

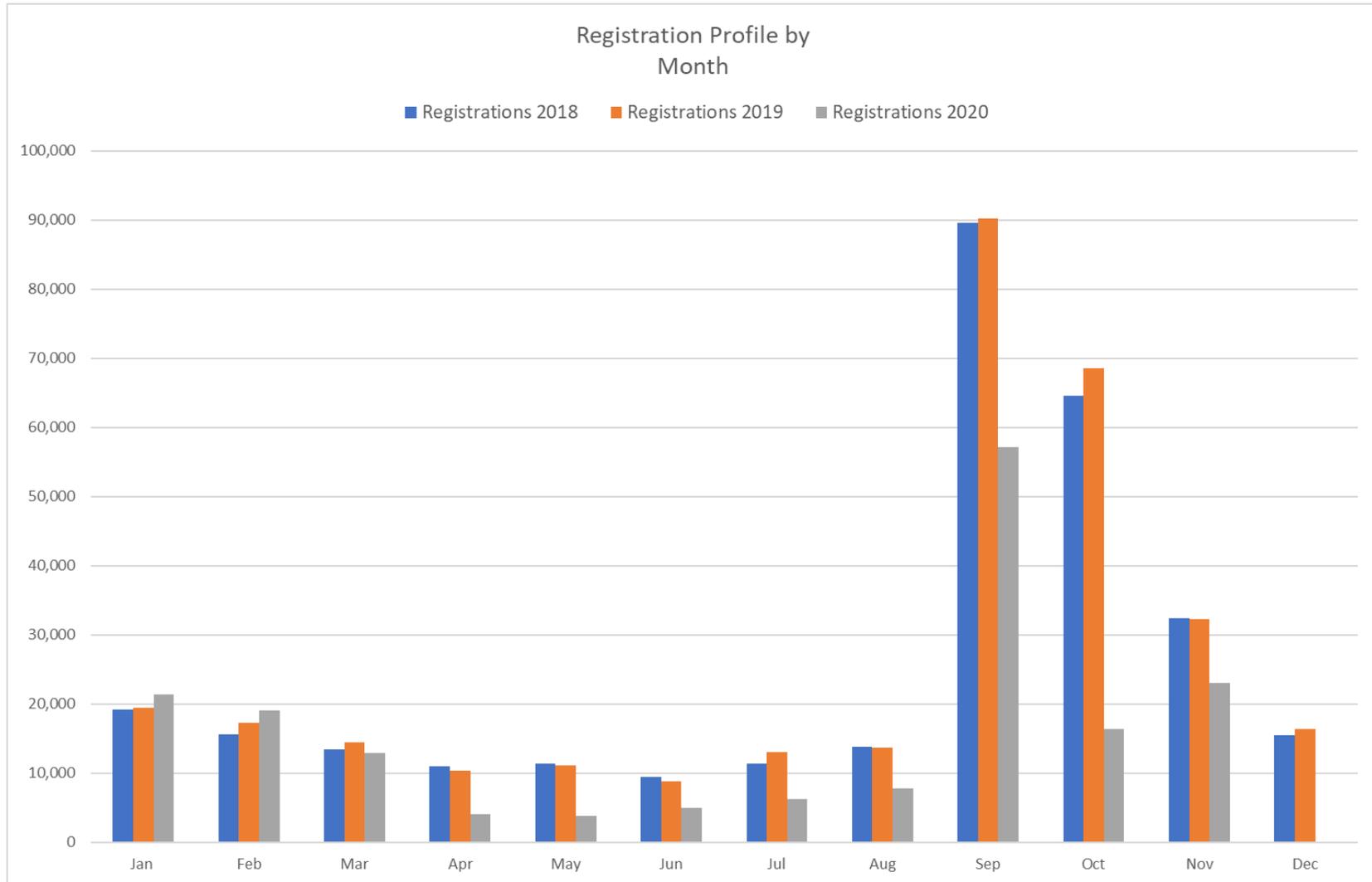
# GP practices serving significant student populations (university practices)

