



For All London Practices supported by Londonwide LMCs

Nearly all these areas are non-contractual, and dependent on local functionality being available. Digital technology is seen as having “the potential to improve access, quality and outcomes including through better data, more accurate diagnosis, and support tools for patients”, and, for many patients, “digital will become the channel of choice when interacting with the NHS” (both quotes 5.6).

In terms of practice-based aspirations, these include patients having:

- The right to online and video consultation by April 2021,
- Online access to full records by April 2020 and “the ability to add their own information”,
- The option of electronic ordering of repeat prescriptions and electronic repeat dispensing, where appropriate,
- At least 25% of appointments being available for online booking by July 2019 although the nature of these appointments (eg, triage, or face-to-face) will be at the practices’ discretion, and they do not have to be a GP appointment. As per many practices’ current arrangements, these appointments can be embargoed until the same day or another unlock time/date just as with normal appointments so as not to discriminate against patients with a lack of online access,
- Access to an up-to-date and informative practice online presence,
- Access to online patient related correspondence.

And that practices:

- Have a dedicated MHRA Central Alert System receiving email address,
- Do not use fax machines for NHS or patient communication after April 2020,
- Offer new patients registered after April 2019 online access to prospective data from their health record.

Although not strictly part of the Contract Agreement, NHS England are planning to replace GPSoc (GP Systems of Choice) with a new practice IT support framework called GP IT Futures, which will support GP2GP functionality, improved cyber-security, better interoperability between IT systems and real-time secure access to data by patients and other NHS users.

NHS England are also seeking to address what they see as inappropriate incentives to digital providers; hence the changes to the Off-Formula London Adjustment and rurality index, although these in themselves will have a very small absolute financial impact on digital providers. Two further current regulatory matters will also be reviewed during 2019:

- The Out-of-Area Regulations,
- The current 46% Carr-Hill weighting for patients in their first year of registration.



However, there remains, outside this Contract Agreement, widespread NHS England willingness to see newer digital providers as being innovative demonstrators of the way the NHS might better offer digital and remote consultation services to patients.

111 access to practice appointments is seen as demonstrating both 'joined up' NHS digital services, as well as urgent access services to patients, and although trialled by practices in a number of areas, particularly in the North-East, will be a significant change for many practices; more details of this are given in the LMC update: Integrating Urgent Care Services.

Future Contractual Requirements

NHS England and GPC England expect practices to make progress in 2019-20 towards the digital changes that will become contractual requirements from April 2020 and April 2021:

- All practices will be offering online consultations by April 2020 at the latest,
- All patients will have online access to their full record, as the default position from April 2020, subject to existing safeguards for vulnerable groups and third-party confidentiality and system functionality,
- All practices will need by April 2020 to have an up-to-date and informative online presence, with key information being available as metadata for other platforms to use,
- All practices will be giving all patients access online to correspondence by April 2020, as the system moves to digital by default (with patients required to opt-out rather than in),
- By April 2020, practices will no longer use facsimile machines for either NHS or patient communications,
- All practices will be offering consultations via video by April 2021 at the latest.

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