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Annex A - Online and Video Consultation (undertaken in GP Practice) Directions Requirements Specification

Document management

Revision History

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| 1.0 | 09/12/2021 | Published following review by Executive Director of Privacy, Transparency and Ethics |
| 1.1 | 18/12/2023 | Updated to reflect legal and organisational changes which came into effect from 1 July 2022 and 1 February 2023, to reflect the latest publication schedule and to remove references to OC/VC data being linked to GP Appointments Data (GPAD) |
| 1.2 | 12/01/2024 | Updated following review by Assistant Director of Primary and Community Care |
| 1.3 | 30/01/2024 | Updated to remove Annex 2 |
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Reviewers

This document must be reviewed by the following people:

| Reviewer name | Title / Responsibility | Date | Version |
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| REDACTED | Assistant Director of Primary and Community Care / Information Asset Owner | 12/01/2024 | 1.1 |
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Approved by

This document must be approved by the following people:

| Name | Signature | Title | Date | Version |
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| REDACTED | | Assistant Director of Primary and Community Care / Information Asset Owner | 23/09/2024 | 1.5 |

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Purpose of document

This document sets out the Requirements Specification for information to be collected, analysed and published by NHS England on the implementation and performance of Online and Video Consultations (**OC/VC**) undertaken in General Practice. This document should be read alongside the [Online and Video Consultation Directions 2021](#) issued by NHS England under section 254 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012 (**the 2012 Act**).

This is a revision of this Requirements Specification to reflect legal and organisational changes which came into effect from 1 July 2022 and 1 February 2023, to remove Annex 1 – Data Specification, to reflect the updated publication schedule, to remove references to OC/VC data being used to inform incentive schemes including the Investment and Impact Fund (**IIF**) and to remove references to OC/VC data being linked to GP Appointments Data (**GPAD**).

On 1 February 2023, the statutory functions of NHS Digital transferred to NHS England under the [Health and Social Care Information Centre \(Transfer of Functions, Abolition and Transitional Provisions\) Regulations 2023 \(Transfer Regulations\)](#). Under these Transfer Regulations, the provisions of all Directions from either the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care or NHS England to NHS Digital are to be treated as if contained in Directions from the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to NHS England.

Consequently, the legal basis for this Specification is still the Direction identified above, with its status now treated as if contained in a Direction from the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to NHS England under section 254 of the 2012 Act.

Introduction / Purpose of data collection

The [NHS Long Term Plan](#) sets out a vision to offer digital first primary care to all patients in England by 2024. Following the COVID-19 pandemic there has been an acceleration in the adoption of total triage and of online and video consultation tools in general practice.

The [Online and Video Consultation undertaken in General Practice \(OC/VC\) data collection](#) will provide vital information both to practices and local commissioners on how OC/VC functionalities are being used by patients and general practices. It will enable targeting of implementation support and will support understanding of demand and activity in general practice.

The data will:

- improve the capture of OC/VC activity to provide a more complete picture of demand and workload
- auto-extract meaningful metrics directly from OC/VC system suppliers without burdening practices
- enable informed and value-based commissioning of online and video consultation products
- monitor and drive product development to deliver the right outcomes for general practice
- standardise reporting from OC/VC system suppliers for consistency and comparison of products and to ensure all suppliers, which are on the relevant Framework, contribute to data collections
- extract data items that would not otherwise be available from other national data collections or from general practice clinical systems

- ensure publication of the data by NHS England aligns with the [‘Data Saves Lives’ strategy](#) which has a strong focus on transparency and how data is used. Publication also supports increased use of the data which drives data quality and consistency.

Data collection

Scope

Under section 259(1)(a) of the 2012 Act, a [Data Provision Notice](#) has been served in accordance with the procedure published as part of NHS England’s duty under section 259(8) on the following persons:

- General practices in England

Under section 259(5) of the 2012 Act, the organisation types specified above must comply with the Form, Manner and Period of the data collection requirements.

As confidential patient information is not required for the purposes of this data collection, national data opt-outs do not apply, and Type 1 objections are not upheld in relation to the collection of data from practices.

Source

The intention is that data is collected from all OC/VC system suppliers in use by general practices in England, regardless of the procurement route. Some OC/VC system suppliers have been procured through the [Digital First Online and Video Consultation procurement framework](#) whereas others have been procured outside of this framework.

Category

Patient identifiable information is not required for the purposes of this data collection. OC/VC data is collected as record-level (appointment level and general practice level) and aggregate data. The [data specification](#), which has been agreed with the [Data Alliance Partnership Board \(DAPB\)](#), is published on the NHS England website. The [data specification](#) is provided to OC/VC system suppliers to set out the scope of the collection. System suppliers then develop the extract in accordance with the data specification.

The list of data items listed in the [data specification](#) was drawn up prior to COVID-19 based on research carried out with general practices, commissioners and patients. The research established which indicators would be most useful to monitor and manage online consultations in their daily practice.

The OC/VC system suppliers create a report containing the information defined in the data specification.

Frequency

NHS England requires OC/VC data on a weekly basis. The first weekly collection took place in March 2022, covering the period from January 2022 onwards. The collection is ongoing.

Analysis

NHS England works with OC/VC system suppliers to implement the direct extraction and automated flow of the required data from OC/VC systems.

NHS England accepts any of three data formats: .xml/ .json/ .csv. The data should be submitted via the [Message Exchange for Social Care and Health \(MESH\)](#) system. MESH is a secure, supported and resilient system with full auditing capability.