Impact of the pandemic on patient registrations

NHS England and NHS Improvement



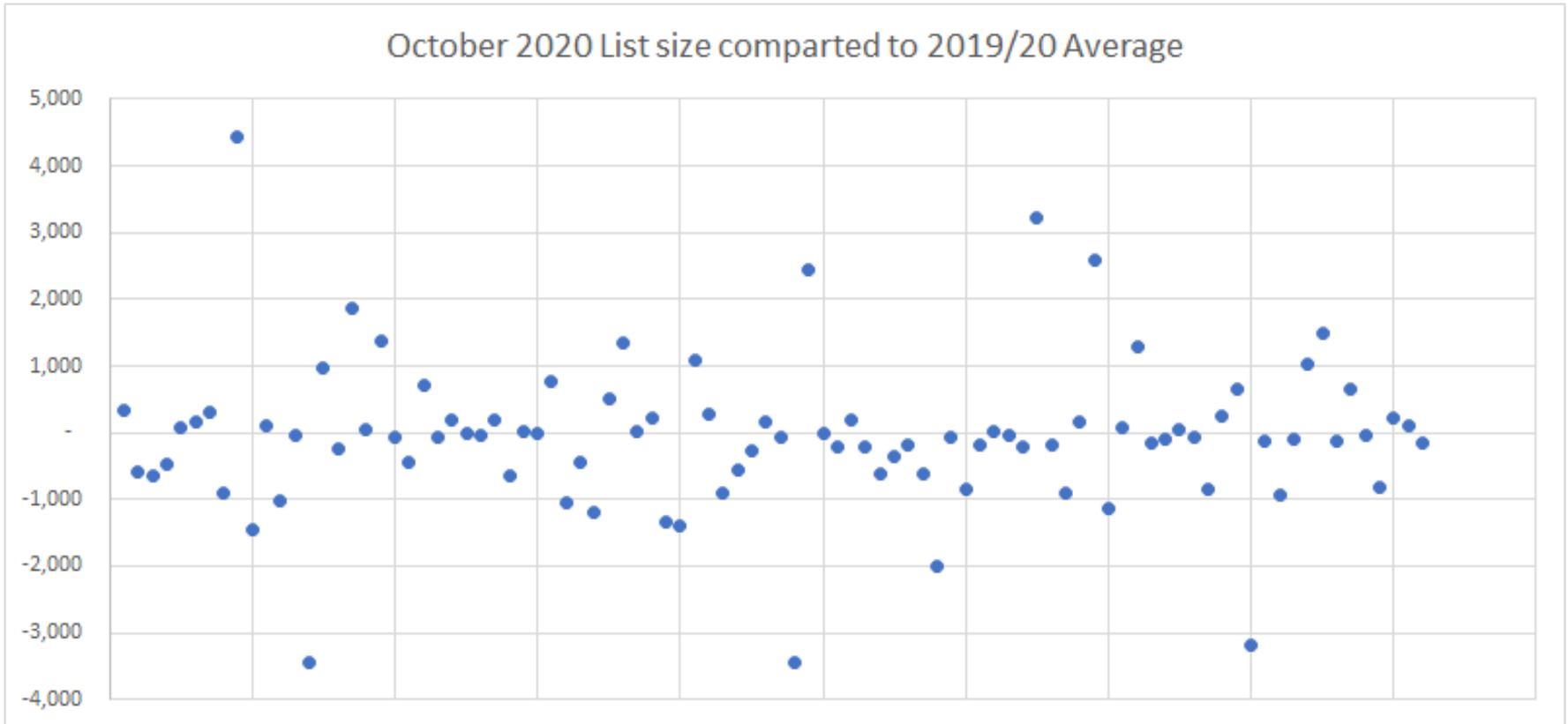
There has been a sustained reduction in new patient registrations at university practices since the start of the pandemic.



