

NHS Standard Contract 2013/14

Guidance on the Variations process









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NHS Standard Contract 2013/14

Guidance on the Variations process

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Executive summary

This document contains guidance on the process to effect variations to contracts based on the 2013/14 NHS Standard Contract.

It applies both to new 2013/14 contracts (whether they have been created as eContracts or in paper form) and to earlier contracts which have adopted the 2013/14 NHS Standard Contract terms by being transferred into eContracts.

It applies to both local variations and variations mandated by NHS England.

Introduction

This guidance is relevant to all commissioners and providers who are parties to commissioning contracts based on the 2013/14 NHS Standard Contract. This includes both new 2013/14 contracts (whether they have been created as eContracts or in paper form) and earlier contracts which have adopted the 2013/14 NHS Standard Contract terms by being transferred into eContracts.

It applies to both Variations proposed by one of the parties to a contract and to National Variations which may be mandated by NHS England, but in the case of the latter further guidance will be issued as and when necessary.

This guidance supplements, and should be read in conjunction with, General Condition 13 (*Variations*) of the NHS Standard Contract.

Process

General Condition 13 sets out the process with which the parties to a contract must comply if any one of them wishes to vary the terms of that contract, or if NHS England (referred to in the NHS Standard Contract as NHS CB) mandates a National Variation.

This guidance, and the template documents issued with it, do not in any way alter that process nor do they extend the scope of permissible variations (on which please refer to General Condition 13.2).

The table below explains how the process works in the context of (a) an eContract, and (b) a paper contract, and how to use the template documents in each case.

Whenever an eContract is being varied, the eContract system will ensure that the starting point for the Variation will be the latest version of the eContract (which may be the original eContract or the eContract as most recently updated by a signed and dated Variation Agreement).

Whenever a paper contract is being varied, the parties <u>must ensure</u> that they use as the starting point for that Variation the latest version of that contract (which may be the original contract or the contract as most recently updated by a signed and dated Variation Agreement).

The processes for Local Variations proposed by either a Commissioner or the Provider under General Condition 13 and the eContract system are summarised in the flow diagram at Annex 1 below. The tables at Annex 2 below describe the processes for eContracts and paper contracts in detail, and you will need to

follow the steps described carefully, particularly when using the eContract system.

Template Variation Proposal:

http://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/vari-prop.docx

Template Variation Agreement:

http://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/vari-agree.docx

Competing Variations

It is vital that, at every stage, the parties to a contract know exactly what the terms of that contract are. Equally, when considering, discussing or finalising a proposed Variation, it is vital that the parties know exactly the terms of the contract they are looking to vary. For that reason, parties to a contract should not progress Variations (National Variations or locally-initiated Variations) in parallel or in competition with each other – doing so is likely to result in confusion and, potentially, dispute as to the terms of each proposed Variation and of the contract itself. This applies whether the parties are varying an eContract or a paper contract.

Reflecting good practice in this respect, the eContract Variations process is deliberately designed so that:

1. If a Local Variation is in process, no further Local Variation can be initiated until the ongoing Local Variation has been completed (ie until the Variation Agreement has been signed by all parties and dated) or terminated.

This ensures that the further Variation takes as its starting point the contract as varied by the first Variation.

Alternatively, the parties may agree to effect both Variations together – in other words, to pause in the progression of the first Variation and agree to incorporate the matters to be covered by the proposed second Variation into the first Variation.

2. If a National Variation is in process, no Local Variation can be initiated until the ongoing National Variation has been completed (ie until the Variation Agreement has been signed by all parties and dated).

This ensures that the Local Variation takes as its starting point the contract as varied by the National Variation.

Alternatively, the parties may agree to effect both Variations together – in other words, to pause in the progression of the National Variation and agree to incorporate the matters to be covered by the Local Variation into the National Variation.

 If a National Variation is initiated while a Local Variation is in process, the ongoing Local Variation will be halted, as the National Variation must take precedence.

If and when the Local Variation is then re-initiated as a new Variation, it will take as its starting point the contract as varied by the National Variation.

