

## **GP Data for Planning and Research**

Data about patients has been used for over 40 years to: -

- develop new treatments for disease,
- to make sure that local communities have the health services they need
- to plan national services, for example
  - to make sure that the right numbers of doctors and nurses are trained
  - that hospitals are seeing cancer patients within two weeks of being referred by their GP
  - patients with diabetes are receiving the vital checks that help to manage their condition

The system that collects GP data is over 10 years old and needs to be replaced. The new service replaces 300 individual collections with one single collection. This is more efficient, with stronger privacy protections for the data at all stages and reduces the burden on general practices. For these reasons a new way to collect this data is being developed by NHS Digital, working with general practice, patients, the public and data experts, to develop a solution which is safe, trusted and which maintains privacy. The new, more secure and more efficient way to collect this data is called the General Practice Data for Planning and Research data collection.

### **NHS Digital**

NHS Digital teams design, develop and operate the national Information Technology (IT) and data services that support clinicians at work, help patients get the best care, and use data to improve health and care.

During the summer of 2021 substantial public, patient and professional concerns were raised about the changes being proposed to improve the control, security, and consistency of access to data from general practice (GP). Many of these people, including GPs, also thought that in the past these concerns had not been listened to or fully understood. NHS Digital have an opportunity through this new GP data collection, 'GP Data for Planning and Research' to do much better.

NHS Digital understand the need to listen, understand, engage and act on what is learned to get this right, and are committed to doing so. They are redesigning the programme from the ground up and are spending time working with partners such as, health and care professionals including the Royal College of GPs, research organisations and patient charities, data experts and the National Data Guardian, patients and the public to establish how best to address the concerns raised.

Consequently, as at July 2022, NHS Digital do not have a set start date for this new method of data collection. They will only begin to collect data when:

- the British Medical Association (BMA), Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) and the National Data Guardian (NDG) are satisfied with the proposed arrangements - they are working with NHS Digital as part of a Check and Challenge Group and will be key partners throughout the design process
- an effective, secure computing environment (known as a Trusted Research Environment or TRE) has been developed to allow approved researchers to access data they have applied for, without it ever being copied or moved outside the security of the NHS
- any previous data collected through the GP Data for Planning and Research collection can be deleted at any time if people choose to opt-out of sharing their GP data with NHS Digital
- people are more aware of the new data collection process as a result of wider engagement and communication including choices regarding opting out

More information about the development and implementation of GDPR can be found via : -

<https://digital.nhs.uk/>