

GP Patient Survey: Your doctor, your experience, your say

This briefing note is an update on the previous version published in March 2007 and reflects developments as at 18th July 2007 (NB It may be subject to amendment following the planned ministerial announcement).

Improved Access Scheme

1. The Survey was developed alongside the 'Improved access Scheme' directed enhanced service (DES). The scheme aims to reward good GP access by using some of the Survey results to assess practice performance against the standards set out in the scheme.
2. The Survey was administered by Ipsos MORI in the form of a postal questionnaire to around 5 million members of the public, sent between January and March 2007. The Survey results were made available in late May, under strict embargo, and practices should have received their DES payments in the first quarter of the 2007/08 financial year i.e. by the end of June.
3. Payments are linked to the number of positive responses received from patients surveyed. The access questions have a graded scoring level attached with high percentage scores receiving higher payments. The PCT will assess the levels achieved guided by the Financial Reporting Standards (FRS) 12 rules around provision.
4. Paragraphs 7B 22-26 of the Statement of Financial Entitlements set out the mandatory translation tables that link survey results to specific levels of payment.
5. Practices that chose to opt out of the Survey or score less than the minimum levels will not receive payment. It is likely that some practices may give reasons for low scores or non-participation in the Survey. The SFE provides no power for PCTs to make any payments where the normal criteria are not met.
6. Practices with patient list sizes below 100 patients were excluded from the survey for confidentiality reasons, i.e. the patients would have been too easy to identify.

Choice/Choose and Book

7. The Choice element of the Choose and Book DES was conducted at practice level between 15th January – 30th March.

8. Practices will receive a reward payment if 60% or more of their patients who respond to the questionnaire agree that they had a discussion about choice with their GP. This is not linked to the number of registered patients, it is an absolute figure. Unfortunately with all surveys there is the risk that returns will be low as participation is voluntary. The detailed payment scheme is set out in paragraph 7D of the SFE.

9. The full value of the DES is 96 pence per registered patient and comprises two equal components: 48 pence for choice and 48 pence for Choose and Book.

10. Half is paid as an aspiration payment with the remaining half to be paid if at least 60% of patients agree they were offered choice.

11. In addition, if the number of returned questionnaires is at least 1.5% of the practices list size, a one-off reimbursement payment for handing out the questionnaire to relevant patients will be made. This is 2.8p per registered patient, registered as at 1st January 2007. The administration/reimbursement payment is separate from the overall DES Choice and Booking payment.

12. The Survey results were sent to PCTs on 24th May. SHAs were asked to provide email addresses for all their PCTs so that DH could email the raw results data directly to two named contacts.

13. Practices for whom no questionnaires were returned will not appear on the results spreadsheets.

General

14. The latest information we have is that the results are scheduled to be placed in the public domain on 24th July and they will attract interest from the media. Individual practice results will be available on the Department of Health website:

- www.dh.gov.uk/gppatientsurvey2007.

15. The results will be a resource to contribute to PCTs' plans to develop services or improve access and to their discussions with local practices and patients. The final planned date for publication of the results is yet to be announced.

16. Posters and leaflets informing patients of the survey outcome have gone to print and will be distributed to practices following publication and the ministerial statement.

17. Copies of the Access and Choice questionnaires are available at the following links:

- Choice Survey: www.pcc.nhs.uk/uploads/pes/July_07/Choice_survey.pdf
- Access Survey: www.pcc.nhs.uk/uploads/pes/July_07/Access_survey.pdf

Or by contacting the GP Patient Survey helpdesk:

- gppatientsurvey@pcc.nhs.uk

18. Discussions relating to the 07/08 GP Patient Survey are still ongoing. The DH has not yet formally taken Ministers' views on the content of next year's survey. However, communication on the details of the 07/08 survey is expected from the DH shortly.

19. The DH has stated that practices "can appeal against payments but not against the results of the GP Patient Survey". If they wish to make an appeal practices should refer to the following documentation for appeals:

- paragraphs 20.11 - 20.12 of the consolidated Statement of Financial Entitlement (SFE) as at 1st April 2006
- http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Policyandguidance/Organisationpolicy/Primarycare/Primarycarecontracting/GMS/DH_4133079
- and paragraphs 6.35-6.38 of 'Delivering Investment in General Practice - Implementing the new GMS contract' (December 2003)
- http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4070242

20. For more detailed guidance please refer to the following DH website page:

- http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationPolicyAndGuidance/DH_073623