Alternatively, the parties may agree to effect both Variations together – in other words, to incorporate the matters to be covered by the proposed Local Variation into the National Variation.

In either case, the eContract system allows the Co-ordinating Commissioner to "save" drafts and documents in relation to the halted Local Variation, so that these can be imported into the National Variation or the re-initiated Local Variation, as appropriate.

Where a paper contract is being varied, the parties should reflect the process in 1, 2 or 3 above, as appropriate.

Varying a contract: legal considerations

Any proposed Variation should be considered in the context of the contract as a whole, and in the context of wider procurement, competition and other issues, and not in isolation. The parties should seek their own legal advice before proceeding with any Variation.



AGREEMENT

Variations step-by-step

1. For a Local Variation proposed by a Commissioner

Note that a Variation proposed by Commissioners should involve <u>only</u> changes to:

(a) the Particulars,

- (b) the Service Conditions (but only to which Service Conditions apply to the contract for example if the applicable Service Categories are varied NOT TO THE WORDING OF ANY SERVICE CONDITION), or
- (c) one or more of the documents incorporated into the contract (eg a spreadsheet or a policy or protocol), or the incorporation of an additional document.

			eContract	Paper contract
Α.	Co-ordinating	1.	Ensure that the Contract you wish to vary	
	Commissioner		is checked in.	
	initiates	2.	From the blue bar at the top of the home	
	eContract		Screen, select My eContracts.	
	Variation	3.	Select eContract Variation. This will	
			generate a screen Create eContract	
			Variation.	
		4.	On that screen, select from the drop-down	
			menu the appropriate CCG/commissioner.	
		5.	Select from the drop-down menu the	
			Contract to be varied.	
		6	Select LV (Local Variation).	
		7	Select Create a Variation.	
		8.	Select eContract Forms. The Contract you	
			wish to vary will be listed in eContract Forms.	
		9.	Check Out that Contract.	

10.	Open the Contract.	
11.	Go through the relevant contract screens,	
	making the changes you require to the	
	Particulars (which will, where appropriate,	
	re-tailor the Service Conditions). Note that	
	on each screen to which you want to make	
	changes you will need to untick the box at	
	the foot of the screen before making your	
	changes. Once you have made all of the	
	changes to that page, you must retick the	
	box.	
12.	If you need to add a new linked document,	
	or substitute a new version of an existing	
	one, upload the new document to the	
	external or generic documents library and	
	copy it in, in exactly the same way as you did	
	on creation of the eContract.	
13.	Save Form regularly as you are making	
	changes.	
14.	Once you have made all the changes you	
	require, Save Form again.	
15.	Return to the Home Screen. From there you	
	may Print Preview the pdf Particulars and	
	Service Conditions.	
16.	Check the pdfs and revisit screens to correct	
	as necessary. Save Form again.	
17.	Note: if on the Home Screen the Issue for	
	Signature box is greyed out, you will need to	
	go back through each screen of the	
	Particulars and schedules to check which	
	screen remains unticked. Complete and tick	
	as necessary, then Save Form.	

		 From the Home Screen, select Variation Agreement. Complete the Variation Agreement screen to reflect the Variation Proposal (see below). Then Save Form. Return to Home Screen and select Issue for Signatures. Close Variation. Check in Variation. 	
		alerting them to the issue of a Variation Agreement.	
В.	Co-ordinating Commissioner serves Variation	In parallel with the process above, the Co-ordinating Commissioner should complete a (paper) Variation Proposal template as follows:	The Co-ordinating Commissioner should complete a (paper) Variation Proposal template as follows:
	Proposal on the Provider (GC13.4)	Contract/Variation Reference: insert the reference number (a combination of the Contract Reference and a sequential variation number) generated by the eContract system.	Contract/Variation Reference: insert local contract and variation reference
		Proposed by: select "Co-ordinating Commissioner on behalf of the Commissioners".	Proposed by: to read "Co-ordinating Commissioner on behalf of the Commissioners".
		Date of Proposal: insert the date on which the proposal is to be served on the Provider.	Date of Proposal: insert the date on which the proposal is served on the Provider.
		1. In the text box , insert a summary of the proposed Variation.	1. In the text box , insert a summary of the proposed Variation.
		Delete/complete the text below the box as appropriate. If the Variation involves changes to or	If the Co-ordinating Commissioner has produced revised versions or mark-ups of the Particulars,

