



To: PCT Chief Executives
CC: SHA Primary Care Leeds

Date: 2 August 2006

Attachments: Definitional Q&A

Gateway number: 6968

Practice-based GP referral data collection in respect of the Choose and Book Directed Enhanced Service (DES)

I wrote on 1 June 2006 (Gateway ref 6674) to alert you to the planned practice level data collection that will enable PCTs to determine awards payable under the booking component of the Directed Enhanced Services (DES) for Choice and Booking. This letter provides an update on the measurement of this component and contains important information that you should make available to the relevant information leads within your organisation

Since I wrote, NHS Employers and the General Practitioners Committee of the BMA have agreed that there will be no reference to the June choose and book utilisation aspiration target in the DES Directions and amendments to the Statement of Fees and Entitlements. To receive the aspiration payment, practices need only provide their PCT with a written commitment to utilising the choose and book system. However, and this is not changing, the aspiration payment would be recoverable should a practice not make at least 50% of its referrals (converted UBRNs) through choose and book in the period 1 September 2006 to 28 February 2007. The full value of the booking component is only payable if a practice achieves 90% or more.

Due to this change, you will not be required to provide data with regard to June. The first return will now be in relation to July data. With the payment thresholds starting at 50% and the full value of the booking component only payable if a practice achieves 90% or more, any practice hoping to achieve the maximum payment needs to start using Choose and Book as soon as possible. The July data will give us and PCTs an early indication of whether practices are on track to achieve the DES minimum standards and provide support where necessary.

The deadline for PCTs to have their July data back to us is 12 September. Future months returns will be due in 6 weeks (i.e. 30 working days) after the end of the month. This means that the August data, for example will be due back on the 12 October. ROCR approval on this return is pending, but we expect to have the approval by the time that the first month's forms will need to be returned to us.

The returns will need to be completed by using the Unify pigeonhole system. This will mean that you will log onto unify, go to the pigeon hole part of the system and download the spreadsheet in your PCT's pigeon hole. You will then need to complete the spreadsheet and upload it back into the pigeonholes. Further information on precisely how to use the pigeonholes is attached. This includes a mock-up of the form, which you will find on Unify for completion. All returns will need to be made via the pigeon hole system – the attached form is for reference only. The form will be available on Unify from 14 August. Also attached is a revised copy of the Q&A briefing provided in the last note to PCTs on the subject (Gateway number 6674).

As stated in the letter of 1 June – we would like you to provide contact names for this collection. Although the pigeon hole system will require you to enter a contact name in order to upload the data, we would like to have contact names before that time. If you have not yet provided a contact name please contact Ian Walker (on 0113 2546762 or ian.walker@dh.gsi.gov.uk). You are also asked to pass this letter on to this relevant lead in your PCT.

There is already a login and password to access Unify and the pigeonholes in use in your PCT. It would therefore be helpful if you could get this information from your PCT information lead. If you do need details on login codes or passwords then please e-mail the Unify Helpdesk at unify@dh.gsi.gov.uk. If you have any other queries relating to accessing Unify please contact the Unify Helpdesk on 0113 2545278. Queries relating to definitional issues, etc should come to me, using the contact details given below.

We appreciate that some PCTs will find it easier to pull this data together than others. This is why we are allowing 6 weeks for you to make the return. PCTs in different areas of the country seem to have very different approaches to gathering the data; this is why we are leaving it to PCTs for them to make decisions on how best to collect, based on the systems that they are running in their area. However, as the information is basically that collected for the QM08 return it should be available to you. Starting with the July data will give you the opportunity to establish robust systems by September as PCTs remain responsible for assessing and making payments to practices and therefore need accurate data returns.

Thank you for your help in this matter – please contact me if you have any queries about the collection of the data. Obviously, if your queries relate to the DES generally then these should be sent to your PCT contract lead. Your PCT will be able to provide contact details.

Clare Hiblin
Tel: 0113 256241
E-mail: clare.hiblin@dh.gsi.gov.uk