

GP Connect Update Record: FAQs

1. What is GP Connect Update Record?

GP Connect Update Record is one of the enhancements to connect general practice and community pharmacy announced in the [NHS England delivery plan for recovering access to primary care \(May 2023\)](#). It supports 3 community pharmacy services: Pharmacy First, Blood Pressure Check, and Contraception services.

GP Connect Update Record only allows authorised clinicians in community pharmacy to send pharmacy consultation summaries, including details of any medicines supplied, directly into general practice workflows for filing, rather than via NHSmail or letter.

This reduces practice burden and increases patient safety, by removing the need to manually transcribe consultation summaries and supplied medicines details from emails or letters into the GP patient record.

Update Record testing started with a small number of GP practices and community pharmacies in January 2024, before IT suppliers began to roll out Update Record across all practices on 3 April 2024. As of 8 July, more than 5,660 community pharmacies have sent 110,000 consultation summaries to GP practices using Update Record.

2. How does GP Connect Update Record work?

Community pharmacy consultation summaries – including observations, notes and any medicines supplied – arrive into the general practice workflows in GPIT systems in a structured format.

A workflow task is created in the GPIT system for every community pharmacy consultation summary received, so it is visible to the practice before filing into the GP patient record with one click.



General practice has a choice to enable or disable auto-filing of community pharmacy consultation summaries straight into the GP patient record.

Update Record only provides the summary of the community pharmacy consultation. It will not be used to communicate actions or referrals for the GP.

If a practice has turned off Update Record, the community pharmacy will send the consultation summary via NHSmail or letter for the practice to manually transcribe into the GP patient record.

Community pharmacists and their teams are trained in safeguarding to the appropriate level for the services they provide.

The community pharmacy team will capture consent that the patient is happy to share details of the consultation with their GP practice. Patients will be made aware that a consultation summary and any medicines supplied may be visible in NHS App and other patient-facing services, where this has been enabled by the practice.

In the case of contraception consultations, a patient can choose to not have this information shared.

3. Why is NHS England introducing GP Connect Update Record?

NHS England is aiming to improve the process of how general practice teams receive community pharmacy consultation summaries, to make it easier for practices and their teams and support the safe, accurate and timely update of patient information.

GP Connect Update Record reduces the burden of general practice teams following Pharmacy First, Blood Pressure Check and Contraception services consultations. To ensure the safe ongoing care of the patient, it is essential the details of the community pharmacy consultation and any medicines provided continue to be recorded in the GP patient record in a timely fashion.

Currently, practice teams scan emails or letters to find these community pharmacy consultation summaries, then find the right GP patient record and manually transcribe information across into the different parts of the record.

GP Connect Update Record is designed to support practice staff by having the community pharmacy consultation summaries arrive directly into practice workflows. to make it quicker and easier for patient records to be updated.

4. What are the benefits of GP Connect Update Record?

Improves patient safety

Information on the community pharmacy consultation summary and any medicines supplied is added to the GP patient record as quickly as possible and will be visible to other healthcare professionals. This will reduce the risk of over-prescribing and increasing antimicrobial resistance. It also reduces errors caused by manual transcription.

Saves administrative time

General practice and community pharmacy staff will spend less time manually sending and transcribing information from NHSmail or letters, and practice staff can file updates into the GP patient record with one click.

Shares information faster

When GP patient records are updated more quickly, healthcare professionals in other care settings have faster access to information in the summary care record application; and patients have faster access via patient-facing services such as the NHS App.

5. Can anyone send information back into the GP patient record using GP Connect Update Record?

No. Update Record is only designed, and has been technically and clinically assured, for use between community pharmacy and general practice for Pharmacy First, Blood Pressure Check and Contraception services.

Only registered community pharmacy professionals can use it, and the details of the clinician and the pharmacy site are provided to the practice.

For any other potential use, NHS England will engage with GPs, the British Medical Association (BMA) and Royal College of GPs (RCGP) on the intent and the design, as part of the agreed approach to support implementation of nationally led digital developments. This engagement would also include any required changes to data sharing agreements.