Once collected, the data is stored in the Data Processing Service (**DPS**) used by NHS England and made available to NHS England analysts via the Data Access Environment (**DAE**). Within DAE the data is validated and then transferred to the NHS England Unified Data Access Layer (**UDAL**) in both record level (consultation level) and aggregate form for operational internal analysis. No information is held about the patient.

Validation takes place at the point of data submission with data quality feedback returned via a Power BI Dashboard developed in collaboration with suppliers. The dashboard is aimed at and will predominantly be used by suppliers, however is technically publicly accessible. The data is in aggregate form; it is not possible to identify individuals from the data.

It is also anticipated that data obtained under the Direction may be analysed under the NHS England [De-Identified Data Analytics and Publication Directions 2023 \(Data Analytics Direction\)](#). Any analysis under the Data Analytics Direction will only occur where approved in accordance with Information Governance procedures and controls, including where required in accordance with the statutory guidance issued under s274A of the 2012 Act, and advice from the Advisory Group for Data.

Consultation

Consultation, as required by section 258 of the 2012 Act, has been completed with the following organisations:

- The British Medical Association (**BMA**)
- The Royal College of General Practitioners (**RCGP**)
- Department of Health and Social Care (**DHSC**), as the directing organisation
- The DAPB – the DAPB has been established as part of a system-wide information and technology governance model. The DAPB acts with delegated authority from the Secretary of State as the main governance route through which all data collections and standards requirements are agreed and priorities assigned.
- Healthcare professionals, members of the public and OC/VC system suppliers

Dissemination/Sharing

Regular Dissemination/Sharing

NHS England has been directed to exercise its powers in section 261(4) of the 2012 Act to disseminate the information collected by complying with these Directions to the organisations that provided the information where it would be lawful for NHS England to do so.

NHS England may also disseminate information collected as a result of, or obtained by complying with, these Directions in accordance with its powers under sections 261(1), 261(4) and (5) of the 2012 Act

Publication

Data to be published

In accordance with its duty under section 260(1) of the 2012 Act, NHS England will publish relevant data items from this collection on the [Access to General Practice Data Hub](#).

Any other information must be published in line with NHS England's duty under section 260(1) of the 2012 Act unless it falls within section 260(2) of the 2012 Act.

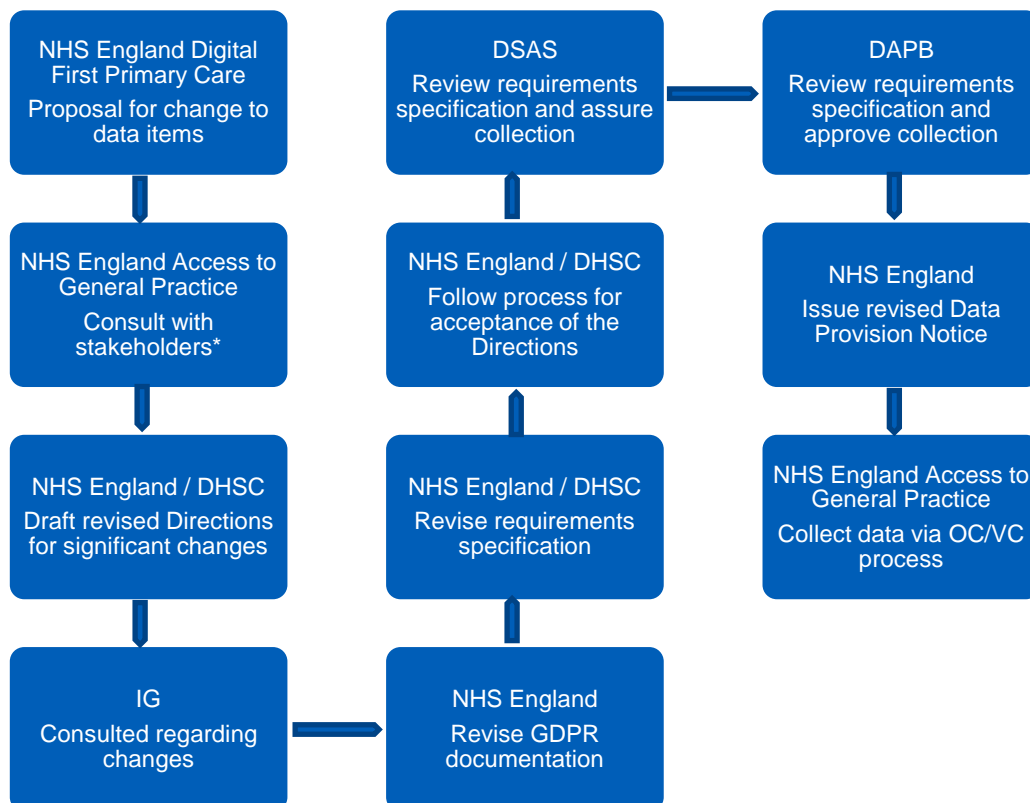
System Delivery Function

There is no requirement for NHS England to create or procure a system delivery function to facilitate this work. It is expected that NHS England will utilise its existing strategic toolset to meet this requirement.

Change control process

Changes to this Requirements Specification will be managed and agreed with DHSC to ensure that any such change is within scope of the Online and Video Consultation Directions 2021.

This process flow is shown below:



*Stakeholders with interest:

- DHSC
- NHS England (Digital First Primary Care team)
- NHS England (Data Provisioning Team)

- Programme Leads
- Policy Leads
- Digital Pathways Framework Catalogue (**DPFC**) Procurement hub