

# HSCN Compliance

## Customer Guide

**V2.0**

Issue Date: Feb 2025  
Public

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## Introduction

All organisations that require connectivity to the Health & Social Care Network (HSCN) must complete and submit a Connection Agreement to NHS-Digital. Signing this agreement will mean that your organisation is ready to be connected to the HSCN once you've identified a supplier.

Full published guidance from NHD-Digital can be found [here](#). This document contains sections from NHS guidance, either replicated verbatim or slightly adjusted for clarity.

You can complete a Connection Agreement at any point before you connect to HSCN. NHS Digital advises that you do this as soon as possible to make sure you do not face any connection delays.

In this document, we'll take you through the necessary steps to obtain your Connection Agreement.

## Compliance Steps

### Step 1: Check the HSCN statement

To access and sign the HSCN Connection Agreement, a representative from your organisation must first confirm that your intended use for HSCN aligns with this statement:

***“Connection to the HSCN is provided based on the business need to share information within the health and social care community. This means that HSCN is available to any organisation where the purpose of its connection to HSCN is the delivery, facilitation, or support of health and/or social care in England.”***

Essentially, the Connection Agreement is a promise that you will use the HSCN for the purpose it was intended, and will follow the information governance standards and data security best practice set out in the Data Security Protection Toolkit (DSPT).

## Step 2: Check for an existing Connection Agreement

Before submitting for a Connection Agreement, you should check whether your organisation already has one.

***If your organisation already has a valid Connection Agreement in place, you do not need to follow the following steps and can proceed to select an HSCN connectivity supplier.***

- You only need one signed Connection Agreement for your organisation even if you are establishing multiple HSCN connections.
- You can search your organisation here to check whether you already have an HSCN Connection agreement in place:

<https://crm.digital.nhs.uk/hscnconnectionagreementsearch/>

Home / HSCN Connection Agreement Search

## HSCN Connection Agreement Search

This search feature allows you to check whether an organisation has signed an HSCN Connection Agreement. You can search for individual organisations by name or up to 100 organisations at a time by ODS code.

Please complete the CAPTCHA below in order to proceed.



[Generate a new image](#)

[Play the audio code](#)

Enter the code from the image

Next

*Enter the CAPTCHA information and then search your organisation by ODS code or name.*

## Step 3: Find or create your ODS Code

***If you already know your ODS code, you can skip this step.***

- An ODS code (also called an Organisation code) is a unique code created by the Organisation Data Service within NHS Digital, and used to identify organisations across health and social care. An ODS code is needed to access a range of NHS Digital services including the HSCN.
- It is likely that you already have an ODS code, especially if you work in a public health organisation.
- To find it, you can search here: <https://odsportal.digital.nhs.uk/Organisation/Search>
- If you can't find your ODS code(s), or you know that you don't have one, this means you don't currently exist on the Care Quality Commission (CQC) database. You'll need to contact the Data Security & Protection Toolkit (DSPT) helpdesk to register yourself. To do this, email **ssd.nationalservicedesk@nhs.net** or call **0300 303 5035**.
- Once the DSPT team have created your organisation on their database, your details will flow through to ODS and be published as part of the social care files used across the NHS.
- If you locate your organisation and some of the details are incorrect, email the DSPT helpdesk on **ssd.nationalservicedesk@nhs.net** or call **0300 303 5035**. They will correct the information for you.



## ODS Portal

[Home](#) [Geographic Search](#) [Organisation/Practitioner Search](#)

### Organisation / Practitioner Search

Search for an organisation or practitioner using their code, type, name, address or postcode.

You must enter at least one search value, although partial matching is possible on postcodes.

GP Practice search criteria – please note GP Practice information is held as Prescribing Cost Centre in the Type drop down menu.

As a result of the Health and Care Act 2022 CCGs were statutorily abolished and are now referred to as Sub ICB Locations. However, the values of Clinical Commissioning Group and Clinical Commissioning Group Site will remain as the Primary Role and will continue to appear in the drop-down list below.

#### Search Criteria:-

Code:	<input type="text"/>	Address:	<input type="text" value="Address or part of address e.g. north west"/>
Type:	<input type="text" value="Select type of organisation or practitioner"/>	Postcode:	<input type="text" value="Postcode, full or partial e.g. EX1"/>
Name:	<input type="text" value="Name or part of name e.g. smith"/>		
<input type="button" value="Reset"/> <input type="button" value="Search"/>			

*Search for your organisation by name, type or postcode*

## Step 4: Signing the Connection Agreement

- The Connection Agreement can be signed online using the HSCN Portal. To register for an account, please complete the self service registration process here: <https://crm.digital.nhs.uk/selfservice/>
- You will need to know your Organisation Data Service (ODS) code (see step 3) and the contact details of the person who will sign the Connection Agreement.
- When you've signed the Connection Agreement online you'll receive an automated confirmation email with a copy of your signed Connection Agreement attached.
- The HSCN Authority (NHS Digital) has a policy which governs access to HSCN. Your organisation's compliance with this policy is automatically determined during the course of the self-service registration process.
- You must confirm that you agree with the "Acceptable Use" statement and specify, at a high level, what sorts of services your organisation offers. Depending on the information which you submit you will either be automatically approved or your application to sign an HSCN Connection Agreement (and thereby gain access to HSCN) will be paused pending manual approval by the HSCN Authority.

