

To: CCG Accountable Officers

Primary Care and System Transformation

Operations and Information

NHS England and NHS Improvement

Copy: STP Leads

Quarry House,

CCG Named GPs for Safeguarding Quarry Hill CCG Designated Nurses for Safeguarding Leeds

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Dear Colleagues,

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable adults: general practice reporting

I am writing, with the support of NHS England's Regional Directors of Nursing for Professional and System Development, to request action from local systems to ensure children and vulnerable adults are effectively safeguarded.

Issue

The sharing of information by general practice on request from local authorities is not resourced under national NHS contracts. Statutory and professional duties apply on individual GPs to share information in a timely fashion, but GP practices are nevertheless entitled¹ to seek payment for this local authority requested work. Such payment arrangements have always varied locally² but with increasing requests for reports due to welcome improvements in education there is a need to review how general practice is supported.

With the new placed based system arrangements set out in the NHS Long Term Plan there is an opportunity to embrace shared local responsibility for these arrangements. Further, new statutory guidance³ 'Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children' requires from September 2019 local system leaders to collaborate to lead, implement and deliver local child safeguarding processes in order to protect the paramouncy of the child. All three safeguarding partners (local authority, health and police) have equal and joint responsibility for local safeguarding arrangements.

¹ National GMS contract expressly enables GP practices to demand or request a fee in respect of any activity requested by a statutory body in exercise of its function

² Payments to GP practice variably made: sometimes through the NHS as core contract holder, sometimes through the local authority as the statutory body requesting the activity; and, sometimes no arrangement where activity was never anything more than exceptional

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

Action required

System Transformation Partnerships – effectively Clinical Commissioning Groups working together in this collaboration along with local GP provider representatives – should review their local arrangements in 2019/20 and where necessary implement changes. The outcome we want to achieve is to assure safeguarding activity in general practice is supported to contribute efficiently and effectively to local decision making on ensuring the safety of children and vulnerable adults.

Local examples of work that have been successfully implemented to improve reporting and the quality of reports include:

- Direct payments to a practice by the CCG under long standing “Collaborative arrangements”
- Introducing a Safeguarding Local Enhanced Service

For full details of these examples, please see Annex 1. For further background on professional, regulatory and contractual duties as apply to GPs and General Practices, see Annex 2.

At this juncture, 11 local systems (Annex 3) are also prototyping new ways of working together, including shared values, collaborative behaviours and resolving local conflicts. Current focus for CCG are:

1. Managing the change of Child Death Overview Panels, (as per Chapter 5 of the new statutory guidance) Reforms, to establish a larger, more integrated care footprint
2. Managing the process of data sharing (as per Chapter 4), to ensure GPs and other health providers actively contribute contemporaneously to case reviews
3. Facilitating a local MOU for sustainable partnership funding.

All annexes can be found here: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/primary-care/primary-care-commissioning/primary-care-resources/>

Monitoring

NHS England and NHS Improvement expects local system reviews for supporting (including resourcing) general practice reporting activity to be completed and implemented by the end of October 2019.

NHS England and NHS Improvement will work with CCGs named GP safeguarding leads to obtain assurances that local systems are supporting effective safeguarding arrangements in general practice from 1 November 2019.

Thank you for your action in support but should you need any further advice or guidance please contact england.primarycareops@nhs.net.

Best wishes



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