

# Requirement Specification for NHS Wayfinder Services

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# Document management

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## Reviewers

This document must be reviewed by the following people:

Reviewer name	Title / Responsibility	Date	Version
REDACTED	Cyber Security Lead, NHS England	02/02/2026	3.1
REDACTED	Higher Executive Officer, Department of Health and Social Care	30/3/2026	4.0
REDACTED	IG Lead, NHS England	16/01/2026	4.0
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REDACTED	Deputy Director Information Governance, NHS England	06/03/2025	3.1

## Approved by

This document must be approved by the following people:

Name	Title	Date	Version
REDACTED	Information Asset Owner, NHS England	16/3/2026	4.0
Ming Tang	Chief Data and Analytics Officer, NHS England	16/3/2026	4.0
Arjun Dhillon	Deputy Caldicott Guardian, NHS England	19/3/2026	4.0
Jackie Gray	Director of Privacy and Information Governance, NHS England	10/3/2026	4.0
Mary De Silva	Deputy Director Data Policy Department for Health and Social Care	30/3/2026	4.0

## Glossary of Terms

Term / Abbreviation	What it stands for
API	Application Programming Interface
DHSC	Department of Health and Social Care
DNA	Did Not Attend (an appointment)

KPI	Key Performance Indicator
ODS	Organisation Data Service
MI	Management Information
PAS	Patient Administration System(s)
Patient-facing system	A system that enables users to view and interact with their medical information. May be provided and owned by NHS Trusts or a 3 <sup>rd</sup> party IT supplier such as a Patient Engagement Platform / Portal (PEP).
PDS	Personal Demographic Service
PIFU	Patient Initiated Follow Up
RAS	Referral Assessment Service
RTT	Referral to Treatment
SNOMED	A structured and consistent clinical vocabulary used by the NHS as part of electronic health records
UBRN	Unique Booking reference Number, assigned by e-RS to identify a referral through the system

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# Introduction

## Purpose of document

This document sets out the requirements for the NHS Wayfinder Services and should be read alongside the:

- NHS Wayfinder Services Directions 2023 issued by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which will replace the “NHS Wayfinder (NHS App) Services Directions 2022” issued by NHS England, which are revoked by the 2023 Directions; and
- NHS Wayfinder Services Technical Specification (**the Technical Specification**).

## Purpose of data collection

The purpose of the Wayfinder programme is to develop and deliver a service that enables people to access additional information about their elective care

The Wayfinder Programme will enhance integrations with patient information sources that support clinical decision making and care coordination, such as Shared Care Records and Trust Integration Engines and patient facing systems surfacing healthcare information via the NHS App to provide more patient-centred care at local and national levels. Wayfinder serves as a bridge between patient-facing systems and the NHS App through a Patient Care Aggregator (the “Aggregator”) to collate and surface information concerning patients’ access to healthcare services via API from patient-facing systems and a management integration layer to link Patient-facing systems with the NHS App. This will realise the following ambitions:

- to create a more consistent user experience which increases accessibility, visibility and control for people on elective pathways through a single point of entry
- to expand the number of people making use of the benefits of Patient-facing systems by using the NHS App as a front door
- to present curated local information, contact details and guidance in the NHS App for people on elective care pathways.
- to enable tracking of KPIs and other anonymous and summarised analytical data about patient usage of Wayfinder features and related services provided via patient-facing systems and NHS Trust systems for the purposes of service delivery, product improvement, and identification of actionable insights to improve end-to-end service

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provision. This could include patient journeys accessed via the NHS App or directly with trusts via PEP's. KPI's are also collected to understand the impact of Wayfinder on the delivery of care and associated outcomes, e.g. appointment attendance

Target benefits of the service include:

- A single point of entry “front door” to Wayfinder services through the NHS App
- An enhanced and more consistent patient experience enabled by higher visibility of information and improved access to and control of their care
- Reduced Did Not Attends (DNAs) resulting in improved clinic utilisation which will ultimately result in improved Referral To Treatment (RTT) performance and reduced financial impact
- Reduced costs and administrative burden from communicating with patients from letters, text messages and translation, realised via:
  - o SMS replacement with lower cost in-app messaging
  - o Reduced paper letters sent
- Reduced waiting times and decreased waiting lists
- Reduced carbon footprint
- Positive contribution towards the Elective Care Backlog Recovery Programme and its goals, enabled by the above target benefits

The programme will also provide a mechanism for gathering and consolidation of data and KPIs from the NHS App, the Patient Care Aggregator, and NHS Trust systems and NHS Commissioned Services systems for the purpose of service delivery improvement and optimisation, monitoring, business case and benefits case measurement.

