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Dear Patient

On 1<sup>st</sup> November 2022 patients will automatically be given access to their general practitioner records relating to any contacts they have with their surgery after this date. This includes access to any free text in the record.

Although GPs absolutely support patient access to records, and for most patients the access will only be positive, there are a number of issues that have not been addressed prior to this launch date:

1. Given that no system is perfect, it is highly likely that there are coded errors in your records. Ideally all records would be reviewed before they are made available. However, the resource to do this would divert clinicians from direct patient care for many months, so if you find what you think is an error, you will need to let your practice know. Please be aware that no additional staff or funding has been made available to correct errors and so it may well take months before these potential errors are reviewed and if appropriate, altered.

2. Patients, including children, may be forced to share their information with potential abusers.

i) NHS England wanted practices to review all children's records prior to the launch date and if thought 'at risk', to prevent access. It would take an average practice over 1750 hours to review these records and lose nearly 300 GP appointments. No practice has the capacity to reduce their access by this amount so we have not been able to do this and as such, we remain very concerned about the risk to our patients.

ii) The system requires patients and clinicians to consider whether every contact could put the patient at risk and if so, prevent it being viewable online. Given the pressure on access this would require shortening appointment times so clinicians and patients could then review the appointment notes and 'hide' the consultation. No resource has been given to inform patients or to allow clinicians to undertake the training required. This solution has a high risk of going wrong especially in the early stages, but if you do wish to hide any future consultations, please let your clinician know at the time of your appointment.

Other countries have allowed access to records and the potential benefits are huge, we are therefore, disappointed that national bodies have not responded to our concerns and addressed the potential risks that have been identified.

We look forward to working with you when this new service is launched and hope your experience will only be positive.

Yours Sincerely  
Clifton Road Surgery