



21 December 2023

The latest news and updates from NHS England for those working in Primary Care.

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Primary care

Flu and COVID-19 vaccinations for frontline NHS colleagues

Dame Ruth May, Chief Nursing Officer for England, has written a [blog](#) reminding frontline NHS colleagues of the benefits of getting their flu and COVID-19 vaccinations this winter.

Eligible frontline professionals include those who have direct contact with patients even if they are not directly involved in patient care.

Medical examiners - independent review of all non-coronial deaths from April 2024

The Department of Health and Social Care has published [final draft regulations](#) for the statutory medical examiner system. From April 2024, all deaths will be independently reviewed by either a [medical examiner](#) or a coroner.

The changes include a new Medical Certificate of Cause of Death, and it will no longer be necessary for the attending doctor to have seen the deceased 28 days before death. Find more information by listening to podcasts from [the National Medical Examiner](#) and [medical examiners and GPs working together](#).

The Royal College of Pathologists will host an [information event on 17 January 2024](#).

Proactive care: Providing care and support for people living at home with moderate or severe frailty' guidance

NHS England has published '[Proactive care: Providing care and support for people living at home with moderate or severe frailty' guidance](#) which supports a more consistent approach to proactive care across England, for people living at home with moderate or severe frailty.

A proactive care approach aims to improve people's health outcomes and their experiences of healthcare, by slowing the onset, or progression of frailty and enabling people to live independently for longer.

£10 million programme to develop local volunteering infrastructure

The Volunteering for Health fund, part of the £10 million Volunteering for Health programme, launched on 18 December and will award around 15 grants to partnerships of organisations to work together, to build volunteering capacity and capability.

Each grant award will be a mix of tailored support and funding - up to £550,000 over three years.

Applications are encouraged from areas that might not have worked in this way before, and those that are ready to pioneer new ideas. [See full guidance and more information about the application process here](#). Contact: volunteeringforhealth@cwplus.org.uk for information.

National Diabetes Experience Survey – Opt out poster

The National Diabetes Experience Survey is a new national survey, commissioned by NHS England, for people living with type 1 or type 2 diabetes.

As a requirement of Section 251 (NHS Act 2006), people living with diabetes must be notified about the survey and given the opportunity to opt-out of being selected.

[Primary Care providers are asked to display this downloadable opt-out poster from 15 December 23 until 17 January 2024](#). The poster makes people aware of the upcoming survey and provides an opportunity for them to ask questions or opt-out if they wish to be excluded from taking part.

General practice

[Reminder: Digital telephony for general practice](#)

Thanks to practices who have signed and returned contracts. Those still to complete this action to enable the switch from analogue telephony solutions to digital, must do so by today (21 December) and sign contracts by 2 February 2024, enabling implementation and go-live by 25 March 2024.

[ICBs, practices and PCNs received a letter in November outlining details of additional funding for practices on sub-optimal digital telephony systems.](#) Thanks also to practices who signed up in principle by 18 December.

Systems have been notified of funding allocations to support sub-optimal digital telephony uplifts. Practices should engage with commercial.procurementhub@nhs.net to resolve issues and commence activities to meet the key activity dates.

Giving patients online access to new GP health record entries

More than 80% of GP practices now offer full online prospective record access by default. Remaining practices should engage with their commissioners on their plans for providing access for all their patients and meeting their contractual obligations.

[Updated guidance](#) is available for remaining TPP practices that are self-enabling access, which can be completed in three steps. Prospective records access needs to be given both to patients who have online accounts and to those patients who do not; for a practice to be considered fully enabled.

New NIHR evidence published on roles in general practice

The new NIHR collection of evidence: [‘Who’s who in General Practice? Research can help practices introduce new roles’](#) has been published and brings together research for general practices and Primary Care Networks to help maximise benefit from new roles and the growing diversity of staff.

The evidence can be used by practices to help patients and the public understand changes in primary care, drawing on research funded by the NIHR and other significant research findings, prioritising evidence from systematic and wider reviews.

[This NHS campaign also helps practices to raise awareness of the different health professionals working in general practice, supporting the Delivery Plan for Recovering Access to Primary Care.](#)

NICE consultation on CVD risk and assessment published

[NICE has published the results of its consultation “Cardiovascular disease: risk assessment and reduction, including lipid modification - Escalation of Therapy” and updated guidance.](#)

As a result, for the remainder of 2023/24, there will be a slight difference between NICE and QOF cholesterol targets. Complying with the QOF (CHOL002) targets will not carry a risk of over treatment. The slightly higher target levels chosen by NICE are based on considerations of cost-effectiveness, rather than clinical risk.

