

- To:
- GP practices
 - Primary Care Networks
 - CCGs:
 - clinical leads
 - accountable officers

NHS England and NHS Improvement
Skipton House
80 London Road
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20 December 2021

Dear Colleagues,

Primary care networks: network contract directed enhanced service from 20 December 2021

Explanatory note

1. This variation to the 2021/22 Network Contract Directed Enhanced Service (DES) Specification implements the plans for temporary changes to the GP contract to support the COVID-19 vaccination programme outlined in our letter of [7 December 2021](#).
2. The updated DES aims to support GPs, primary care networks (PCNs) and their teams to progress the expansion of the vaccination programme alongside prioritisation of timely patient access to general practice services this winter.
3. The updated DES confirms:
 - three Investment and Impact Fund (IIF) flu immunisation indicators, and the appointment categorisation indicator (as the work is complete) are retained and operating as planned for 2021/22;
 - the remaining IIF indicators will be suspended and the allocated funding (worth £112.1m) repurposed:
 - £62.4m of the funding allocated to these suspended indicators will be allocated to PCNs via a PCN support payment, to be paid on a weighted patient basis, subject to a simple confirmation from the PCN that it will be reinvested into services or workforce;
 - £49.7m will be allocated to a new binary IIF indicator, paid on the basis of all practices within a PCN being signed up to phase 3 of the COVID-19 Vaccination Enhanced Service as at 31 December 2021, remaining signed up until 31 March 2022, and actively delivering the programme. Payment for this

indicator will be made on a registered list size basis after the end of the financial year. Where, in exceptional circumstances, the commissioner agrees with one or more practices that they should not participate in the COVID-19 Vaccination Enhanced Service (as a result of wider access, performance or patient safety issues) then the PCN may still receive payment with those practices excluded from consideration. The payment will not apply if any practice in the PCN otherwise declines to participate in the programme; and

- PCN service requirements will continue as planned through 2021/22 and 2022/23. However, in order to free up capacity in December and January, the deadline of 31 December 2021 for PCNs to have identified a priority cohort and commenced engagement with them in the Tackling Neighbourhood Health Inequalities service may be deferred to 28 February 2022. All other service requirements are unchanged.
- To support identification of a priority cohort, PCNs may want to use the Core20PLUS5 population cohort. This will align with the approach being taken across the NHS, based on extensive data analysis and evidence. PCNs will be supported by commissioners and local/regional data teams to use data and intelligence systematically to identify this population. The Health Inequalities Improvement Dashboard (HIID) brings together a range of indicators to help users, from national to local level, understand where health inequalities exist in their area; what is driving these inequalities; and what local insights and actions they can take to drive improvement. The dashboard will develop over time as data becomes available. Priority Wards (contained within EHI RightCare Packs) will be added to the dashboard which will include quarterly data together with the top 10 conditions for each Priority Ward and CCG/ICP. Public Health teams in local authorities, and analytical teams in CCGs, can supply further intelligence to inform the selection of the population, and support the analysis of population health data for this purpose. The PCN Dashboard continues to enable PCNs to track their progress against the service specifications set out in the Network Contract DES. Further resources, including case studies and toolkits, are available on the [FutureNHS Equality and Health Inequality network](#).

4. Updated supporting guidance documents are available on our [website](#).

Participation

5. Practices already signed up in 2021/22 will automatically participate in the updated 2021/22 DES. This means that PCNs with no changes to their membership or

information do not need to submit any sign-up information to their CCG to continue to participate. Each practice that automatically participates must, as soon as practicable, enter into a written variation of its primary medical services contract with the commissioner to incorporate the Network Contract DES Variation and ensure the PCN's Network Agreement reflects the arrangements for delivery of the Network Contract DES Variation

6. PCNs with changes to their membership must notify the commissioner by 19 January 2022 to seek approval of those changes.
7. If a practice wishes to sign up to, or opt out of, the DES, it must inform its clinical commissioning group (CCG) by 19 January 2022.

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