

**To: GP practices**

July 2014

Dear colleague,

**Re: NHS Friends and Family Test**

The NHS Friends and Family Test (FFT) becomes a contractual requirement for GP practices from 1 December 2014. NHS England, NHS Employers and the BMA General Practitioners Committee have today jointly published guidance that sets out how GP practices should implement it.

Our approach has been to make the FFT flexible and create as little burden on practices and patients as possible. The guidance for GP practices can be found here: [www.nhsemployers.org/FFT](http://www.nhsemployers.org/FFT)

Since the introduction of the FFT in April 2013, over 3 million individual pieces of feedback have been collected on patients' experiences of inpatient, A&E and maternity services. This is a huge achievement and demonstrates that the FFT has enabled significant numbers of patients to give feedback that might not have otherwise been heard.

It is our intention that the FFT will provide all NHS patients and people who use NHS funded services an opportunity to give feedback to the provider of those services and by April 2015 FFT will be implemented across outpatients, community and mental health services as well as ambulance services and NHS funded dentistry.

There are a small number of requirements. Practices must:

- Provide an opportunity for people who use the practice to give anonymous feedback through the FFT, except where it would be inappropriate to do so.

- Use the standard wording of the FFT question and the responses. NHS England has published advice on how feedback can be collected from people who may not be able to answer the FFT question on their own.
- Include at least one follow up question which allows the opportunity to provide free text comment.
- Submit data, in the format required, to NHS England each month.
- Publish results locally.

Beyond these requirements, there are several areas of implementation in which there is local flexibility, so that approaches to gathering feedback that will work best for you and different patient groups, can be implemented. This is to ensure that FFT is fully inclusive, giving everyone the chance to offer their feedback.

NHS England has also published guidance for other parts of the NHS, which includes advice, and support to help with implementation, including advice on how to make FFT inclusive. This can be found here: [www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/fft-imp-guid-14.pdf](http://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/fft-imp-guid-14.pdf)

NHS England will be contacting practices, when they have had chance to absorb the guidance, during the autumn, to find out whether any additional support would help with implementation.

NHS England will start to collect monthly data from GP practices from the end of January 2015, and will start to publish monthly data after three months have been collected, to give the new system time to bed in and to deal with any issues that arise. Further details about how to submit data to NHS England will be provided in due course.

We are aware that many practices have already started to implement the FFT, ahead of the national timetable, and we are hopeful that the guidance will not require those practices to alter their initial processes too much. Practices should be aware that any data gathered through the FFT should not be submitted prior to the national requirement. Details of this can be found in the guidance.

An accompanying FAQs document with more detailed information, if needed, can be found here [www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/fft-imp-guid-fags-14.pdf](http://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/fft-imp-guid-fags-14.pdf), but if the information you need is not there, you can email us at: [england.friendsandfamilytest@nhs.net](mailto:england.friendsandfamilytest@nhs.net) or call us on: **0113 824 94 94**

Many parts of the NHS contributed to the review of FFT and to the pathfinders: GP practices, NHS Trusts, CCGs, regional and area teams, as did the voluntary and third sector, expert groups and organisations. We have valued all of the input into our development activities, and would like to thank you for your contributions.

Yours sincerely

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