

Information for GP practices and Primary Care Networks considering joint working initiative with a non-NHS service provider (e.g. sponsored nurse or external Medicines Optimisation Company)

Practices are approached on a regular basis by non-NHS organisations offering clinical or medicines management services or support. Often the service is offered for 'free' as it is supported by an educational grant from a pharmaceutical company.

As independent contractors, GP practices or Primary Care Networks (PCNs) are free to commission services directly from these independent providers. However, there are a number of important points that practices should consider before entering into any initiative.

Responsibilities of the GP practice or PCN

- The GP practice/PCN should consult with the local ICB Medicines Optimisation Team before commissioning any independent initiatives/services to avoid duplication or conflict.
- GP practices/PCNs need to be assured that funding sources which may be attached to any initiatives offered are in line with Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI) Code of Practice <http://www.abpi.org.uk>. GP practices/PCNs should be aware of the ABPI Code of Practice for the Pharmaceutical Industry.
- Collaboration between the GP practice/PCN and a non-NHS service provider should be on the basis of a signed written agreement defining the exact nature of the support provided and the responsibilities of each party, dependent on the nature of the work commissioned.
- Any initiatives commissioned should align to all local and national prescribing guidance e.g. NICE and APC guidance. There should be no duplication or conflict with medicines optimisation and practice prescribing objectives. Any recommendations or initiatives to change existing prescribing to an alternative product should be in accordance with the relevant formulary below:

Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Practices (except Bassetlaw): [Nottinghamshire APC Joint Formulary](#)

Bassetlaw practices:

- Physical Health related indications: [Doncaster and Bassetlaw Traffic Light List and Formulary](#) and/or [South Yorkshire Integrated Medicines Optimisation Committee](#) (Except if referring patient to NUH or SFH where Notts APC will apply)
- Mental Health related indications: [Nottinghamshire APC Joint Formulary](#)
- Woundcare: [Nottinghamshire APC Woundcare Formulary for County](#)
- The written agreement must clearly specify the benefits to the NHS, the GP practice/PCN and its patients arising from any initiative. The benefits to the non-NHS service provider must also be explicit.
- All agreements must include a 'break' clause, enabling both parties to terminate the agreement at short notice. This should detail the repercussions for both parties should either party break the term of the signed agreement.

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NHS Nottingham and Nottinghamshire ICB Medicines Optimisation Team

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- The GP practice/PCN must ensure governance mechanisms are in place for any activities where the service provider accesses or uses patient data. These must be in line with relevant governance policies and with the Data Protection Act. Caution should be exercised if there are any requests for aggregated data.
- GP practices/PCNs should have mechanisms in place to record and declare any funding from external sources, e.g. GP practice register of interests.

Please be aware that the ultimate accountability and responsibility for any prescribing decisions will always lie with the GP Practice.