## High Level Wayfinder Features

- Ability to access any Wayfinder functionality (covers all subsequent scenarios)
- Ability to access content surfaced in the NHS App via deep link (covers subset of subsequent scenarios)
- Ability to view appointments
- Ability to view referrals.
- Ability to book, change and cancel appointments including requesting a patient initiated follow up (PIFU) appointment or to request to be placed on the PIFU pathway.
- Ability to access relevant resources whilst waiting for care.
- Provides a single point of contact for the relevant appointment or referral for patients.

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- Ability to view clinical documents (including but not limited to: allergies and adverse reactions; medicines; test results; consultations and events; other documents and correspondence)
  - Ability to view and complete questionnaires.
  - Ability to be notified when something surfaced in the NHS App needs their attention (NHS App Notification Service)
  - Provide a single place to access, view and respond to messages received through the NHS App
  - Ability to be able to view waiting times for expected future appointments.
  - Provide guidance to users as to why information (e.g. appointments, documents, questionnaires) may not be showing and provide guidance on how the appointment tooling works
  - Provide a mechanism by which users may provide feedback.

## Data collection

### Scope

Data will be collected for patients with NHS numbers in the NHS's Personal Demographic Service (PDS) covering England, as well as where approved for use outside of England (i.e. devolved authorities) using NHS England formal request processes. Personal data will be collected and processed to deliver Wayfinder services, but data will be pseudonymised for the purposes of data analysis and creating anonymous and summarised statistical reports and outputs.

### Source

Data processed by NHS Wayfinder Services will be provided by:

- NHS Trusts including:
  - Patient Facing Systems<sup>1</sup>
  - Integrated patient information sources<sup>2</sup>
- NHS England systems

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<sup>1</sup> Is a system that allows patients to access and manage their health care e.g. via a patient engagement portal or web application. These are usually a third party data processor instructed by the NHS Trust.

<sup>2</sup> An **integrated patient information source** is a system or platform that provides access to patient health data, supporting clinical decision-making and care coordination—examples include Shared Care Records and Trust Integration Engines (TIEs), which consolidate and share information across healthcare providers.

- NHS Data sources<sup>3</sup>
- NHS commissioned services<sup>4</sup>

## Category

NHS England will collect and process the following data as part of delivering the Services:

Data Categories	Data level	Rationale
<b>Personal Data</b>		
NHS Number	Identifiable	To match / validate patient records. Not considered healthcare data unless aggregated with other information e.g. condition data
	Pseudonymised	Reporting services, past appointments
Surname	Identifiable	Required to match / validate patient records
Name	Identifiable	Required by Service Desk to contact the user to resolve their issue.
Date of Birth	Identifiable	Required to match / validate patient records.
	Pseudonymised	Reporting services, past appointments
Email Address	Identifiable	Required by Service Desk to contact the user to resolve their issue.
Phone number	Identifiable	Required by Service Desk to contact the user to resolve their issue.
Patient analytical data E.g. overall number of patient logins to Wayfinder, number of	Pseudonymised	Data about patient interaction with Wayfinder functionality gathered to inform business case benefits mapping, KPI /

<sup>3</sup> An **NHS data source** is a centralized repository or system that collects, stores, and provides access to structured health and administrative data used for patient care, service planning, and performance monitoring—examples include the Personal Demographics Service (PDS), Secondary Uses Service (SUS), and Waiting List Minimum Data Set (WLMDs).