## HSCN Self Service

HSCN ✓	Who Should Sign	Your Org.	About You	Confirmation	Acceptable Use	Service Offered	Thank You
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### Who should sign the HSCN Connection Agreement?

The HSCN Connection Agreement should only be signed by someone in a senior role. That person must have the necessary authority to bind their organisation to the Terms & Conditions set out in the Connection Agreement. Normally this would be a CEO, Director, or similar (e.g. CIO, CTO, etc.). If your position is less senior than these but you have been invested with the responsibility for signing this Connection Agreement or have been responsible for signing similar contracts in the past then you may proceed.

**If you are not sure whether you have sufficient authority to continue then please check with a senior colleague before you do so.**

### Authority to Act

Please confirm that you have (or the person whose details you are submitting has) the necessary authority to bind your organisation to the Terms and Conditions set out in the HSCN Connection Agreement.

Previous	Confirm
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*Register for the HSCN portal and follow the steps*

## Step 5: Information Governance and Data Security

The Information Governance Toolkit (IGT) has been replaced by the Data Security and Protection Toolkit (DSPT).

- It is not necessary to complete a [Data Security and Protection Toolkit \(DSPT\)](#) assessment in order to gain access to HSCN. However, all organisations that have or require access to NHS patient data and systems must use this toolkit to provide assurance that they are practising good data security and that personal information is handled correctly.
- This means that having an HSCN connection does not automatically grant your organisation access to the systems and services available on it. A DSPT assessment is still required to access NHS Digital's national applications (such as the NHS e-Referral Service (ERS), Personal Demographics Service (PDS) and Secondary Uses Service (SUS)). Other suppliers may have alternative prerequisites for access to their systems such as tokens or smartcards or a sponsor.

More information about the systems and services provided by NHS Digital can be found on the NHS Digital [systems and services](#) page.



## Step 6: Submission

When you have completed and submitted the Connection Agreement online (see step 4), you'll receive an automated confirmation email with a copy of your signed Connection Agreement attached.

## What next?

The time taken to obtain your CA is dependent on NHS Digital's capacity to countersign it. We recommend starting the process as soon as possible, to avoid any risk of delay. Once everything is in place, the connection can be set up within 5 working days.

## FAQs

### Connecting to the HSCN from outside England

ITSPs outside England may obtain HSCN connectivity from a CN-SP to deliver their service to users. However, their company must have a presence in England in order to apply for an ODS code.

Data must be stored in the UK, European Economic Area, or an adequate country (deemed to have an adequate level of data protection by the European Commission). Users consuming the service must be based in England or the devolved nations. Find out more [here](#).

### Do I have to be an NHS organisation to connect to the HSCN?

No, private IT Service Providers (ITSP) that are part of the health community are also able to connect to the HSCN. As long as you get your ODS code and sign up to the terms of the HSCN Connection Agreement), you can obtain a connection.

### Why isn't my ODS code showing on the Connection Agreement Portal?

When searching your CA, you may notice that your ODS code isn't showing. This is a common issue.

To resolve this, contact NHS Digital at [enquiries@nhsdigital.nhs.uk](mailto:enquiries@nhsdigital.nhs.uk) and ask them to make sure your ODS code is transferred from the CQC database to the CA database. It is often resolved quickly.

### Do I need an NHS sponsor / token / smart card to connect to the HSCN?

No, these are not needed to connect to the HSCN itself. However, an HSCN connection does not automatically grant your organisation access to the systems and services available on it.

You might need a sponsor, smart card, token or DSPT assessment depending on the service you want to access via HSCN. See step 5 for a link to the NHS systems and services page for more information.

### What is a CN-SP and CSP?

CN-SP stands for Consumer Network Service Provider. CN-SPs are suppliers, like Cloud Gateway, who are permitted by NHS Digital to sell HSCN Connectivity. Accreditation involves a detailed audit process, to ensure our network and service management processes are reliable and secure. At the time of writing there are 21 CN-SPs permitted to sell HSCN Connectivity.

CSP stands for Cloud Service Provider and is different from a CN-SP, in that they cannot sell 'pure pipes' connectivity to the HSCN to their customers. Instead, a CSP is a supplier that has its own HSCN Connection and builds some kind of value-add service or software on top. Customers who purchase from a CSP must buy the connected service and share the CSP's HSCN connection, rather than buy an HSCN connection for themselves.