

**For the attention of:**  
Regional Medical Directors  
Regional Head of Primary Care  
CCG Clinical Leader, cc the  
Accountable Officer

Commissioning Operations  
NHS England  
80 London Road  
London  
SE1 6LH

22 June 2015

Dear colleagues

**RE: Support for practices entering Special Measures**

The Department of Health and NHS England have commissioned the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) to provide a pilot programme offering expert peer advice and support for GP practices that enter special measures following inspection by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

It has been agreed that this Pilot which started in October 2014 will now be extended so that support is available to any practice that has been placed into special measures before the 31 December 2015.

This letter is to provide clarification on practice eligibility for all commissioners of general practice and supports the published [Framework for responding to CQC inspections of GP practices](#).

When a GP practice is placed into special measures, NHS England and CCGs (acting under Delegated Agreement) have a responsibility to ensure that practices are made aware of this offer of support from RCGP during the pilot period.

The funding terms for practices entering the pilot programme are the commissioner providing up to £5,000 of funding directly to the RCGP, with matched funding by the practice. Commissioners (whether NHS England or CCGs under delegated authority) will be expected to meet these costs from their primary care allocation.

One of the key principles behind the pilot is the need to understand the evidence around what types of support best meet the needs of practices in special measures. This will inform work which is now in progress, about how commissioners can help to strengthen primary care. Other than in exceptional circumstances, all practices should be offered access to RCGP support to avoid introducing bias into the outcomes of the pilot.

Under the 2014 framework, practices eligibility for support was dependant on the absence of 'contractual action.' It has become apparent however that given the degrees of 'contractual action', this statement has been open to differing interpretation.

The following is a clarification on the policy intent in relation to the eligibility criteria:

- Whilst each case should be considered on its individual merits, where a practice is served with a remedial or breach notice, this alone should not prevent a practice being eligible to be offered support from the pilot.
- If there is evidence of significant previous investment in the practice failing to result in improvement, commissioners may consider this as evidence that further investment is unlikely to be cost effective. In these incidences, commissioners may decline to fund further support, but should discuss their concerns with the RCGP and ensure there is clear document the rationale for the decision.
- Where a Notice of Termination has been issued or is in the process of being issued, the practice would not be eligible to apply for support.

If you have any queries regarding this, or would like further information, please get in touch with [matthew.boycott@nhs.net](mailto:matthew.boycott@nhs.net)

Best Wishes

Yours sincerely



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