

## Improved collection of GP data launched

**Respected voices across the clinical, academic, research and patient spectrum have welcomed the introduction of a new service from NHS Digital, which will more efficiently collect primary care data and make it available for better planning of healthcare services and for use in medical research.**

NHS Digital has been collecting data from GPs to meet bespoke data requests for these purposes for over ten years, through its trusted General Practice Extraction Service (GPES).

This system is now being replaced with their new [General Practice Data for Planning and Research \(GPDPR\) service](#), a broader general-purpose collection which will enable faster access to pseudonymised patient data for planners and researchers.

Today (12 May 2021), NHS Digital has issued a Data Provision Notice to GPs to enable this new and improved data collection process to begin from 1st July.

The pandemic led to a significant increase in the need for GP data from NHS Digital to support clinicians, researchers, academics and commissioners. It has been used by NHS organisations and researchers to help run and improve health and care services.

This includes identifying those most vulnerable to coronavirus, rolling out vaccines, and for critical COVID-19 research, including the University of Oxford's RECOVERY trial which identified that treatment with dexamethasone improves the chances of survival for people hospitalised with COVID-19.

To support these needs, NHS Digital was legally directed to collect and analyse healthcare information about patients, including from GP records, for the duration of the coronavirus emergency period. The current collection system (GPES) performed adequately during the pandemic but is based on legacy technology.

As we emerge from the pandemic, but into an era of enormous demand for NHS services, data will continue to be a critical asset in planning services and facilitating research into conditions such as long COVID. Therefore, NHS Digital has been legally directed by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to establish a new strategic system to collect and provide access to near-real-time data from GP Practices for planning and research purposes.

The new service (GPDPR) has been designed to the most rigorous privacy and security standards, to meet patient expectations with regards to the confidential management of patient data.

NHS Digital has consulted with patient and privacy groups, clinicians, and technology experts, as well as with the British Medical Association (BMA), Royal College of GPs (RCGP), the National Data Guardian (NDG) and multiple other organisations and communities across the health and care system.

Any data which directly identifies an individual will be pseudonymised and then encrypted before it leaves a GP practice. Data will only be shared with organisations who have a legal

basis and meet strict criteria to use it for local, regional and national planning, policy development, commissioning, public health and research purposes.

If a patient does not want identifiable data to be shared outside their GP Practice except for their own care they can [opt-out at any time](#), by requesting that their GP practice record this preference, known as a Type 1 opt out, or by registering their opt-out through the National Data Opt Out service on nhs.uk, or both.

The new system will improve efficiency in data collection from GP practices, and significantly increase the speed and efficiency of providing appropriate access to that data, reducing the burden on GPs. Patients can have greater confidence that their data is being used in ways which preserve their confidentiality, as a result of the rigorous, standardised and unified approach to data management and access.

NHS Digital is committed to complete transparency with patients and the public about the collection and use of health data.