



## EpicCare Link: Frequently Asked Questions

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### General Information

#### **Q. What is EpicCare Link?**

EpicCare Link is HSCNI'S secure online tool for connecting primary care clinicians, other HSC clinical staff, social care workers and other approved third parties to HSCNI's encompass electronic health record system. EpicCare Link offers 'view-only' access to patients' information such as hospitalisations, specialist referrals, and real-time clinical data.

#### **Q. What does EpicCare Link offer?**

- Provides a user-friendly interface for accessing patient information, facilitating seamless communication and collaboration among care teams.
- Enables clinicians and social care workers to view patient records, place certain orders, and receive real-time updates, with the aim of enhancing the efficiency and quality of patient care.
- Link promotes interoperability and integration across healthcare systems, enabling comprehensive and coordinated care delivery.

#### **Q. Will EpicCare Link include patient information from any HSCNI facility?**

Not initially. Only clinical data from Trusts that are 'Live' on encompass will be viewable through EpicCare Link. NIECR and other legacy systems will still be needed to view clinical information from non-live Trusts. Once all HSCNI Trusts are live on encompass, you can access clinical data for your patients using EpicCare Link, regardless of which HSCNI Trust they visit.

#### **Q. What information is available within EpicCare Link?**

With EpicCare Link you can view the following from Trusts that have implemented encompass:

- Lab results, diagnostic test results & reports – Note that GPs will continue to receive results to their clinical systems (EMIS/Vision) the way they do today.
- Hospitalisation records, procedural information, discharge instructions and progress notes
- Medications, allergies, problem lists, medical history and more.

#### **Q. Who can use EpicCare Link?**

EpicCare Link is available to:

- Staff at non-live HSCNI facilities who also have NIECR access, including Social Services
- Referring physicians and their support staff
- Community-based care partners, such as General Practitioners, Community Optometrists and long-term care facilities

**Note:** *Optometrists who do not have existing NIECR access at the point of go-live will request access to EpicCare Link at the same time as requesting a new NIECR account using the same*

online application form – see subsequent questions below “**How do I sign up for EpicCare Link?**”

## Transition from NIECR to EpicCare Link

### **Q. What is the transition from NIECR To EpicCare Link?**

As Trust’s Go-Live on encompass, EpicCare Link will replace NIECR as the portal to the Trusts’ Electronic Health Record and that used in primary care settings.

### **Q. How will the transition be carried out across the five Trusts?**

The transition will be implemented over the coming years beginning with **South Eastern Trust** on **9<sup>th</sup> November 2023**. Initially, all active NIECR users will be provisioned an EpicCare Link account (apart from SEHSCT staff who will have full ‘encompass’ access). As each remaining Trust goes live on encompass, Trust staff will be provisioned full encompass access to replace their EpicCare Link accounts. Once the final Trusts are live on encompass, only GPs and other non-Trust clinical staff will use EpicCare Link.

### **Q. Can I use EpicCare Link to access Trust information about my patients and service users?**

Yes, EpicCare Link will allow healthcare and social care providers to view patient information from Trusts that are ‘live’ on encompass. **Initially only clinical information from South Eastern HSC Trust will be viewable in EpicCare Link.** As other Trusts go live on encompass, EpicCare Link will be updated with clinical information from the corresponding Trust.

### **Q. Can I view patient records from ‘non-live’ Trusts (i.e. those Trusts that have not as yet moved to encompass as their patient record) in EpicCare Link?**

No, NIECR will be the primary source for patient records at ‘non-live’ Trusts. Once the respective Trust implements encompass, patient records will be accessed via EpicCare Link.

### **Q. Will I be able to view clinical information from ‘live’ Trusts (i.e. those Trusts that have moved to encompass as their patient record) in NIECR?**

No, clinical documentation and data from live Trusts will be stored in encompass and accessed via EpicCare Link for ‘external’ (including primary care) clinicians and ‘non-live’ Trust staff. Some information such as lab results and imaging reports **may** file in NIECR as unsolicited results, but this **should not** be relied upon. EpicCare Link should always be reviewed side-by-side with NIECR when a patient is seen at a live Trust for treatment.

