NHS OpenAthens accounts: what to do if…

This information sheet is intended to help SW library staff assist users with some commonly reported NHS OpenAthens problems. The information is also summarised in a flowchart.

1. Accounts that have not been activated / deactivated accounts

When a new account is created an automated account activation email is sent to the account holder’s registered email address. The account activation email contains a link which must be clicked in order to set a password and activate the account. If the account holder does not activate their account, the account will not be active and they will be unable to login.

If an account holder reports recently registering for an account but not being able to log in/not receiving a password it is likely that they have not activated their account.

If the account is not active ask the user to check their email in-tray for the activation code (normally received the day the account was registered for).

- If the code is still current, they can click on the link and choose a password for their account.
- If the code has expired, or they are unable to find it in their inbox or their spam / junk folder, they should contact their NHS OpenAthens administrator for help.

Accounts not activated within 30 days of creation are automatically deleted from the system.

2. Expired accounts

Account holders receive an automated email, sent to their registered email address, one month before their eligibility is due to expire. This email invites the account holder to “renew their access rights” and will contain a link to an account renewal form through which they can update details of their contract, job title, address, email and organisation. If the user says that they never received this email it is likely that the email was overlooked, went to their junk folder or that their registered email address is no longer current.

Providing that the account holder renews their account from an NHS computer or using an NHS email address the renewal will be processed automatically by the system and access to resources will be maintained. If the account holder does not use an NHS computer or NHS email address then the renewal request will be sent to the SW OpenAthens Team for validation. Validation can take up to 10 working days (NB: usually within 5) and the SW OpenAthens Team may need to contact the account holder in order to confirm certain details e.g. contract end-date. Whilst the renewal request is pending the account will be ineligible and the account holder will be unable to access resources. If the renewal request is successfully validated the account holder will receive an automated email confirming they are now eligible to access resources. If the account holder is no longer considered eligible they will be informed by email.

The OpenAthens upgrade in 2014 introduced two expiry dates for all NHS OpenAthens accounts; an eligibility expiry and an account expiry. Eligibility expiry is the date up to which the account holder can access resources, whereas the account expiry date is the date when the account will be deleted from the system. An account holder’s eligibility expiry is always 3 months before their account’s expiry date; which means that an account has a 3 month period of grace before it is deleted permanently.

During this period of grace, even though the account will be listed as ineligible, the account holder is still able to log into their account at: http://openathens.nice.org.uk/Hub. They won’t be able to access any resources but they will be able to complete the renewal process as a “renew access rights” link will be visible from the menu on the left of the page. The account holder must complete the renewal process or their account will expire and be deleted from the system.
All users can check the expiry date of their eligibility expiry at any time by logging in at: http://openathens.nice.org.uk/Hub and going to My Account.

3. The account holder has forgotten their username and/or password.

If an account holder is unsure of their username advise that in most cases the email address they used to register for their account can also be used as their username (it’s often easier for account holders to remember or guess which email address they used than to try and remember their actual username).

To reset a password the account holder will need to enter the email address associated with their account at: https://openathens.nice.org.uk/ForgotPassword/Reset

If the email address entered matches an active account, the account holder will receive an email containing instructions on how to reset their password. If the email is not found in the user’s inbox ask them to check their junk folder.

If a password reset email is not received then either:
- the account is registered to a different email address. If so they can submit the password request again using their alternative email address.
- the account has never been activated so a password has never been set (see the de-activated accounts section for more information)
- the account has expired (and therefore is no longer active) and they will need to register again. The user should only register again if they are positive that their account had previously been activated and was linked to the entered email address. If they are not certain they should email their NHS OpenAthens administrator.

If the above does not resolve the problem please contact your NHS OpenAthens administrator.

4. The account holder has never received a password.

This usually happens when an account holder is unaware that after registering they need to activate their account. If the account holder registered for NHS OpenAthens recently ask them to find the account activation email and click on the link. If the activation email is not found in the account holder’s inbox/junk folder or if the link does not work they should contact their NHS OpenAthens administrator.

5. Your account is ineligible/ your provided details have not proven your eligibility/ you do not have access rights/ your account is awaiting administration approval

All applicants, at the point of registration, are given a username and emailed an activation code to set their password and activate their account. This happens regardless of the applicant’s eligibility for NHS OpenAthens access. However, in order to access resources (i.e. have access rights) the account must be listed as eligible. In short anybody can submit an application and activate an account but not all accounts will be listed as eligible.

An account will be marked as eligible or ineligible as a result of 4 processes:

1) At the point of registration
2) At the point of renewal
3) After changing the registered organisation
4) When the account’s eligibility expiry date has passed
If your user has just registered/renewed/changed organisation and has done so without using an NHS networked computer or NHS email address then the system cannot automatically validate their details. The account is marked as ineligible and in the SW will go to the Regional OpenAthens Team for validation (local admin teams in TVW). The team may need to contact the account holder by email to confirm details e.g. contract end-date. The account holder will be informed by email about the outcome of the admin team’s decision.

