have to register for the patient portal?

No, if you don't want to register you will still receive individual invites to view your digital letter.

Where can I view my historic appointments when I am registered?

These are viewable by selecting 'APPOINTMENTS' in the top left-hand corner:

- Upcoming tab shows all your appointments in the future
- Previous tab shows all your past appointments that you should have attended
- Cancelled tab shows all your appointments, both past and future that have been cancelled, either by you or your care provider.

What is the home screen?

If, as a registered patient, you have no unread correspondence, you will land on the home page when you first log in.

5 Security

How secure is the patient portal?

A unique URL (Uniform Resource Locator) is a web address that specifies the location of a resource on the internet. It's essentially the unique identifier for a webpage, file, other online resource, allowing users to access it.

A URL is generated for each portal invitation; this URL is secure and encrypted. The URL is then assigned a mini-URL which is SMS and smartphone friendly. The mini-URL is contained within your invitation and is specific to your care provider. The invitation to view the mini-URL asks you to view your correspondence electronically.

Once accessed, the mini-URL will redirect you to the portal URL where the encrypted identifier is decrypted and used to obtain the fields which are to be displayed for verification.

If you have registered, your portal is on a secure site.

How can I change my password on the patient portal?

If you have registered for the patient portal previously and forgotten your password, you can change your password by clicking 'FORGOT PASSWORD?' on the login page. If you already know your password and have successfully logged in, you can change your password by clicking on your username in the top right corner of the portal and select 'CHANGE PASSWORD'.

Can I opt out of receiving digital invites?

You can opt out of digital letters at any time by speaking to a member of staff when attending your appointment or you can contact the telephone number on your hospital letter.

If you later decide you would like to receive letters digitally, please let us know.

If you opt out of digital letters, you will still receive SMS appointment reminders, if you still wish.

If someone has my phone, can they access my letter?

The patient portal features an additional level of security in that Date of Birth verification is required to access your appointment letter as well as the four-digit PIN received in the text message.

If you have registered for the patient portal, access can only be gained using your unique username and password. If you think this may have been compromised, you can change your password at any time.

How is my data handled?

We would like to reassure you that your personal information is processed securely and WILL NOT be used for marketing purposes.

The [Your Information, Your Rights](#) leaflet explains why information is collected by NHS Wales and how it may be used.