

Tips for running a digital health drop in session in community settings

The NHS app helps people to access healthcare services online, such as booking appointments, ordering repeat prescriptions, and viewing medical records.

Running a digital drop-in session can help people register and use the NHS app effectively.

Here are some top tips for organising a successful session.

Choose the right location

Selecting an appropriate venue is crucial for the success of your session. Consider the following options:

- **Library:** Libraries often have the necessary technology resources, reliable internet and are accessible to the public.
- **Community centre:** These are frequently used for local events and are familiar to residents.
- **Places of worship:** These can be welcoming spaces for communities.

Ensure the space is accessible, has enough seating, provides a quiet environment conducive to learning and has a good wifi connection.

Involve local GP surgery staff

Having a member of staff from a local GP practice can be very helpful.

They can:

- **Provide expertise:** Answer specific questions about health records and appointments.
- **Build trust:** Reassure participants about the safety and benefits of using the NHS app.

- **Troubleshoot:** If someone doesn't have the required ID the staff member can confirm the identity of the patient and help them sign up with a linkage key so the person can still get registered.

Coordinate with the GP practice in advance to ensure their involvement.

Unblocking access issues

Some participants may not have access to mobile data or a reliable internet connection at home.

- **Consider offering support through SIM Cards from the National Databank:**
These can provide free mobile data for those in need.
- **Social Tariffs:** These can provide low cost broadband for people receiving certain benefits.

Consider having some promotional materials that can be handed out to make people aware of these options.

More information about the national databank can be found here:

www.goodthingsfoundation.org/our-services/national-databank

More information about social tariffs can be found here:

www.ofcom.org.uk/phones-and-broadband/saving-money/social-tariffs

Ensuring the venue has reliable wifi access will ensure everyone can fully participate in the session.

Create a dedicated space

Set up a specific area within your chosen venue for the session. Consider the following:

- **Technology setup:** Consider bringing a laptop, tablet or smartphone to be able to demonstrate the NHS app and support people with the sign up process.
- **Comfortable environment:** Arrange seating to promote a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere.

- **Signage and directions:** Use clear signage to direct participants to the session area.

Collaborate with digital inclusion organisations

Reach out to local organisations that specialise in digital inclusion. They can:

- **Provide volunteers:** To offer additional support and guidance during the session.
- **Share resources:** Supply educational materials or tech devices if needed.

Building partnerships with these organisations can enhance the overall experience for participants. You can use [Good Thing Foundation's map](#) to find a local Digital Inclusion Hub who can help you.

Plan your session structure

Ensure the session is well-organised and covers essential topics:

- **Introduction to the NHS app:** Explain the app's features and benefits.
- **Step-by-step registration:** Guide participants through the app registration process.
- **Hands-on practice:** Allow time for participants to explore the app with assistance.
- **Q&A session:** Allocate time for questions and personalised help.

Promote Your Session

Publicise your session in advance to attract attendees:

- **Flyers and posters:** Distribute them in community hubs and online platforms.
- **Social media:** Use local community groups and pages to spread the word.
- **Local newsletters:** Feature the event in community newsletters or bulletins

You can use the suggested social media and text message content here:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/services/nhs-app/toolkit>

You can download promotional materials here including posters, leaflets, social media images here:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/services/nhs-app/toolkit>

During the session

1. When an attendee arrives, greet them and **introduce yourself by name and role**.

For example:

"Hello, my name is [Name] and I'm a Digital Champion. I'm here to help patients get started with the NHS App and answer any questions about using it."

Use clear, jargon-free language and speak at a pace that is comfortable for the patient.

2. Briefly explain **what support is available during the session**. This helps set expectations and reassures patients that they are in the right place. For example:

"This session is on today to help you use the NHS App. We can help with downloading the app, creating an account, logging in, understanding the different features and helping you use them"

Explain that support is tailored to the individual's needs and that there is no expectation that they already have digital skills.

3. Ask open questions to understand why the patient has attended and what they would like help with. Examples include:

"What would you like help with today?"

"Have you used the NHS App before?"

"Do you already have an account, or are you starting from scratch?"

"Is there a specific feature you'd like to use, such as ordering prescriptions or viewing appointments?"

Listen carefully to their response and allow them time to explain. Some patients may have multiple questions or may not be sure exactly what support they need.

4. Once you understand their needs, briefly explain how you can help and what the session will involve. Explain what you can and cannot help with. This helps manage expectations and protects patient confidentiality. For example:

"I can help you use the NHS App and show you how the different features work. However, I cannot access your medical records, view personal health information, make changes to your healthcare records, or provide medical advice."

It is also important to explain that patients should enter their own personal information, passwords, PINs, and security codes wherever possible. For example

"For your privacy and security, I'll ask you to enter any passwords, security codes, or personal information yourself. If you get stuck, I can talk you through the process."

Supporting multiple people

- **Assess needs and prioritise support:** Quickly identify what each patient needs help with and deal with simple issues first where possible to reduce waiting times and help more people.
- **Promote independence and shared learning:** Encourage patients to use their own devices and complete tasks themselves, while providing general guidance that may benefit others waiting for support.
- **Manage the session effectively:** Keep patients informed about waiting times, maintain privacy and confidentiality, and signpost complex issues to the appropriate service when needed.

Provide resources and guides

- **Paper resources:** Have printed guides and resources readily available. These should include step-by-step instructions on how to download and navigate the NHS App.

- **Easy read guides:** Easy read guides can be great to support people with additional needs to understand the benefits of the app, what it can do and how they can register.

Gather feedback

After the session, collect feedback to improve future events:

Surveys: Provide a short survey for attendees to complete.

Feedback forms: Offer both digital and paper options for convenience.

Provide contact details: Encourage participants to reach out with additional questions or concerns.

By following these tips, you can create an effective and supportive environment for helping people register and use the NHS app, ultimately contributing to increased digital health literacy within your community.