

Version 1, published September 2019

Announcement of methodological changes to NHS Payments to General Practice, England

Introduction

The NHS Payments to General Practice, England series of Official Statistics publishes details of payments to general practices by the NHS via the GP Payment system, National Health Applications and Infrastructure Services (NHAIS) and NHS England and NHS Improvement's Integrated Single Finance Environment (ISFE). It does not include payments from other sources such as Public Health bodies.

Figures are published at practice level but also at CCG, NHS England and NHS Improvement regions and overall England level.

This notice describes changes agreed for the 2018/19 report following consultation with stakeholder groups and a formal publication review.

Registered and Weighted Patient Counts

Patient counts are included to give users an indication of each general practice's size.

These registered and weighted patient counts are also used to calculate the average payment per patient. These figures are not an indication of the amount available to spend on direct patient care and should be treated with caution.

In previous reports, the patient counts provided and used in the calculations were the most recent counts available for the applicable financial year, i.e. registered and weighted patient counts were taken at quarter four, (January to March) unless no figures were available, in which case figures from quarter three (October to December), quarter two (July to September) or quarter one (April to June) were used.

However, use of the most recently available patient counts can mean that some individuals are included more than once, exacerbating the issue known as "list inflation".

To mitigate the effect of this double counting, the practice average across all four quarters is now used. This means that the counts of patients, particularly at CCG, regional and England level are slightly lower than figures produced using the original methodology (by approximately 1.6% at England level). As a result of this change to the patient counts, average payments per registered and weighted patient are now slightly higher.

For comparative purposes, England-level average payments per registered and weighted patient have been included for 2016/17 and 2017/18 as well as for the most recent year. Comparisons of average payments per registered or weighted patient should not be made

with England-level figures from previous years as 2016/17 was the first year that the complete payment data was available from ISFE.

Comparisons with earlier years' figures should not be made of practice-level, CCG or regional average payments per registered and weighted payments.

Timing

These changes will be implemented in the NHS Payments to General Practice, England, 2018/19 publication of 19 September 2019.

Further information

If you have any comments or questions about these changes, please contact NHS Digital on 0300 303 5678 or email PrimaryCareWorkforce@nhs.net.