		1	
		the addition of a document to be incorporated into	the Service Conditions or any incorporated
		the eContract (eg a new spreadsheet or a revised	documents at this stage, complete the text
		local protocol), that document should be attached to	below the box accordingly. The draft revised
		the Variation Proposal.	Particulars and/or Service Conditions and/or
			incorporated document(s) (as appropriate)
		2. Insert here the date on which the	should be attached to the Variation Proposal.
		Commissioners wish the proposed Variation to take	
		effect.	If the Co-ordinating Commissioner has not yet
			produced revised versions or mark-ups, delete
		The Co-ordinating Commissioner's authorised	the text below the box.
		signatory must sign the Variation Proposal.	
			2. Insert here the date on which the
		The Variation Proposal (and any attached	Commissioners wish the proposed Variation to
		document) must be served on the Provider in	take effect
		accordance with the procedure for service of notices	
		set out in GC 36 - ie outside the eContract	The Co-ordinating Commissioner's authorised
		system. This should be done simultaneously with	signatory must sign the Variation Proposal
		the Issue for Signatures (stop A 17 above)	signatory must sign the variation r roposal.
			The Variation Proposal (and any attached
			documente) must be corred on the Drovider in
			documents) must be served on the Provider in
			accordance with the procedure for service of
	David Law and		notices set out in GC 36.
C.	Provider must	I ne Provider must serve its response in accordance	I ne Provider must serve its response in
	issue	with the procedure for service of notices set out in	accordance with the procedure for service of
	Recipient's	GC 36 – le outside the eContract system.	notices set out in GC 36.
	Response		
	within 10		
	Operational		
	Days (GC 13.8)		
D.	Parties	This may result in changes needing to be made to	This may result in changes needing to be made
	discuss	the revised Particulars and/or Service Conditions	to any revised Particulars and/or Service
1	Variation	and/or incorporated documents.	Conditions and/or incorporated documents

	Proposal and Recipient's Response (GC13.9)	 To make the necessary changes, the Co-ordinating Commissioner must: 1. Select My eContracts. 2. Select My eContracts Awaiting Signature. 3. Select the relevant Contract Variation, check it out and open it. 4. Make the required changes to the relevant screens and the Variation Agreement, following stops A 10 to A 16 as above 	already issued and/or the issue and development of the appropriate drafts.
		 Reissue the Variation Agreement, following steps A.17 to A.19 as above. 	
E.	Provider serves written notice accepting or refusing Variation Proposal (GC 13.10)	The Provider must serve its notice in accordance with the procedure for service of notices set out in GC 36 – ie outside the eContract system.	The Provider must serve its notice in accordance with the procedure for service of notices set out in GC 36.
F.	(If Variation Proposal is accepted) parties finalise details of Variation	Repeat steps A.11 to A.16 as above to make further changes and reissue as required.	The draft revised Particulars and/or Service Conditions and/or incorporated document(s) (as appropriate) must be finalised to reflect the terms agreed between the parties.
G.	Co-ordinating Commissioner issues Variation	Repeat steps A.17 to A.19 as above.	The Co-ordinating Commissioner should complete a Variation Agreement template as follows:

	Agreement for signature		Con Prop Vari Prop Prop Date Prop	Contract Reference: insert as per the Variation Proposal. Variation Number: insert as per the Variation Proposal. Proposed by: complete as per the Variation Proposal. Date of Proposal: insert as per the Variation Proposal.	
				agreed Variation, as agreed between the parties.	
			2.	Delete and complete the text as appropriate. The draft revised Particulars, Service Conditions and incorporated document(s) (as appropriate) should be attached to the Variation Agreement.	
			3.	Insert here the date on which the parties have agreed that Variation is to take effect.	
Н.	All parties sign Variation Agreement	All parties (the Provider and all Commissioners) must sign a copy of the Variation Agreement.	<u>All</u> p mus	arties (the Provider and all Commissioners) t sign a copy of the Variation Agreement.	
	(GC13.3)	Date of Variation Agreement: Once signed by the authorised signatory of each party, the Variation	Date the a	e of Variation Agreement: Once signed by authorised signatory of each party, the	
		Agreement must be dated here.	Varia	ation Agreement must be dated here.	
Ι.	Co-ordinating	Repeat steps D.1 to D.3 above, then:			
	logs	1. Select Log Party Signatures.			