<sup>4</sup> An **NHS commissioned service** maybe an independent Health and Social Care provider who have been commissioned under contract by the NHS to provide services to patients.

unique patient logins to Wayfinder		<p>MI generation and service delivery improvement opportunities.</p> <p>Will in some scenarios require processing of patient Personal Data (e.g. NHS Number) in order to generate pseudonymised data at a per patient level</p>
<p>Outcome analytical data</p> <p>E.g. overall number of appointments where the outcome was attended, cancelled or Did Not Attend</p>	Pseudonymised	<p>Data about patient outcomes where the use of Wayfinder is expected to have an impact. This is collected to inform business case benefits mapping, KPI/MI generation and service delivery improvement opportunities.</p> <p>Will in some scenarios require processing of patient Personal Data (e.g. NHS Number) in order to generate pseudonymised data at a per patient level</p>
<b>Special Category Data</b>		
<p>Appointment data</p> <p>(data relating to an individual's appointment)</p>	Identifiable	<p>Required to surface clear and navigable appointment information to patients.</p> <p>Required by Service Desk to contact the user to resolve their issue.</p>
<p>Referral data</p> <p>(data relating to an individual's referral)</p>	Identifiable	Required to surface clear and navigable referral data to patients
<p>Document data</p> <p>E.g. document type, document status</p>	Identifiable	Required to surface clear and navigable document information to patients
<p>Questionnaire data</p> <p>E.g. questionnaire type, questionnaire status</p>	Identifiable	Required to surface clear and navigable questionnaire data to patients
<p>Patient-specific wait list data</p>	Identifiable	Required for data linkage to surface average wait time data relevant to the patient, to

		identify candidate patients for wait list validation, PIFU and transfer of care
Test results	Identifiable	Required to surface patient clear and navigable test result information to patients
Condition / patient specific pathway data	Identifiable	Required to enable delivery of a tailored patient experience related to their individual condition or care pathway
Speciality e.g. orthopaedics, podiatry psychiatry	Identifiable	Required to deliver relevant information to patients based on the speciality
Messages from health and care providers	Identifiable	Required to update patients on their care and required actions via NHS Notify and NHS App Messaging and Notification Services.
<b>Non-Personal Data</b>		
Portal URL (deep link)	Pseudonymised	Required to allow patients to access Wayfinder content and features delivered via Patient-Facing System within NHS login-enabled experience
Portal identifiers (Codes relating to a specific system)	Anonymous	Required to identify source systems to manage integration
Wait list rolled-up data	Aggregated	Trust, speciality, procedure data required to match with patient presence on wait list to provide wait time information relevant to the patient and to validate the true size of NHS waiting lists

## Frequency

Data will be collected on an ongoing basis as required, ranging from a static monthly feed to data streaming closer to real-time.

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# Analysis

## Internal processing

NHS England will process personal data to the extent necessary to make available the relevant information to the user through the NHS App and to enable analysis of the utilisation and impact of the Wayfinder Service, to meet the Purpose set out in the Direction.

The NHS App will present, but will not store information, which it will source from the Patient Care Aggregator.

NHS England will collect, process and analyse personal data, which may include special category data to meet and facilitate the Purpose set out in the Direction by carrying out the following processing activities in accordance with a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) approved in accordance with the NHS England DPIA Procedure:

- Use of data provided by the user to the service desk function to resolve issues.
- Use of the NHS number and NHS login identifier to assist in fault resolution.
- User research to support the continued improvement of the service by inviting users to take part in interviews / usability tests and surveys.
- Provide event logs and audit events into the Corporate Protective Monitoring service managed and delivered by NHS England's Cyber Security Operations Centre
- Caching of data (including patient personal data) within a patient's authenticated user session in order to optimise performance and user experience.
- Processing of data for the purpose of summary linkage to other data or assets (e.g. measurement of user click-through of NHS App notification and completion of a questionnaire inside Patient-Facing System) for the purpose of feature delivery, analytics and service improvement.
- Processing, pseudonymisation and linkage of patient personal data related to appointments using a common identifier (e.g. NHS number) in order to create anonymous analytical and volumetric data for NHS England and NHS Trusts to use to analyse and assess the full picture of patient journey patterns and experience as they engage with and traverse NHS digital services. The purposes for which this data is thus employed include benefits case understanding for NHSE to support investment and delivery decisions and for NHS Trusts to establish the value of investment in and procurement of digital solutions (particularly patient-facing system solutions), KPI/MI generation to track achievement in relation to policy and strategic objectives and commitments, and analytics for service delivery improvement by identifying variations

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for deeper investigation. The data to be utilised for these purposes, includes but is not limited to:

- number of unique patients accessing Wayfinder;
- number of patients who did not attend an appointment after having viewed the appointment via Wayfinder;
- appointment journey patterns across:
  - Wayfinder;
  - Patient-facing systems;
  - NHS Trust systems;
- Processing of data (including user personal data where required e.g. addressing of service tickets) to provide event logs and audit events into the Corporate Protective Monitoring service managed and delivered by NHS England's Cyber Security Operations Centre

Patient-identifiable datasets (e.g. processing NHS numbers to measure number of unique patients accessing Wayfinder features within a Patient-Facing System) may be processed and pseudonymised locally (e.g., within a single system such as a Patient-Facing System or the NHS App) to enable delivery of anonymous and summarised data for analysis to the Wayfinder programme.

