



Thursday 4 May 2023

Changes to the GP Contract Regulations on Access

I hope you are well. You may be aware that following being laid before Parliament last week on 18th April, changes to the GP Contract Regulations regarding patient access will come into effect on 15th May, as detailed below:

Contact with the practice

10. For paragraph 4 of Schedule 3 substitute—

“Contact with the practice

4.—(1) The contractor must take steps to ensure that a patient who contacts the contractor—

- (a) by attendance at the contractor’s practice premises;
- (b) by telephone;
- (c) through the practice’s online consultation system; or
- (d) through any other available online system,

is provided with an appropriate response in accordance with the following sub-paragraphs.

(2) The appropriate response is that the contractor must—

- (a) invite the patient for an appointment, either to attend the contractor’s practice premises or to participate in a telephone or video consultation, at a time which is appropriate and reasonable having regard to all the circumstances;
- (b) provide appropriate advice or care to the patient by another method;
- (c) invite the patient to make use of, or direct the patient towards, appropriate services which are available to the patient, including services which the patient may access themselves; or
- (d) communicate with the patient—
 - (i) to request further information; or
 - (ii) as to when and how the patient will receive further information on the services that may be provided to them, having regard to the urgency of their clinical needs and other relevant circumstances.

(3) The appropriate response must be provided—

- (a) if the contact under sub-paragraph (1) is made outside core hours, during the following core hours;
- (b) in any other case, during the day on which the core hours fall.



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- (4) The appropriate response must—
- (a) not jeopardise the patient’s health;
 - (b) be based on the clinical needs of the patient; and
 - (c) where appropriate, take into account the preferences of the patient.”

GMS (Amendment) Regulations 2023

https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2023/436/pdfs/uksi_20230436_en.pdf

To enable practices to meet both their legal and contractual obligations, they will require the details of the services to which patients should be signposted. These will include 111, community pharmacies, urgent care and treatment centres, dental services, ophthalmic services, hospital emergency departments and any other locally commissioned service provider. Londonwide LMCs would be grateful if you would confirm that a list of all wider commissioned services will be accessible to all GPs and their practice teams on the Directory of Services in good time for May 15th.

Practices are also required to communicate with the patient as to when and how the patient will receive further information on the services that may be provided to them, having regard to the urgency of their clinical needs and other relevant circumstances. Londonwide LMCs would therefore also be grateful if you would confirm that the ICB will ensure that practices are provided with the contact details of who patients can directly complain to should they experience a breach in the provision of the service to which they were referred or signposted by the practice under these new regulations.

I look forward to hearing from you as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

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