

To: • GP practices

NHS England  
Wellington House  
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Dear practice manager

## Expansion of the OpenSAFELY secure COVID-19 research platform

We recently wrote to you about the expansion of the OpenSAFELY secure COVID-19 research platform to other diseases.

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care has now issued NHS England with Directions – the legal instrument to allow this to happen. These Directions are for a time-limited pilot until 31 March 2027.

As such we need you to instruct your chosen GP system supplier to make pseudonymised data available to the OpenSAFELY service. Details of what you need to do are given below.

The OpenSAFELY platform has privacy protection methods that allow colleagues such as academics, analysts and data scientists to analyse the patient data held within your practice system without them needing to see patient-identifiable information. The knowledge from this analysis will improve treatments and delivery of care and support better national and local planning.

The [NHS OpenSAFELY Data Analytics Service Pilot Directions 2025](#) are supported by a detailed requirement specification developed with the British Medical Association and the Royal College of General Practitioners. The specification incorporates safeguards, including how the service will be implemented using the OpenSAFELY technology. The platform was developed by the Bennett Institute for Applied Data Science (University of Oxford) and NHS England has contracted this institute to provide the OpenSAFELY service.

Under the Directions, NHS England has issued a [Data Provision Notice \(DPN\)](#) to GP practices. The DPN is the instruction to make data available via your practice's chosen GP system supplier for the wider purposes and you have 6 weeks to review and comply with the DPN. To do this you need to instruct The Phoenix Partnership Ltd (TPP) or Optum (formerly EMIS) to make data available to the OpenSAFELY service.

To comply with the UK GDPR your practice will need to have an appropriate privacy notice and relevant data protection impact assessments in place that reflect the wider data processing purpose.

### Support for GP practices

- To help get appropriate privacy notice and data protection impact assessments in place, NHS England has [published template documents](#)
- [FAQs and contact details](#) for the team are also available from the same online area
- Should you need any further information please write to [england.secureanalyticsservice@nhs.net](mailto:england.secureanalyticsservice@nhs.net)

Yours sincerely,



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