### **Q. Will NIECR be accessible once all Trusts are live on encompass?**

NIECR access will remain throughout the encompass rollout period so users can view historical data that is not transferred to the new system and ongoing data documented at non-live Trusts. BSO ITS is currently working on an archiving solution for NIECR and until this is in place, NIECR access will be maintained for historical data review.

## Signup/Login

### **Q. How do I sign up for EpicCare Link?**

Anyone with current NIECR access will automatically receive an account for EpicCare Link. These details will be emailed to individuals. Optometrists will be issued an EpicCare Link account when they apply for a new NIECR account. The application form for a user account for both systems is a combined form. Site Administrators will process applications for EpicCare Link accounts for new users following receipt of the completed on-line application form. The application

form is hosted on the HSC Optometry Portal (please select the relevant form on the Optometry eForms tab/page).

**Q. How long does it take to get an account?**

Once your Site Administrator processed the application with the signed End User Confidentiality Agreement to the EpicCare Link team, it should take a maximum of 10 business days to process the account. Once setup, the user's account information will be securely emailed back to the user via their linked email address.

**Q. How will I know when a patient's health record or new result has been updated?**

You can choose which notifications you wish to receive from your EpicCare Link account. You will then receive a message in your EpicCare Link 'In-Basket' whenever selected information is made available. If you don't open the message within 24 hours, the system will send a reminder to your email address (provided on the End User Confidentiality Agreement when you signed up).

**Q. How do I log in?**

Please refer to the detailed information in the '**EpicCare Link Introduction Information**' provided by Ophthalmic Services to ensure ease of access to the EpicCare Link site and follow the steps below to log-into EpicCare Link.

1. Open your web browser and go to [https://epiccarelink.encompass.hscni.net/EpicCareLink/common/epic\\_login.asp](https://epiccarelink.encompass.hscni.net/EpicCareLink/common/epic_login.asp).
2. Enter the user ID and password that you received for EpicCare Link.
3. Enter your single-use passcode.

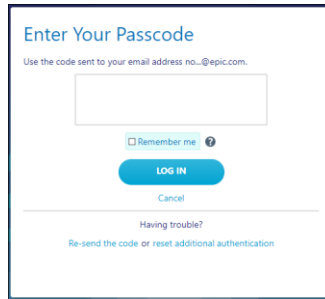
***Set up an authentication method***

When you first log in with your username and password, you're prompted to choose how you receive single-use passcodes that are required to access your account. This extra layer of security helps ensure that you're the only person who can log in to your account, even if someone knows your username and password. Please ensure that you have installed an authenticator app on your device (e.g. Google Authenticator, Microsoft Authenticator etc...), the device that you select should be one which is accessible to you when logging into EpicCare Link making it easy for you to input the Passcode which the authenticator app generates.

You can receive the passcodes through a mobile application, a text message, or email. Each time you try to log in, you receive a passcode through your chosen method that you need to enter to finish logging in. Each passcode can be used only one time.

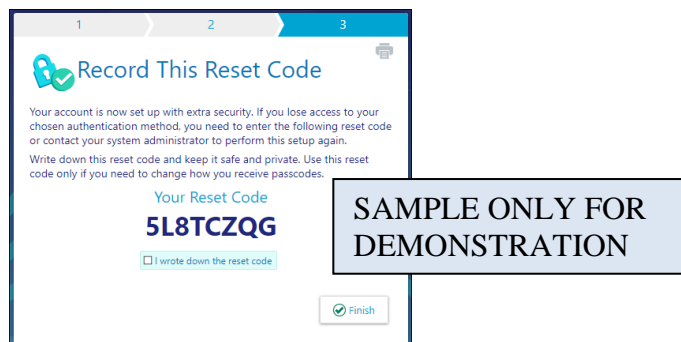
After you enter the passcode, you can select the "Remember me" check box to indicate that you are using a device that is not shared with anyone else. This means that you will not be asked for a passcode the next time you sign in from the same device for a period. If you **are using** a shared device please **do not select** the "Remember me" option.

**Note** that if you log in through a different device or browser, or your browser's settings are reset, you will be prompted for a passcode.



### **Record your reset code**

- When you set up an authentication method, the system gives you a reset code to use if you need to change how you receive passcodes. For example, if you get a new smartphone you will use the reset code to set up your new phone to receive passcodes.
- **Write down the reset code that appears on the screen and keep it private.** You need to enter the reset code from the login screen if you need to change your authentication method. Note that you can also use this code to change your authentication method from the Settings menu after you log in.
- A new passcode is sent to you each time you log in. Enter this code to complete the login process.
- Unlike passcodes, the reset code appears only once after you set up your authentication method. Use this reset code only if you need to change how you receive passcodes.



