



August 2024

Update on GP IT Provision

I am pleased to be able to share with you a brief update on the work so far regarding GP IT hardware and software. We have identified that there is a major gap in provision, impacting multiple practices in multiple parts of the North East and North Cumbria region. The 7 LMCs are working together to address this. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your own LMC who will collate and share information with me as needed.

We are aware of the following problems:

- Lack of clarity over entitlements
- Lack of clarity over how to request equipment
- Slow processing times
- Inequalities in what is being provided, even within the same locality
- Inappropriate requests for practices to purchase equipment

Contractual Basis

Every practice holds a contract with the ICB, mandating the ICB to provide essential IT services for your practice. The contract can be found [here](#). This contract for IT provision is in addition to your GMS contract or any other contracts with the ICB. It is not your responsibility to provide essential IT services, either for your practice or for your PCN; **the funding and the contractual responsibility sits with the ICB.**

The IT contract references an operating model in relation to the specific hardware and software that must be provided. The current version is available [here](#). The sort of items that are included within this operating model, to be provided at no cost to practices, are:

- Desktop PCs, including monitors, keyboards, a mouse, and printers (excluding consumables).
- Laptops/remote access, particularly to support your business continuity plan, with an expectation that at least 60% of your normal capacity could be provided remotely.
- A clinical system to allow the recording of notes, prescribing, referrals and document management.
- Scanners.
- Online and video consultation software.
- Practice to patient communication (eg SMS, email, AccuRx).
- Patient facing facilities via the NHS App.
- GP2GP transfer of records.
- General IT support.
- Appropriate cyber security.

Incorporating

Cleveland LMC : Co Durham & Darlington LMC : North Cumbria LMC : Gateshead & South Tyneside LMC
Newcastle & North Tyneside LMC : Northumberland LMC : Sunderland LMC

Chair: Dr Paul Evans - **Vice-Chair:** Dr Richard Glennie - **Administrator:** Emily McDarby

Work so far

We have met with the ICB and agreed that they have a contractual requirement to provide all services outlined in the operating model. We have shared where we think the gaps in provision are (mainly around additional equipment to support practice-based workforce expansion and in relation to PCN employed staff) and made it clear that the contractual responsibility for providing this equipment remains with the ICB. **It is the opinion of the LMCs that the ICB has made a choice to underfund GP IT provision in the hope that you will subsidise this from your own pockets.**

We are working with the ICB to develop a clear IT prospectus that clarifies all the current discrepancies. Progress so far on this document has been slow; I cannot provide any positive reassurances that this is going to be published in a format that is acceptable to the LMCs anytime soon.

The ICB have been developing a portal within TeamNet to provide an easy route for practices to request new equipment. This will also include clear information about what is provided, in line with the IT prospectus which is in development. This is positive and supportive; we welcome this development.

Current advice

1. Continue to request any essential IT equipment and services through your usual methods.
2. If you are asked to fund something yourself that you think should be provided:
 - a. Check with your LMC.
 - b. **DO NOT SPEND YOUR MONEY ON THIS.**
3. Keep a note of any delays in providing equipment or services, and any reasons for these delays. Share them with your LMC for information.
4. **Be persistent** – feedback from practices that have successfully acquired equipment is that constantly chasing and not being willing to take no for an answer has paid off.

Following our advice will help us to advocate for you and will increase the pressure on the ICB to quickly develop an acceptable long-term solution. I will keep you updated at the situation progresses.

Dr Rachel McMahon
CEO Cleveland LMC
GP IT lead for North East & North Cumbria Regional LMC

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