6. How were key professional stakeholders involved in the development of Update Record?

After the delivery plan for recovering access to primary care was published in May 2023, NHS England worked with GPs, pharmacists, and professional stakeholder organisations – namely the BMA, RCGP and CPE – to develop the Pharmacy First clinical pathways, and the digital approaches to connect general practice and community pharmacy.

NHS England started detailed engagement with professional stakeholder organisations on the new Update Record capability in summer of 2023, and explicitly agreed the design prior to the launch of Pharmacy First in January 2024.

The final agreed approach was confirmed in writing in March 2024, with further discussions including in GP webinars, and guidance to GPs issued via GP IT system suppliers and via colleagues in regional and ICB teams.

7. Why did NHS England want to remove the opt out for Update Record?

The default for GP Connect Update Record is set to 'On'. This is to ensure that key information about the community pharmacy consultation and any prescription medicines supplied is added to the patient record as quickly as possible and visible to other healthcare professionals, reducing the risks of over-prescribing and increasing antimicrobial resistance. It also reduces errors caused by manual transcription.

As this is a new way for practices to receive information directly into workflows, a temporary opt-out of Update Record for a 3-month period was provided to give practices time to familiarise themselves with this new function.

8. Will GP practices' ability to opt out of the Update Record change?

No. NHS England has heard from the profession and representative bodies that the original agreed approach for Update Record opt out has caused concern.

Therefore, the ability for a practice to opt out of Update Record will not change, and opting out will remain an option for practices.

Practices will continue to have the choice of whether to use this new way to receive post consultation summaries from community pharmacy directly into workflow or receive these communications via NHSmail or letter.

This also provides the opportunity for general practices to opt in, trial the Update Record and provide feedback.

9. Was NHS England planning to remove practices' ability to opt out of Update Record?

In March 2024, NHS England confirmed with GP IT suppliers, the BMA and RCGP that the temporary opt-out of Update Record was expected to be removed 3 months after Update Record was enabled in GP IT systems. The system changes were enabled on 3 April.

However, the rollout of Update Record by community pharmacy IT suppliers has not yet concluded, and many GP practices have not yet received Update Record messages into their workflow. As a result, NHS England was reviewing the timing of the removal and had no intention of removing the opt-out on 1 July.

10. Which suppliers have national approval to use Update Record?

Only the general practice clinical system suppliers (EMIS and TPP) and the 4 community pharmacy suppliers (Cegedim Healthcare Solutions, EMIS Pinnacle, Positive Solutions, Sonar Informatics) have gone through the necessary clinical and technical assurance needed to be able to deploy Update Record between community pharmacies and general practice.

Any plans to change or expand the uses for Update Record would be part of broad engagement with GPs, the BMA and RCGP as part of the agreed approach to support implementation of all nationally led digital developments.

11. Will Update Record increase workload from other care settings to general practice without any controls?

No. Update Record is designed to send routine consultation summaries from community pharmacy to general practice only, and only following Pharmacy First, Blood Pressure Check and Contraception services consultations.

Any plans to change or expand the uses for Update Record would be part of broad consultation with GPs, BMA and RCGP, as NHS England does for all nationally led developments that impact general practice.

12. Does GP Connect Update Record impact or remove the ability of the GP to undertake their role as data controller?

No. Update record has no impact on GP data controller role or responsibilities; see below:

- Community pharmacists are responsible for the data generated as part of the patient consultation.
- NHS England is responsible for the safe and secure transit of data between care settings.
- GPs are responsible for the data in the GP patient record.
 - Update Record presents the community pharmacy consultation summary in the practice workflow ready for it to be added to the GP patient record
 - it is only when the data has been added to the GP patient record that the GP becomes responsible for the data

13. Will Update Record mean GPs become responsible for decisions made in community pharmacy consultations?

No. Update Record only applies to the Pharmacy First, Blood Pressure Check, and Contraception services.

As clinical healthcare professionals, pharmacists have full responsibility for ensuring that any medicines supplied are clinically appropriate.

GPs are not responsible for management and treatment decisions, including any medicines supplied by registered community pharmacy professionals.

In the vast majority of cases, patients will not require ongoing treatment or monitoring by GPs following a community pharmacy consultation. The specification for each of the services delivered through community pharmacy set out guidelines for escalation and onward referral where clinically appropriate.