# The number of patients university practices have deducted from their patient lists has also reduced.



There is variation at practice level. The net impact could be significant patient list size changes for some.



But the reduction in new registrations is anticipated to be a short-term impact of the pandemic.

### Over 2 million students again in education this year.

- Proportion of residential students unchanged (we were concerned new students may have been choosing to study closer to home).
- International student numbers down, including accessing courses online.

### Impact of lockdown on registering at GP practices.

- New registrations and deductions have generally slowed across all general practices due to the pandemic
- New patient registrations at start of the academic year are clearly significant for university practices.
- Lack of freshers week to secure registrations, impact of lockdown on attending the surgery to register or receiving information on where/how.
- Period of general uncertainty for students and universities supporting many pandemic response priorities at this time.
- Possible perceptions need to physically attend the surgery to register (GMS1/application forms can be accepted by email).
- Universities UK and other partners committed to running social media campaign for students returning in January to support registration push.

- NHS England and Improvement recognises practices serving student populations may not always be best served by national funding arrangements due to their different characteristics and workload challenges.
- A significant, unplanned but short term change in patient list size due to the pandemic could not only amplify those concerns, it could have destabilising effects. Cash flow issues due to potential significant fall in income while costs remain could quickly escalate to impact on the delivery of services and practice viability.
- **NHSEI is therefore requesting local commissioners urgently review the funding support needs of their practices serving significant student populations** and follow the national principles of support (next slide).
- By supporting university practices in their area until patients lists recover, commissioners can ensure those practices are able to maintain services and support local health outcomes and risks to ongoing viability managed.
- Commissioners primary care allocations are based on 12-month rolling average of registered patients. Commissioners are therefore funded, and will have planned spend, for anticipated university practice patient list increases at the start of the academic year and therefore have the funding to support practices at those levels.
- NHSEI will continue to monitor the position of student registrations and will provide further guidance as needed. Further information can be requested from [england.primarycareops@nhs.net](mailto:england.primarycareops@nhs.net)

- Commissioner will proactively offer, or invite requests for, (Section 96) support from their local practices serving significant student populations ('university practices').
- Funding support will be used to protect university practices where there have been significant patient list reductions at the start of the 20/21 academic year (which for these purposes is 1 September 2020).
- Commissioners will need to identify what is a significant reduction given the relative impact on practice income and the individual circumstances of the practice. For example, just a 2% drop in annual global sum income (or equivalent contract price) could materially impact on both current service delivery and future sustainability. Any atypical funding arrangements may also need to be taken in to account.
- Support should be directly linked to and impact patient care, supporting maintenance or enhancement of services for current registered patients or wider population under an agreed plan (for example, this could include redeploying vaccinators to support Covid vaccination programmes if practices agree their capacity allows).
- Practices will work with local University partners to encourage and support student registrations, including registration by email (GMS1/application).
- Support is time-limited to 20/21 financial year and should be adjusted for recovery in the patient list over the coming months. Any longer term changes may require review of the practice as an atypical practice.
- NHSEI may seek to understand local commissioners decisions where support has been refused and escalated by the BMA General Practitioners Committee for review.

# Background:

## Support arrangements for atypical practices

- NHS England and Improvement policy guidance (2016) recognises practices serving student populations may not be best served by national funding arrangements due to their demographically different characteristics and particular workload challenges.
- <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/atypical-commissioning-guid.pdf>
- University practices may...
  - not able to earn as much funding due to low disease prevalence.
  - have higher demands associated with independent living for the first time:
    - Mental health support.
    - More frequent presentation with minor ailments.
    - Alcohol and drug use and sexual activity.
    - Some students may have long term and complex health needs.
    - Additional needs for foreign students.
  - High patient turnover and additional administrative effort at start and end of the academic year (new registrations, de-registrations).
- Commissioners were encouraged to undertake a review of atypical practices in their area to identify the need for possible support with aims of impact patient care and support practices long term viability.