If the account holder has been marked as ineligible as a result of using a personal email address but needs access straightaway then they should login to their account at: http://openathens.nice.org.uk/Hub

NB: The account holder will need to have activated and set a password for their account to be able to do this.

Once logged in the account holder should choose the “change email address” option from the menu on the left of the page and enter their nhs.uk or nhs.net email address. A confirmation email will be sent to the newly specified email with an activation link. Once the link is clicked the account holder will need to log in using their given username (not email address) and chosen password. Once logged in the user’s account will be eligible and access to resources available.

If the account holder’s eligibility expiry date has passed then the account will have been automatically marked as ineligible and will no longer have access rights. The account holder will still be able to log into their account (because the account expiry, i.e. date the account will be permanently deleted, is set three months after the eligibility expiry) but they will not be able to access resources. The account holder will need to renew their account (access rights) by logging into their account at http://openathens.nice.org.uk/Hub and choosing the “renew your access rights” option.

6. Account holder needs to change their registered organisation or other details

To ensure that account holders are accessing the correct resources and are receiving all automated emails it is important that they keep their registered details up-to-date.

All details can be updated by logging in at: http://openathens.nice.org.uk/Hub

Account holders can then choose to update their email, password or registered organisation. If an account holder has not changed organisations but needs to update their work address/job title/phone number etc then they should choose the “change organisation” option as this allows the account holder to review all of their registered details and make changes where necessary (they will not be forced to pick a different organisation).

7. Problem(s) when registering

If the system detects that the entered email address is already registered to an account the applicant will receive a message informing them of this. Please advise the applicant of the forgotten username/password reset instructions in section 3 above. Some placement students will already have their university email addresses registered to a university managed HE NHS OpenAthens account. If this is the case, advise placement students to register from an NHS networked computer using a private email address. Please note that any other OpenAthens user with more than one account is breaking licence terms and conditions.

During the registration process applicants are required to enter the name of their employing organisation. If an applicant enters a name or abbreviation that is not recognised by the system then they will also need to confirm which county their organisation can be found in. Applicants
who enter a non-recognised organisation name will find that after clicking the submit button the page refreshes and an extra box titled *We do not know about your organisation, please select where it is based* appears under the ‘please enter your organisation box’. Once they have selected the correct county from the list the applicant can scroll to the bottom of the page and click on the register button again. The application will then be processed.

If the reported problem is different from those above please contact NICE, as they are responsible for managing the registration pages, by emailing: nice@nice.org.uk

8. Problems accessing OpenAthens authenticated resources

NHS OpenAthens is used to authenticate access to subscribed resources/platforms i.e. to ensure that only eligible users receive access. The resource/platform providers use the OpenAthens system to deliver purchased resources to the correct OpenAthens organisations.

Once a resource/platform has been added to an organisation by the resource/platform provider access can be switched on for that organisation by the organisation’s NHS OpenAthens administrator (known as adding the resource to the organisation’s permission set). Once the resource is switched on account holders from the corresponding organisation should be able to see the resource/platform in their list of resources and access content. However, users will only be able to access content if it has been added by the platform/resource provider. In short the provider must switch on both the resource/platform and the subscribed content.

If an account holder reports problems accessing a resource please first check on the NICE Journal A-Z (or equivalent) that the resource/platform should be available to access via NHS OpenAthens. Please also check that the account holder experiencing the problem is registered to the correct organisation. NB: The registered organisation can be checked by logging in to the user's account at: http://openathens.nice.org.uk/Hub

If the problem remains the key is to find out whether it is an OpenAthens problem or a provider problem.

To test this log into the resource/platform with your NHS OpenAthens account. If the resource/platform logs you in successfully you should be able to see a message similar to “you are logged in as Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust”. If your login is successful but you cannot access content then it suggests that the problem lies with the platform/resource provider in that although they have connected the platform for you they have not switched on access to individual titles.

For nationally purchased resources please report the access issue to NICE (nice@nice.org.uk).

For regionally purchased resources please contact Jenny Toller (Jenny.Toller@hee.nhs.uk) and for locally purchased resources please contact the supplier/provider’s helpdesk directly.

9. Further help with NHS OpenAthens

Your local NHS OpenAthens administrator should be your first contact (if applicable).

Alternatively, for urgent enquiries SW library staff (not library members) can contact the Regional SW OpenAthens telephone helpdesk on: 01803 656702.

Non-urgent enquiries should be directed to: athens.sdhct@nhs.net
The user's account is de-activated has not received password.

Ask if the user registered recently.

Yes

Ask the user to login to their account at: https://openathens.nice.org.uk/Hub

NB: accounts that expired more than 3 months ago will have been deleted from the system.

Successful login?

