

### Checklist: The NHS website's criteria for linking to external sites

Use this form to check whether your website meets our criteria for sites we link to. We are keen to link to key providers of good quality information on health and social care. If your site meets our criteria we may include a link to it in our "Useful links" database and on any pages with relevant content.

To request a link to your site, contact [nhswebsite.servicedesk@nhs.net](mailto:nhswebsite.servicedesk@nhs.net)

*Please note that the requirements set out below do not generally apply to sites, such as the Google Play Store and the iTunes App Store, that have a primary purpose of providing access to a wide range of digital tools including, but not restricted to, those categorised as being relevant to health and care. Where we judge it to be helpful to our users for us to link to such sites in order to provide access to specific digital tools, we may do so without reference to some or all of the terms of our external links policy.*

	<u>Criteria</u>	<u>Details</u>
	<b>Availability</b>	
<b>Essential</b>	1. Access to website is free of charge.	Sites that are not free to access <b>will</b> be excluded.
<b>Essential</b>	2. Website does not require people to register  or  Registration is for a part of site only (e.g. to discussion fora and distribution of newsletters) and the main pages do not require registration.	Sites that require registration and log in to move beyond the first page <b>will</b> be excluded.  Sites with registration for a small part of the site, for example discussion fora, and sign up for other services e.g. newsletters <b>may</b> be acceptable.  NB: We recognise that sites that offer tailored online interventions may require user registration. Decisions on linking to such sites will be made on a case-by-case basis – see 'Evidence of effectiveness for intervention sites', below.
<b>Essential</b>	3. Website contains content that is appropriate within the context of health and social care.	Sites with content that is considered by the NHS website to be inappropriate within the context of the NHS website <b>will</b> be excluded.

	<u>Criteria</u>	<u>Details</u>
<b>Advertising and competing interests</b>		
<b>Essential</b>	<p>4. Website content is not dominated by advertising.</p> <p>5. Website has a clear distinction between advertisements and non-advertising material.</p> <p>6. Website does not run inappropriate advertising.</p>	<p>Sites with an unreasonably high level of advertising <b>will</b> be excluded.</p> <p>Sites with advertising not clearly identifiable will be excluded.</p> <p>Sites running inappropriate advertising <b>will</b> be excluded.</p> <p>Sites set up solely for the purposes of ordering consumables <b>will</b> be excluded.</p>
<b>Evidence of effectiveness for intervention sites</b>		
<b>Essential</b>	7. Websites that offer interventions must have at least partial evidence of effectiveness	<p>Sites that provide interventions aimed at achieving some level of change in an individual's physical or mental health (such as interventions for mental health problems or interventions to modify health behaviours such as smoking, diet or physical activity), <b>must</b> be able to show that the intervention provided has as a minimum at least partial evidence of effectiveness.</p> <p>'Partial evidence of effectiveness' is defined for this purpose as evidence of improvement in a relevant health or social outcome measure as shown in peer-reviewed observational studies or experimental studies, with no evidence in these studies that the intervention causes significant harm.</p>
Desirable	8. Website clearly states its source(s) of funding and sponsorship.	<p>Commercial funding or sponsorship would not rule out a site but sites which fail to point out potential conflicts of interest to their users <b>may</b> be excluded.</p> <p>Organisations that do not describe their funding sources on their web sites <b>may</b> be excluded.</p>

	<u>Criteria</u>	<u>Details</u>
<b>Authority &amp; reliability</b>		
Desirable	9. All website content is regularly updated.	Sites should list date of publication and date of update.  Sites without date of last update or publication <b>may</b> be excluded.
Desirable	10. Website is covered by a quality assurance scheme, for example The Information Standard <a href="http://www.theinformationstandard.org/">http://www.theinformationstandard.org/</a>  or  Health on the Net Code, <a href="http://www.hon.ch/HONcode/Conduct.html">http://www.hon.ch/HONcode/Conduct.html</a>  or  Website has its own quality assurance procedures that are clearly described on the site.	Websites without a policy for quality assurance <b>may</b> be excluded.
Desirable	11. Website content provides a useful and valuable contribution to health and social care.	Sites that simply act as gateways to other sites (unless for a specific reason) <b>may</b> be excluded.
<b>Clinical accuracy</b>		
Desirable	12. Website content is based on current, good clinical research evidence that is verifiable from other sources.	Sites that are simply personal or organisational opinion <b>may</b> be excluded.
Desirable	13. Website reviews and updates content in line with emerging evidence-based material.	Websites that do not state their policy for updating content in line with new evidence based development <b>may</b> be excluded.

	<u>Criteria</u>	<u>Details</u>
Desirable	14. Website presents a responsible perspective, reflecting existence of choices.	Websites that do not do not reflect choice where it exists <b>may</b> be excluded.
Desirable	15. Website content informed with clinical input through a clinical advisor or board.	Sites containing clinical content should always have a process for clinical assurance; sites without this <b>may</b> be excluded.  Sites without clinical assurance <b>may</b> be excluded.
<b>User involvement</b>		
Desirable	16. Website has involved patients and/or members of the public in its development or We have taken steps to consider how people will use our website in its development.	Sites that cannot demonstrate evidence of involving users in design, piloting or other processes <b>may</b> be excluded.
<b>Design &amp; accessibility</b>		
Desirable	17. Website layout is appropriate for the end user.	Websites with poor design and navigation and sites prepared without consideration to accessibility for people with disabilities <b>may</b> be excluded.
<b>Links</b>		
Desirable	18. Website contains link to NHS website home page from its home page or useful links page.	Health websites that do not link to the NHS website where appropriate <b>may</b> be excluded.