



14 December 2023

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

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Primary care

NHS England National Vaccination Strategy

[NHS England has published a comprehensive vaccination strategy](#). The strategy aims to improve access to vaccinations, learning from the success of the COVID-19 vaccine rollout, record-breaking flu campaigns, and routine immunisations in primary care. It focuses on providing vaccinations in convenient locations, integrating them with other health checks, and extending outreach into communities to meet local needs. By using their workforce and resources, it will support systems to put vaccination at the heart of prevention and other health services. Vaccine histories, including MMR, flu, and COVID-19, will also be more accessible via the NHS App.

Commissioning guidance for post-COVID services for adults, children and young people

[NHS England has updated its commissioning guidance for post COVID services](#). As responsibility for commissioning post COVID services transitions to ICS-level from April 2024, the updated guidance sets out a blueprint for best practice in supporting people with long COVID and is designed to be adapted to local needs.

Reminder: Digital telephony for general practice

For practices still yet to sign and return contracts to enable the switch from analogue telephony solutions to digital, this must be actioned by tomorrow (15 December 2023) to enable implementation and go-live by 25 March 2024. Further communications will follow confirming next steps. Please contact commercial.procurementhub@nhs.net with any queries.

[ICBs, practices and PCNs received a letter in November outlining details of additional funding for practices on sub-optimal digital telephony systems](#). The key activity dates remain, which is signing up in principle by 5pm on 18 December, signing contracts by 2 February, with a go-live by 25 March 2024. Contact necsu.adtelephony@nhs.net for queries

Hear about improvement support and how to make the most of cloud- based telephony systems

There's still time to register to hear how practices can access 'hands on' improvement support available through the [General Practice Improvement Programme](#). The package will be delivered over three months, starting from the end of January 2024. It is recommended for practices moving to cloud-based telephony, as it will help them to get the best out of these systems. [Find out more and sign up](#).

Mycoplasma pneumoniae infections

Mycoplasma pneumoniae infections are seen regularly in the UK and epidemic peaks are normally seen every 3 to 4 years in winter. The last UK Mycoplasma pneumoniae epidemic season was 2019/20. Surveillance data suggests that we are entering an epidemic winter for Mycoplasma pneumoniae infection this year, which is not unexpected. However, clinicians should continue to follow current NICE guidance for treatment of pneumonia. Further information can be found in a [briefing note from UKHSA](#). This note includes information from NHS England for general practice.

IIF ACC-08 Exception Flags

Exception flags are now active in both EMIS and TPP practice systems to indicate when an appointment would not be expected to happen within two weeks of booking. This may be due to patient preference or clinical rationale. Cegedim is expected to go live in early 2024. As noted in [the IIF guidance for ACC08](#), these flags will not affect the two-week threshold calculation for this financial year.

Practices are encouraged to use the exception flagging functionality to support [improvements in access](#) to general practice by more accurately [recognising appointments](#) which may be appropriate for booking more than two weeks in advance. Guidance on how to apply exception flags for appropriate appointments can be found in the information section of each clinical system.

General Practice Assistant (GPA) accreditation opportunities

[NHS England has expanded the support available to General Practice Assistants \(GPAs\) wanting to gain formal accreditation of their skills and experience.](#) GPAs are able to gain certification, and level 4 credits, by having a portfolio of evidence assessed and validated by an approved educational provider. Additional capacity has been procured with providers in each region and is free to access for employee/employers. [GPAs who wish to gain accreditation can register their interest with their regional provider.](#)

2024 GP Patient Survey

[The 2024 GP Patient Survey will be the start of a new series.](#) Changes have been made to the question set to provide stronger focus to patient experience of modern general practice access, as set out in the primary care access recovery plan. This insight will be important for ongoing service improvement. Fieldwork launches in January and the results will be published in summer 2024. It will not include trend data due to changes to the questionnaire, meaning this year's results will not be comparable to previous years. [Posters and social media graphics can be downloaded to help promote the survey.](#)

Please contact gppatientsurvey@ipsos.com with any questions or queries.

Survey: patient facing digital services

[NHS England is wanting to capture feedback in a survey from GP practices about patient facing digital services, such as patient online and the NHS App.](#) The aim is to understand the impact these services are having on GP practice staff and to capture quantitative baselines that can be used to measure positive and negative impacts.

Get involved

Proxy access: new co-creator group

The NHS England Proxy Access programme invites practice managers, GPs, safeguarding, and IT experts who manage proxy access for their patients to join a new co-creator group of experts, to help directly shape the service and the future of proxy access. [Complete the form by Friday 15 December 2023, to express interest in joining the group between January and June 2024.](#)

Training and Development

Delivery Plan for Recovering Access to Primary Care: National Care Navigation training available until March 2024

[Practice managers are encouraged to book one member of their team to complete care navigation training.](#) The primary care recovery plan commits to training up to 6,500 staff (one person from every practice and PCN in the country). 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 supports learners and their managers to access resources and to connect with peers. **Book before the end of March 2024.**

Email carenavigationtraining@england.nhs.uk with any questions. [Care navigation training FAQs and promotional materials can be accessed here.](#)

Delivery Plan for Recovering Access to Primary Care: Fundamentals of Change and Improvement Programme

Applications are open for [the Fundamentals of Change Improvement Programme](#), part of the [General Practice Improvement Programme](#). This short and accredited programme will share practical materials that learners can try out immediately on a specific challenge, such as improving the uptake of screening, flow of documents or active signposting. [Apply before 5 January 2024.](#)

Medical Retina training

[Continuous professional development training for NHS Medical Retina is available for ophthalmic nurses, optometrists, orthoptists, ophthalmic technicians and photographers.](#) Courses include non-medical intravitreal injection, optical coherence tomography capture and interpretation, enhanced and advanced ophthalmic imaging and institutionalised medical retina courses.

Funding for nursing associates

Trainee nursing associate (TNA) places are available to staff in general practice and primary care networks. Financial support includes £8,000 employer grant per TNA and Apprenticeship levy funding up to £15,000. Send expressions of interest to england.nationalnursingteam@nhs.net.

Upcoming webinars and events

- **Various dates.** [NHS Pension Scheme webinar series](#)
- **Various December 2023 dates.** [GPIP practice level support introductory webinar](#)
- **Various dates up to February 2024.** [Understanding and awareness of Ramadan and how it can affect people with a serious mental illness](#)
- **19 December, 11.30am – 12.30pm.** [NHS App webinar – introducing the redesign of the NHS App and overview of the current features](#)
- **16 January, 1pm – 2pm.** [Acute Respiratory Infection \(ARI\) hubs - Community of Practice](#)
- **30 January, 1pm.** [Reducing antibiotic use in primary care](#)

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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