NHS England will consider any potential changes to future QOF arrangements as part of the usual annual review process. Contact england.gpcontracts@nhs.uk with any queries.

Consultation on incentives in general practice

The [Government is seeking views on the role of incentives in general practice and has published a new consultation](#). The consultation is open to all stakeholders, including healthcare professionals, patient groups and the wider public, to share their views and insights on the role of the incentives, including the Quality Outcomes Framework (QOF) and Investment and Impact Fund (IIF), in general practice.

Feedback collected will help to shape the future role of incentives in driving excellence and innovation in general practice. The [survey](#) is open for the next 12 weeks and will close on 7 March 2024.

Community pharmacy

Pharmacy First: Patient Group Directions (PGDs) Published

As part of the Delivery Plan for Recovering Access to Primary Care, the final signed versions of the Patient Group Directions and the Clinical Protocol for the [Pharmacy First Service](#) are now available. Community pharmacies that have not yet opted in / registered to deliver this service are encouraged to do so by registering via the ['Manage Your Service' platform](#).

Optometry

Changes to General Ophthalmic Services (GOS) payments

Changes to GOS payments are coming into effect on 1 January 2024, as a result of amendments to the GOS regulations. Claims for sight tests completed, and voucher claims collected, on or after 1 January 2024 must be submitted using an electronic system.

Contractors will have three months to submit sight test claims. The PCSE Online system new functionality will mitigate against interruption to patient care in the event of system outages or mobile/internet connectivity issues.

New functionality will process uncollected glasses claims and claims with a changed voucher type, due to back vertex distance changes.

Updated user guides will be available on the PCSE website before the end of December. [Updated business continuity guidance is now available](#).

Training & Development

Delivery Plan for Recovering Access to Primary Care: National care navigation training: dates now available until March 2024

The delivery plan for recovering access to primary care commits to training up to 6,500 staff (one

person from every practice and PCN in the country) in care navigation skills. [Thousands of primary care colleagues have taken up this free national offer](#), equipping learners to effectively communicate with patients and the multi-disciplinary team.

Training is accredited, with foundation and advanced modules available. A new online collaborative platform has launched for learners and their managers to access resources and to connect with their peers.

This training is only available until March 2024. [Managers are encouraged to register their nominated staff member to complete the training to develop a strong understanding of care navigation](#), as soon as possible.

Delivery Plan for Recovering Access to Primary Care: General practice improvement leads programme

Applications are open for the next cohort of the [General Practice Improvement Leads' programme](#), which will start in January 2024. This is an accredited personal development programme for those working in general practice. Participants gain new perspectives, skills and confidence in using quality improvement tools and techniques for service redesign and for leading teams through change.

Funding for nursing associates

Financial support is provided for trainee nursing associates (TNAs) in general practice and primary care networks. Each TNA is eligible for an £8,160 employer grant, along with Apprenticeship levy funding of up to £15,000. If interested, please submit expressions of interest to england.nationalnursingteam@nhs.net.

Upcoming webinars and events

Various dates. [NHS Pension Scheme webinar series](#)

October 2023 – February 2024. [Understanding and awareness of Ramadan and how it can affect people with a serious mental illness](#)

January – March. [Working with and supporting Patient and Public Voice Partners drop in](#)

5 January, 1pm – 2 pm. [General Practice Nursing national monthly webinar](#)

10 January, 12.30pm – 2.00pm. [Improving the telephony journey webinar](#)

18 January and 8 February 2024, 12.30pm – 2.00pm. [Safe, reliable processes \(Reliable Design I and II\) webinar](#)

23 January, 12pm -1pm. [Audiology Communities of Practice webinar on self-referrals](#)

24 January, 12.30pm – 2.00pm. [Care Navigation I: Using Quality Improvement to embed care navigation in General Practice webinar](#)

30 January, 12.30pm – 2.00pm. [Matching Workforce to Demand II webinar](#)

Catch up

Missed a recent national webinar? You can view slides and recordings below:

- [General Practice webinars](#)
- [Primary Care Network webinars](#)
- [Recovering Access to Primary Care webinars](#)

Download patient-facing materials

- [The general practice team](#) - introducing the different roles
- [NHS staff respect](#) - encouraging kindness to staff
- [General practice access routes](#)
- [Supporting general practice referrals to the NHS Community Pharmacist Consultation Service](#)

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