

Gateway publication reference number: 02515

To: Area Team Directors of  
Commissioning, Heads of Primary Care  
and Regional Directors of  
Commissioning, NHS England.

Commissioning Operations  
NHS England  
Quarry House  
Leeds  
LS2 7UE

Cc: CCG Clinical Leads and Chief  
Officers

11 November 2014

Dear Colleagues

### **Choice of GP practice – out of area registration**

As you will know last year's GMS contract agreement provided that GP practices will be able to register patients from outside their traditional practice boundaries without the requirement to provide home visits or out of hours care. This was due to start 1 October 2014 but we revised this to 5 January 2015.

Area teams remain responsible for patients who live in their area who register this way and must commission local arrangements to ensure such patients can access primary medical services during core hours (Monday – Friday 8.00 – 6.30pm) when they need access and it is unreasonable on clinical grounds for them to attend their registered practice.

We have developed guidance which provides further information on how the new arrangements will work. This includes a commissioning framework to support area team decisions on putting in place urgent primary medical care services. We have worked in conjunction with area teams, NHS Employers, the BMA General Practitioners Committee, the Department of Health and other stakeholders to ensure that this provides a range of options. This also provides a nationally priced enhanced service to be used when commissioning services from local GP practices where these feature in your local strategies to deliver urgent care to out of area patients when at home.

The guidance including the commissioning framework and enhanced service can found [here](#).

We anticipate there will be a slow start to registrations in line with findings from the former pilot scheme. However, area team's arrangements must be in place, on a population wide-basis, for 5 January 2015. Registration under the new arrangements cannot proceed until we are assured that is the case. We are therefore putting in place assurance arrangements to establish the status of area teams readiness at the end of October, November and mid-December.

It is important CCGs are also aware of the new arrangements and area teams will want to work with them on their local arrangements to deliver urgent care in core hours to out of area patients when at home. Out of hours access is unaffected. CCGs commission for their local population (excluding practices that continue to provide 24 hour responsibility for their patients) and so will already provide for patients in their area but are not necessarily registered there or are registered in the CCG area but not necessarily living there. CCGs will want to understand this new category of registered patient and the guidance provides some prompts for how CCGs can support the new arrangements – for example ensuring up-to-date information about the range of community services in their areas is maintained via the directory of services held by NHS 111 so can be accessed remotely by practices.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rosamond Roughton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped 'R' at the beginning.

Rosamond Roughton  
Director of NHS Commissioning