### **Q. How do I log out?**

To maintain viewing patient confidentiality, you need to log out or secure your screen when you are finished viewing your patient record/working or, must leave the computer for any reason. There are **two ways to do this**:

1. Click Log Out. The next time you log in, you are directed to your start page
2. Secure the computer by going to **Menu >Secure**. When you log back in, you return to the same activity that you were using before you secured the screen.

### **Q. How long will I have access to EpicCare Link and view-only access to my patient's information at HSCNI?**

You will have access to your patient's information for as long as your patient has a valid HCN and has a health care record in encompass. You can find your patient's record using 'First Access', note that this is reportable and monitored by encompass.

You must log into HSCNI's EpicCare Link portal **once every 90 days** for your account to remain active. If your account becomes **inactive**, you will need to **submit a vFire** for account reactivation. Please refer to the guidance on the use of vFire to ensure your request is directed to the correct support team.

Primary care optometrists/optometry practices currently use vFire for other purposes (e.g. requesting password resets for CCG/ NICER user accounts). Full guidance on the use of vFire is available via the vFire Customer Portal link on the HSC Optometry Portal.

**Q. Who should I contact if I am having problems accessing EpicCare Link?**

You must first contact the EpicCare Link Site Administrator for primary care optometry using the [ophthalmic.services@hscni.net](mailto:ophthalmic.services@hscni.net) email address. In your email please be specific about the issue/problems you are experiencing. The Site Administrator is your EpicCare Link support and will be your first point of contact for any questions/problems. Site Administrators can look up login IDs and reset passwords. If the Site Administrator is not able to assist you, they can:

- a. Contact the IT Support Team
- b. Contact the EpicCare Link Support Team

**Note** that if you do not first contact your Site Administrator, you will be redirected to your Site Admin by the IT/EpicCare Link Support Team for assistance.

**Q. I forgot my password; how do I retrieve it?**

If you have forgotten your password, you can contact [ophthalmic.services@hscni.net](mailto:ophthalmic.services@hscni.net) and the optometry EpicCare Link Site Administrator(s) will be able to change your password.

**Q. Can I change my password in EpicCare Link?**

**Yes**, once you have an 'active' account you will be able to change your own password within EpicCare Link, using the **Utilities and User Settings** activities.

## Information on 'Site Administrators' and their role

**Q. What is the role of an EpicCare Link Site Administrator?**

The Site Administrator is responsible for assisting with the onboarding of new users within the EpicCare Link system, managing user accounts, site verification and keeping site information updated. **Ophthalmic Services staff in SPPG are the designated Site Administrators for primary care optometrist users of EpicCare Link.**

**Q. How do I request a new user account for EpicCare Link?**

Optometrists can apply for an EpicCare Link account **using the same method and online form as for the current NIECR account application**. Following receipt of a completed application form the Site Administrator(s) for ophthalmic services in SPPG will action the request for a new user account for an optometrist and the details of the new user account will be sent to the relevant linked email address provided in the application. **Please note:** New EpicCare Link user account information is sent to the linked individual optometrist email address, but new NIECR account information is sent to the associated optometry practice.

**Q. What do I do if a user forgets their username/password or encounters login issues?**

Site Administrators can reset passwords through the administrative tools provided. However, if you are experiencing **technical issues** or your account is 'inactive' (i.e. not accessed for 90 days), please **submit a vFire**, via the usual process following the guidance hosted on the HSC Optometry Portal.

**Q. Are there be multiple Site Administrators in SPPG for Ophthalmic Services?**

Yes, organisations can have multiple Site Administrators to ensure efficient user management.

**Q. How do I stay informed about updates and changes to EpicCare Link?**

Site Administrators will receive communications about updates, changes and new features through official channels. Any updates or changes to EpicCare Link will be advised to all optometry contractor practices by SPPG via the usual communication channels.

**Q. How do I remove access for a user who no longer needs their EpicCare Link account?**

Site Administrators in ophthalmic services in SPPG will deactivate or remove access to an EpicCare Link account that is no longer required.