The Wayfinder service will also produce statistics and analytics on, but not limited to:

- High-level statistical information.
- Summary linkage to other data or assets for the purpose of feature delivery, analytics and service improvement.
- Key Performance Indicators
- Management Information generation
- Service delivery improvement

## **Data linkage**

Pseudonymised data may be linked to other datasets (such as the NHS App, Trust data sources) for the purpose of dissemination / publication, management information reporting and internal data analytics. This linkage will only occur where approved by information governance team and in accordance with information governance procedures and controls, including where required, advice from the Advisory Group for Data.

Where data may be linked for these purposes, this will be subject to the Data Protection Impact Assessment being updated to provide details on the linkage and assess any associated risks.

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# Consultation

Before issuing these Directions, the Secretary of State has consulted with NHS England.

NHS England has consulted with the following:

- Patient representative groups, via user research and testing
- Trust representatives as part of design and during onboarding
- Wayfinder Trust Reference Group
- Government Digital Service:
  - Alpha assessment completed 16th June 2022
  - Beta assessment completed in March 2023.

## Dissemination / Sharing

### Regular Dissemination / Sharing

Planned dissemination will include:

- Support NHS Trusts, NHS commissioned services, commissioners & policy teams, support strategies etc. at national, regional and provider level by making metrics available that can inform operational decisions and improve health outcomes.
- Service usage metrics and data for the Department of Health and Social Care and its associated bodies (NHS England, UK Health Security Agency etc.)

Planned dissemination of data will be at an anonymous and summarised level, with no personally identifiable data shared.

### Ad-hoc Dissemination / Sharing

NHS England may disseminate data back to the NHS Trust which originally provided it, in identifiable or anonymised form, at the request of the NHS Trust to assist in resolving any technical or quality assurance issues.

Other dissemination of data may take place where required for purposes such as research or audit. Data shared for these purposes will be at an anonymous and summarised level, with no personally identifiable data shared.

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## Data Access Request Service (DARS)

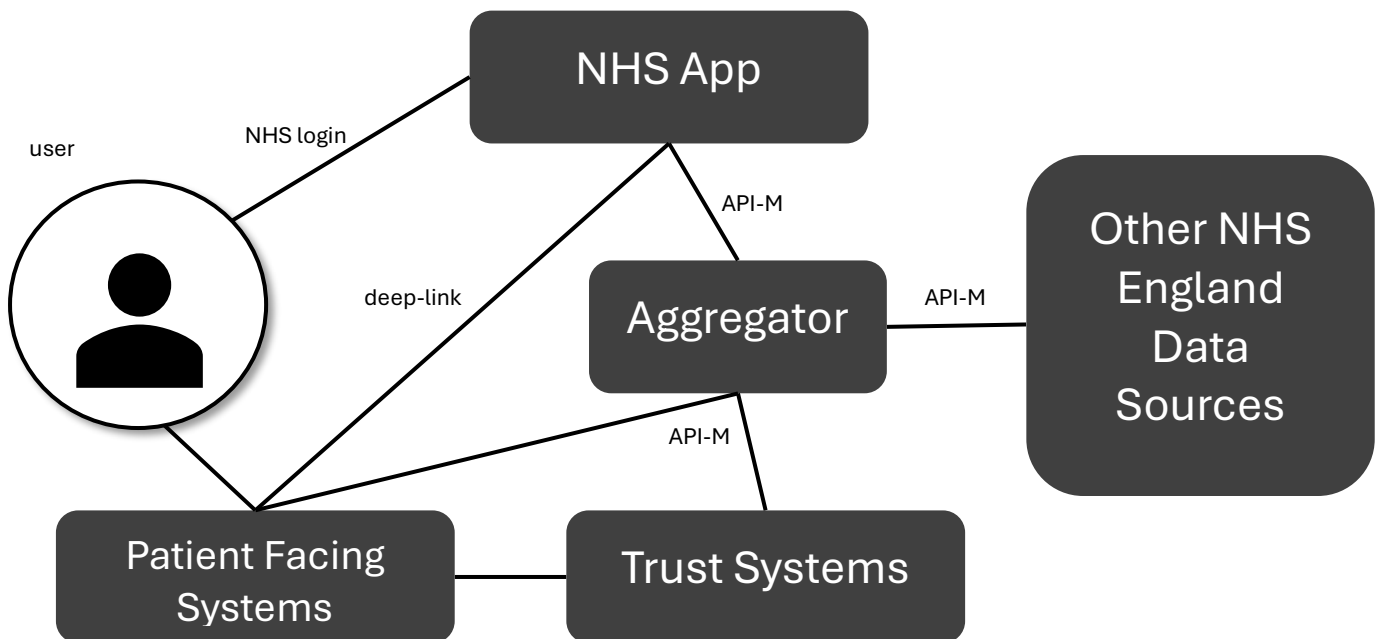
No data is planned to be disseminated or shared through DARS.