signatures	 Select/complete that screen as appropriate. Save Form. Return to Home Screen. A red box "Please enter the Variation date to signed copy" will have appeared. Enter the date of the Variation Agreement in the box headed Variation Date. This should be the date on which all signatures have been collected and recorded and on which all parties have agreed that the Variation Agreement should be dated. Save Form. Issue Signed Copy. Close Form. Check In. The Variation will now appear in Variations Signed. The details of the Variation will appear in Schedule 6 Part A (Recorded Variations) of the varied Contract. 	
J. Status of Contract	The previous version of the eContract has now been superseded by the version attached to and/or referred to in the Variation Agreement	The previous version of the Contract has now been superseded by the version attached to and/or referred to in the Variation Agreement

2. For a Local Variation proposed by the Provider

A Variation proposed by the Provider should involve only changes to:

(a) the Particulars,

(b) the Service Conditions (but only to which Service Conditions apply to the contract – for example if the applicable Service Categories are varied – NOT TO THE WORDING OF ANY SERVICE CONDITION), or

(c) one or more of the documents incorporated into the contract (eg a spreadsheet or a policy or protocol), or the incorporation of an additional document.

		eContract	Paper contract
Α.	Provider	The Provider should complete a (paper) Variation	The Provider should complete a (paper)
	serves	Proposal template as follows:	Variation Proposal template as follows:
	Variation		
	Proposal on	Contract/Variation Reference: leave blank – the	Contract/Variation Reference: insert local
	the Co-	reference number can be completed later once	contract and variation reference
	ordinating	generated by the eContract system	Proposed by: to read "Provider"
	commissioner	Proposed by: to read "Provider"	Date of Proposal: insert the date on which the
	(GC13.4)	Date of Proposal: insert the date on which the	proposal is served on the Co-ordinating
		proposal is served on the Co-ordinating	Commissioner
		Commissioner	
			1. In the text box, insert a summary of the
		1. In the text box, insert a summary of the	proposed Variation.
		proposed Variation.	
			If the Provider has produced revised versions or
		If the Provider has produced revised versions or	mark-ups of the Particulars, Service Conditions
		mark-ups of the Particulars, Services Conditions or	or incorporated documents at this stage,
		incorporated documents, at this stage, complete	complete the text below the box accordingly.
		the text below the box accordingly. The draft revised	The draft revised Particulars and/or Service
		Particulars and/or Service Conditions and/or	Conditions and/or incorporated document(s) (as
		incorporated document(s) (as appropriate) should	appropriate) should be attached to the Variation

be attached to the Variation Proposal.	Proposal.
If the Provider has not yet produced revised versions or mark-ups, delete the text below the box.	If the Provider has not yet produced revised versions or mark-ups, delete the text below the box.
2. Insert here the date on which the Provider wishes the proposed Variation to take effect.	2. Insert here the date on which the Provider wishes the proposed Variation to take effect.
The Provider's authorised signatory must sign the Variation Proposal.	The Provider's authorised signatory must sign the Variation Proposal.
The Variation Proposal must be served on the Co-	
ordinating Commissioner in accordance with the	The Variation Proposal must be served on the
procedure for service of notices set out in GC 36.	the procedure for service of notices set out in GC 36.
1. Ensure that the Contract you wish to vary	
is checked in.	
2. From the blue bar at the top of the home	
Screen, select My eContracts.	
3. Select eContract Variation. This will	
generate a screen Create eContract	
Variation.	
4. On that screen, select from the drop-down	
menu the appropriate CCG/commissioner.	
5. Select from the drop-down menu the	
Contract to be varied.	
 Select LV (LOCAL Valiation). Soloct Crosto a Variation 	
8 Select Contract Forms The Contract you	
wish to vary will be listed in eContract Forms	
	 be attached to the Variation Proposal. If the Provider has not yet produced revised versions or mark-ups, delete the text below the box. 2. Insert here the date on which the Provider wishes the proposed Variation to take effect. The Provider's authorised signatory must sign the Variation Proposal. The Variation Proposal must be served on the Coordinating Commissioner in accordance with the procedure for service of notices set out in GC 36. 1. Ensure that the Contract you wish to vary is checked in. 2. From the blue bar at the top of the home Screen, select My eContracts. 3. Select eContract Variation. This will generate a screen Create eContract Variation. 4. On that screen, select from the drop-down menu the appropriate CCG/commissioner. 5. Select from the drop-down menu the Contract to be varied. 6. Select LV (Local Variation). 7. Select eContract Forms. The Contract you wish to vary wish to vary wish to vary with be listed in eContract Forms

