

**For the attention of  
Senior Partners and  
Practice Managers**

Sent on behalf of NHS Digital

*Sent electronically*

Dear Colleague,

**Workforce Minimum Data Set – update & action for March 2016 collection**

Classification: **OFFICIAL**. SCCI reference **R01010**. Publications Gateway Reference **05554**.

We would like to thank you for completing the workforce Minimum Data Set (wMDS) return by the 31st March 2016. The results will be published by NHS Digital in September and are used to form an accurate picture of the current workforce and capacity in primary care.

Please find our last collection publication [here](#)

**Data Collection period:**

We are writing to provide you with advance notice that the 4th collection window for your submission **will open on the 1st October 2016 closing at midday on the 26th October 2016**.

We would like to encourage practices to submit their returns as early as possible when the collection opens. NHS Digital will be in further contact via email with all practices about the collection.

**Why do we need this data?**

As you know, primary care is currently experiencing severe workforce pressures. This data is vital in addressing these pressures and securing a well-trained workforce for the future. wMDS publications are used to form an accurate picture of the current workforce so that we can get a clear understanding of current skills and capacity in primary care.

Analysis of the data enables Health Education England to identify local gaps in skills and capacity and commission training and education more effectively. This data also underpins the delivery of the joint (BMA, RCGP, NHS England, Health Education England) 10 point plan to address workforce pressures in general practice.

The latest live data now feeds directly into the Workforce Plan for England. The collection is more comprehensive than ever with additional data gathered from primary care. This rich

data gives us an even better understanding of the current workforce and ensures we can plan more effectively.

Next steps, where to obtain help and support, guidance and further information have been provided in the FAQs below.

Yours sincerely

NHS Digital

## **FAQs**

### **Guidance materials and contact information for help and support**

You can continue to keep up to date on the wMDS collection on the NHS Digital website, including all guidance documentation and tutorial videos on the NHS Digital's dedicated site which is available [here](#).

Alternatively, practices continue to use existing HEE tools where available.

Further information is available in the frequently asked questions document at <http://digital.nhs.uk/wMDS> or email NHS Digital at [enquiries@nhsdigital.nhs.uk](mailto:enquiries@nhsdigital.nhs.uk) with 'wMDS Collection' in your subject heading.

### **Primary Care Web tool: [www.primarycare.nhs.uk](http://www.primarycare.nhs.uk)**

Currently not all practices have registered for the Primary Care Web Tool (PCWT); if your Practice still does not have any members of staff with access to the workforce module or you require new/additional staff to gain access you should arrange for this to happen as soon as possible.

### **What you need to do to obtain access**

**If there is anyone within your Practice that still does not have access to the workforce module of the Primary Care Web Tool who needs it then please respond by emailing [enquiries@nhsdigital.nhs.uk](mailto:enquiries@nhsdigital.nhs.uk) and quote 'Primary Care Web Tool'. Alternatively you can contact the NHS Digital Contact Centre on 0300 303 5678.**

**In the response, please confirm who in your practice will need access to the workforce module.**

**For each user please provide the following:**

- **Forename**
- **Surname**
- **Telephone number**
- **Valid individual NHS Mail email address (e.g. [john.smith@nhs.net](mailto:john.smith@nhs.net))**
- **Your practice's National ODS organisation code (e.g. M12345)**

If your email address is not currently registered to use the PCWT please visit <https://www.primarycare.nhs.uk/register.aspx>. You will be asked to enter your name, email address and your practice's National ODS organisation code (e.g. M12345). Please register using the email address you provided to us. We will grant you access to the workforce census module once your email address has been registered.

Practices can significantly reduce the amount of work required during the collection window by making an early start on their data entry in anticipation of the next collection. Accordingly, we would highly recommend that Practices, if not doing so already, at least consider beginning their preparations for the September 2016 collection.

## **Updates**

### **Data Quality**

Taking account of the concerns that have been raised of the following amendments, NHS Digital will take this early opportunity to ensure that Practices are fully aware of the processes involved in the wMDS collection.

All submissions will be checked to ensure that data provide meets expected levels of accuracy and where data is significantly different to previous submissions made amongst other criteria. Subsequently emails will be sent to these Practices to highlight potential data quality issues and practice's submissions will be re-opened.

These emails do not mean that a practice's data is wrong; it is merely a mechanism to confirm data with a practice to ensure that no data is missed and to help us understand your submission. If you confirm that the data provided is 100% accurate then you can simply re-submit it before the collection window closes.

When accessing the Primary Care Webtool, it is recommended that you use a modern browser (Internet Explorer 9+, Firefox 10+, Chrome 13+, Safari 4+ or Opera 10.63+). These browsers support native W3C/CSS3/HTML5 standards and the user experience is noticeably better compared with older browsers.

### **Submitting through Health Education England**

We understand that there has previously been some confusion in relation to how Practices can submit their workforce data to NHS Digital. By way of clarification, we know that some practices already provide their workforce information within separate collections to Health Education England via the regional offices. If you are one of these practices, and to avoid duplication, Health Education England will forward your information to us directly and you will

not be required to add and submit your full practice workforce data using the workforce module on the PCWT. If you are submitting your data via HEE, please use one of the links provided:

<https://gpdata.wrap.org.uk> - HEE North West

<https://gpworkforce.kss.hee.nhs.uk> - HEE Kent, Surrey & Sussex

<https://nww.gpworkforce.hee.nhs.uk/> - HEE Yorkshire & Humber

<https://nww.gpworkforce.hee.nhs.uk/> - HEE North East

Please note however that you still have to access the workforce module of the PCWT to confirm that you are providing a return via you HEE region, this is achieved by selecting submitted by alternative means on the submitted page.

**Such practices will also still need to respond to this communication to confirm or provide the contact details of the person who will need access to the module to do this.**

Your local team from Health Education England will be in touch in due course regarding the workforce data collection for September, however if you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact them directly.

Please note;

NHS Digital is the new trading name for the Health and Social Care Information Centre (HSCIC). We provide 'Information and Technology for better health and care'. Find out more about our role and remit at [www.digital.nhs.uk](http://www.digital.nhs.uk)