No

Try resetting password (see 3 below). Reset successful?

Yes

Providing NHS email or NHS networked PC used the renewal will be complete and resources accessible.

Any problems?

No

Any problems, e.g. code expired.

Ask the user to check their email inbox/junk folder for an account activation email and then follow instructions to set password and activate.

The user's account has expired.

Ask user to login to their account at: https://openathens.nice.org.uk/Hub

NB: accounts that expired more than 3 months ago will have been deleted from the system.

Successful login?

No

Try resetting password (see 3 below). Reset successful?

Yes

In most cases the user’s registered email address can be used as their username.

To reset password ask user to go to: https://openathens.nice.org.uk/Forgot Password/Reset

Password reset unsuccessful.

Ask user to select appropriate options (e.g. change organisation) from menu on the left.

Yes

Ask the user to check their email inbox/junk folder for an account activation email and then follow instructions to set password and activate.

The user has forgotten their username or password.

Ask user to login to their account at: https://openathens.nice.org.uk/Hub

Successful login?

Yes

Password reset successful.

Form completed

Any problems?

Yes

Ask the user to select the renew access rights option and complete form using either an NHS email or NHS networked PC.

No

Ask if the user registered recently.

Yes

Ask the user to check their email inbox/junk folder for an account activation email and then follow instructions to set password and activate.

User needs to change organisation/ update details.

Any problems?

Yes

Ask the user to login to their account at: https://openathens.nice.org.uk/Hub

Successful login?

No

Try resetting password (see 3 above). Reset successful?

Yes

Any problems, e.g. code expired.

Ask the user to check their email inbox/junk folder for an account activation email and then follow instructions to set password and activate.

If the user's enquiry is urgent and your local administrator is not available then SW library staff may phone the regional helpdesk on their behalf. Please dial: 01803 656702

Ask the user to click on the activation code and choose a new password.

Password reset unsuccessful.

In most cases the user’s registered email address can be used as their username.

To reset password ask user to go to: https://openathens.nice.org.uk/Forgot Password/Reset

Password reset unsuccessful.

Ask user to select the renew access rights option and complete form using either an NHS email or NHS networked PC.

Any problems?

Yes

Ask the user to login to their account at: https://openathens.nice.org.uk/Hub

Successful login?

No

Try resetting password (see 3 above). Reset successful?

Any problems, e.g. code expired.

Ask the user to check their email inbox/junk folder for an account activation email and then follow instructions to set password and activate.
Problems using registration pages.

Did the system tell the user that they already have an account?

Yes

See number 3 (forgotten password) above.

No

Problems accessing OpenAthens resource.

Is the user registered under the correct NHS OpenAthens organisation?

Yes

Ask user to log in at http://openathens.nice.org.uk/Hub to check.

No

Did the user use an NHS networked computer or NHS email address?

Yes

Did the registration form refresh after the ‘Register’ button was clicked?

Yes

This usually occurs when the user has entered an organisation name that is not recognised by the system. If the user scrolls down the page they should see an extra box which asks them to select the county their organisation is based in. Once they have selected the correct county they should click the register button again. Their application will then be processed.

No

See number 4 changing org instructions.

Account is ineligible/ doesn’t have access rights/ awaiting administration authorisation.

Ask the user if they have recently registered/renewed/changed registered organisation?

Yes

Did the user use an NHS networked computer or NHS email address?

No

Account has probably expired. See number 2 (expired accounts) above. NB: accounts that expired more than 3 months ago will have been deleted from the system.

Yes

Account has been sent to OpenAthens Team for verification. User will be notified by email. If they need access sooner advise them to login to account at http://openathens.nice.org.uk/Hub and update their registered email address to an NHS one. Account should then become eligible.

Any problems?

No

Inform user of local ILL procedures etc, as applicable.

Yes

The problem is likely to stem from the resource/platform provider. For nationally purchased content contact NICE. For regionally purchased content contact Jenny Toller and for locally purchased content contact the resource’s helpdesk.

No

Account has been sent to OpenAthens Team for verification. User will be notified by email. If they need access sooner advise them to login to account at http://openathens.nice.org.uk/Hub and update their registered email address to an NHS one. Account should then become eligible.

Any problems?

Problems accessing OpenAthens resource.

Is it a resource the user should be able to access via NHS OpenAthens login?

Yes

Does the resource/platform recognise the user’s/your NHS OpenAthens login?

No

The problem is likely to stem from the resource/platform provider. For nationally purchased content contact NICE. For regionally purchased content contact Jenny Toller and for locally purchased content contact the resource’s helpdesk.

Yes

Inform user of local ILL procedures etc, as applicable.

Account has been sent to OpenAthens Team for verification. User will be notified by email. If they need access sooner advise them to login to account at http://openathens.nice.org.uk/Hub and update their registered email address to an NHS one. Account should then become eligible.

Any problems?