Check Out that Contract.	
Open the Contract.	
Go through the relevant contract screens,	
making the changes you require to the	
Particulars (which will, where appropriate,	
re-tailor the Service Conditions). Note that	
on each screen to which you want to make	
changes you will need to untick the box at	
the foot of the screen before making your	
changes. Once you have made all of the	
changes to that page, you must retick the	
box.	
If you need to add a new linked document ,	
or substitute a new version of an existing	
one, upload the new document to the	
external or generic documents library and	
copy it in, in exactly the same way as you did	
on creation of the eContract.	
Save Form regularly as you are making	
changes.	
Once you have made all the changes you	
require, Save Form again.	
Return to the Home Screen. From there you	
Service Conditions	
Service Conditions.	
check the puis and revisit screens to correct	
Note: if on the Home Screen the Issue for	
Signature box is greved out, you will need to	
an back through each screen of the	
Particulars and schedules to check which	
screen remains unticked. Complete and tick	
	 Check Out that Contract. Open the Contract. Go through the relevant contract screens, making the changes you require to the Particulars (which will, where appropriate, re-tailor the Service Conditions). Note that on each screen to which you want to make changes you will need to untick the box at the foot of the screen before making your changes. Once you have made all of the changes to that page, you must retick the box. If you need to add a new linked document, or substitute a new version of an existing one, upload the new document to the external or generic documents library and copy it in, in exactly the same way as you did on creation of the eContract. Save Form regularly as you are making changes. Once you have made all the changes you require, Save Form again. Return to the Home Screen. From there you may Print Preview the pdf Particulars and Service Conditions. Check the pdfs and revisit screens to correct as necessary. Save Form again. Note: if on the Home Screen the Issue for Signature box is greyed out, you will need to go back through each screen of the Particulars and screen remains unticked. Complete and tick

		 as necessary, then Save Form. 18. From the Home Screen, select Variation Agreement. Complete the Variation Agreement screen to reflect the Variation Proposal (see above). Then Save Form. 19. Return to the Home Screen and select Issue for Signatures. 20. Close Variation. 21. Check in Variation. 	
		alerting them to the issue of a Variation Agreement.	
3.	Co-ordinating Commissioner must issue Recipient's Response within 10 Operational Days (GC 13.8)	The Co-ordinating Commissioner must serve its response in accordance with the procedure for service of notices set out in GC 36.	The Co-ordinating Commissioner must serve its response in accordance with the procedure for service of notices set out in GC 36.
4.	Parties discuss Variation Proposal and Recipient's Response (GC13.9)	 This may result in changes needing to be made to the revised Particulars and/or Service Conditions and/or incorporated documents. To make the necessary changes, the Co-ordinating Commissioner must: Select My eContracts. Select My eContracts Awaiting Signature. Select the relevant Contract Variation, check it out and open it. 	This may involve changes to any revised Particulars and/or Service Conditions and/or incorporated documents already issued and/or the issue and development of the appropriate drafts.

