

How the NHS works for young people

1 When can I make decisions about my healthcare?

- You can make decisions on your own **before 18 years old** if your healthcare professional feels that you have a good understanding of the situation ([competence](#))

2 When can I make my own appointment?



- You can make an appointment with a GP **at any age**
- From 16 you can access GP online services, where you can book & cancel appointments, see test results and order repeat medications
- From 16 years, your parent/carer should only make, change or cancel your appointments if you have agreed ([consent](#))

3 When can I see a healthcare professional (doctor/nurse) on my own?

- **At any age**
- Everything you tell a healthcare professional should stay [confidential](#) unless you give permission to share or your safety is at risk
- You should be told before any information is shared



4 Can I see a doctor/visit a clinic without my parent/carer being told?

- **Yes.** If you don't want your parent/carer to know about a visit, this information should be kept private
- Your healthcare professional might encourage you to speak to your parents (or someone you trust) if they think it would be helpful
- If your healthcare professional is concerned about your safety, they may need to share information with other professionals

5 When can I use a pharmacy on my own?

- You can ask your pharmacist for advice at any age
- From **16 years old** you can collect your own prescriptions and can buy over the counter medications
- Under 16 years you can collect some prescriptions, ask your pharmacist for more information




6 Can my parent/carer still help me when I'm 16 or older (e.g. book or accompany me to appointments)?

- Yes, when you turn 16 **it's your choice** how much to involve them

More tips...

- **Involving** your parents, or **someone you trust**, can be helpful at any age
- You can **bring a friend or parent/carer** to an appointment or request a chaperone (chaperones have been trained to provide unbiased support for patients)
- As you get older, it can be really valuable to start seeing healthcare professionals alone for the whole or part of your appointment
- It can help to **write down** any concerns and questions, or make a diary of your symptoms, and take this to your appointment
- If you're unsure about something a healthcare professional has said, **ask them to explain again**
- Some people find it helpful to write important information down during/after an appointment
- Try to be as **open and honest** about your worries/concerns so that the healthcare professional can help
- If you are unhappy with the care you have received, it is important to **feedback** (find out [how to feedback](#))
- For young people, your **healthcare documentation** should be addressed and sent to you – speak to your healthcare professional if this is not happening
- Keep the **contact details** for your GP, school nurse and other healthcare professionals and a reminder of your appointments **in your phone**
- If there is not time to cover all your questions in one appointment ask about **booking a follow up**



As a young person, can you share an example of when healthcare has worked well for you?

“My occupational therapist is amazing! She listens to me and looks at me as a person”

Anon, 16 years old