## Publication

Data collected under these Directions may be published via statistical charts and data dashboards. Any data published will be anonymous and summarised, with no personally identifiable data shared.

## System Delivery Function

The diagram below provides a high-level illustration of the Wayfinder product. Key components of the service are described below, and additional content and context is set out in the Wayfinder Technical Specification.



- **NHS login**

A national citizen identity proofing and authentication service, which provides patients with a simple, secure and reusable way to access digital health and care services

- **Patient Care Aggregator**

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- A back-end service, designed specifically for Wayfinder, that retrieves patient data from the NHS Trusts, NHS England systems, other NHS data sources and patient facing systems and aggregates those data for presentation in NHS App (i.e. the front-end service). The Patient Care Aggregator is made up of 4 types of services:
    - Records Services:
      - Uses NHS number and matches in with the Patient-Facing System client ID to check whether information should be sought for a given patient.
      - This is the only data that the aggregator stores.
    - An Events Service:
      - Requests appointment, document, questionnaire, and wait list data from NHS England systems, Patient-facing systems, and Trust systems as and when requested by the patient via the app.
    - A Reference Data Service
      - Matches the ODS code to a patient readable trust name
    - A Waiting Lists Service:
      - Indicates a patient's presence on a waiting list and PIFU pathway. If a patient never uses Wayfinder services, their data will not be pulled into the Patient Care Aggregator Event Service.
  - **NHS App**

A national service that provides citizens in England with access to a range of NHS services both on their mobile devices and their desktop computers. It presents an aggregated view of all appointment requests, referrals, all NHS Trust elective care appointments, all documents and questionnaires, and wait times for any planned care associated with the user's NHS Number. Enables users to be notified when something surfaced in the NHS App needs their attention via the NHS Notify or NHS App Notification Service, creating a message for the patient to read where relevant via the NHS App Message Service. All data above will be sourced via API integration with the NHS England Patient Care Aggregator. For further information about the NHS App, please see the [NHS App Direction 2023](#).
  - **NHS Digital API Platform (a.k.a. API-M)**

A 'front door' for health and care APIs, primarily for NHS in England.
  - **Patient-facing systems (e.g. Patient Engagement Platforms / Portals)**

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Patient-facing systems allow patients to access and manage their health care e.g. via patient engagement portal or web application.

- **Integrated Patient Information Sources**

A system or platform that provides access to patient health data, supporting clinical decision-making and care coordination—examples include Shared Care Records and Trust Integration Engines (TIEs), which consolidate and share information across healthcare providers.

- **Trust systems (e.g. patient administration systems) –**  
are systems that hold and process healthcare data

- **Other NHS England data sources –**

Centralized repositories or systems that collect, store, and provide access to structured health and administrative data used for patient care, service planning, and performance monitoring.

## Change control process

Changes to this Specification will be managed by NHS England in conjunction with the Department of Health and Social Care to ensure such changes are aligned with the NHS Wayfinder Direction 2023.

Any changes will include consultation with the following stakeholders where appropriate:

- NHS England, internal teams
- NHS Trusts and their contracted Patient-facing systems