		 Make the required changes to the relevant screens and the Variation Agreement, following steps B.10 to B.16 as above. Reissue the Variation Agreement, following steps B.17 to B.19 as above. 	
6.	Co-ordinating Commissioner serves written notice accepting or refusing Variation Proposal (GC 13.10)	The Co-ordinating Commissioner must serve its notice in accordance with the procedure for service of notices set out in GC 36.	The Co-ordinating Commissioner must serve its notice in accordance with the procedure for service of notices set out in GC 36.
7.	(If Variation Proposal is accepted) parties finalise details of Variation	Repeat steps B.11 to B.16 as above to make further changes and reissue as required.	The draft revised Particulars and/or Service Conditions and/or incorporated document(s) (as appropriate) must be amended to reflect the terms agreed between the parties.
8.	Co-ordinating Commissioner issues Variation Agreement for signature	Repeat steps B.17 to B.19 as above.	The Co-ordinating Commissioner should complete a Variation Agreement template as follows: Contract Reference: insert as per the Variation Proposal Variation Number: insert as per the Variation Proposal Proposal Proposal

		Date of Proposal: insert as per the Variation Proposal
		 In the text box, insert a summary of the agreed Variation, as agreed between the parties.
		 Delete and complete the text as appropriate. The draft revised Particulars, Service Conditions and incorporated document(s) (as appropriate) should be attached to the Variation Agreement.
		3. Insert here the date on which the parties have agreed that Variation is to take effect.
9. All parties sign	All parties (the Provider and all Commissioners)	All parties (the Provider and all Commissioners)
Variation	must sign the Variation Agreement.	must sign the Variation Agreement.
Agreement	5 5	
(GC13.3)	The parties should <u>not</u> sign the revised Particulars.	The parties should <u>not</u> sign the revised Particulars.
	Date of Variation Agreement: Once signed by the	
	authorised signatory of each party, the Variation	Date of Variation Agreement: Once signed by
	Agreement must be dated here.	the authorised signatory of each party, the Variation Agreement must be dated here.
10. Co-ordinating	Repeat steps D.1 to D.3 above, then:	
Commissioner		
logs	1. From the Home Screen, select Log Party	
signatures	Signatures.	
	2. Select/complete that screen as appropriate.	
	3. Save Form.	
	4. Return to Home Screen.	

	 A red box "Please enter the Variation date to signed copy" will have appeared. Enter the date of the Variation Agreement in the box headed Variation Date. This should be the date on which all signatures have been collected and recorded and on which all parties have agreed that the Variation Agreement should be dated. Save Form. Issue Signed Copy. Close Form. Check In. The Variation will now appear in Variations Signed. The details of the Variation will appear in Schedule 6 Part A (Recorded Variations) of the varied Contract.
11. Status of Contract	The previous version of the eContract has now been superseded by the version attached to and/or referred to in the Variation AgreementThe previous version of the Contract has now been superseded by the version attached to and/or referred to in the Variation Agreement

3. For a National Variation mandated by NHS England

	eContract	Paper contract
NHS England	A National Variation mandated by NHS England	A National Variation mandated by NHS England
mandates National	may involve updates to the Particulars and/or the	may involve updates to the Particulars and/or
Variation –	Service Conditions and/or the General Conditions.	the Service Conditions and/or the General
publishes revised		Conditions.
Particulars and/or	Publication of any updates will be notified via the	
Service	eContract platform and CCG bulletins. The new	Publication of any updates will be notified via the
Conditions and/or	version(s) will be published on the eContract	eContract platform and CCG bulletins. The new
General	platform and the NHS England website.	version(s) will be published on the eContract
Conditions		platform and the NHS England website.
	Guidance will be issued to explain the process for	
	effecting any National Variation, and its implications	Guidance will be issued to explain the process
	for local contracts, as and when that National	for effecting any National Variation, and its
	Variation is mandated. The precise details of this	implications for local contracts, as and when that
	process will depend on the nature and scope of the	National Variation is mandated. The precise
	specific National Variation, but will broadly follow	details of this process will depend on the nature
	that for a Variation proposed by a Commissioner, as	and scope of the specific National Variation, but
	set out above.	will broadly follow that for a Variation proposed
		by a Commissioner, as set out above.

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