INFORMING PATIENT CHOICE
A guide to the GP Practice Comparison Tool and online patient feedback
### DH INFORMATION READER BOX

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>Estates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HR / Workforce</td>
<td>Commissioning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>IM &amp; T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning /</td>
<td>Finance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical</td>
<td>Social Care / Partnership Working</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document Purpose</th>
<th>For Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tr>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Circulation List

- [ ]

### Description

Information on the launch of GP practice patient feedback and the new GP practice comparator tool

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### For Recipient's Use
Contents

Background 3
GP Practice Comparison Tool 4
GP Practice Patient Feedback 8
Further Information 11
1. Background

NHS Choices (www.nhs.uk) is the NHS’ digital health information service and receives over 7 million visits a month, making it the UK’s leading health information website.

The aim of NHS Choices is to support individuals to make informed lifestyle decisions that lead to better health outcomes and provide them with information to help them decide when and where to receive their healthcare. Its 80,000 pages include directories of local services, information on over 800 treatments and conditions, performance data on healthcare providers, and magazine style information about health and well-being.

This briefing paper explains two new important features: first, a GP practice comparison tool that allows users to view on a single page the different services and facilities at different practices; and second, the opportunity for patients to post online feedback about their experience of visiting a GP practice.
2. GP Practice Comparison Tool

What is the GP Practice Comparison Tool?
The Comparison Tool allows members of the public to view key information about an individual GP practice and compare it to that of the four nearest practices, or any others selected by the user.

There is a huge demand for accurate information about GP services; each month 400,000 users access the GP practice pages on NHS Choices. This is perhaps not surprising; it is estimated that 2 million people move house each year and the MORI patients' survey indicates that many more would like to change from their existing practice.

The Secretary of State for Health recently announced the government's intention to abolish the long established practice boundaries that have traditionally limited patients' choice of GP practice. It is likely therefore, that in future, patients will have greater opportunity to choose between different practices for their care.

The GP Comparison Tool will help patients to make an informed decision about which practice best suits their needs and those of their family, be it based on the availability of extended hours, or the range of clinics and services offered.

Comparative Information and Sources
The following comparative details are published on NHS Choices:

- The number of male and female GPs at each practice (Practice data)
- Extended opening and availability of appointments (MORI Patient Survey)
- Clinics and other services offered at this practice (Practice data)
- How patients rated this practice overall (GP practice patient feedback and MORI Patient Survey)
- What patients say about staff at this practice (MORI Patient Survey)
- What patients say about the practice itself (MORI Patient Survey)
- Location, transport and parking (Practice data)
- Information on registering a patient (Practice data)

The GP practice data is taken directly from GP profile pages on www.nhs.uk. This data is edited either by the practice itself, or the local primary care trust.
Viewing the Information

Users can access the GP comparator information in three views:

When a user enters his/her postcode in the Find and Choose services box, they are given a list of the closest practices. The following information is displayed for each practice:

- The number of female and male GPs
- Details of languages spoken
- The number of NHS Choices visitors who would recommend the practice
- Details of extended opening hours
- Whether the practice is accepting new patients

View One: Simple List
Having searched for their GP practices, the user can click on a link entitled “Detailed Comparison”. This link takes the user to the Comparison Tool page that displays the full comparative information for each practice side by side.

View Two: comparative information displayed
Updating the Information on NHS Choices

The data displayed on NHS Choices is updated regularly. The annual Mori patients’ survey data is updated on an annual basis, while the practice information can be updated in real time by the practice or PCT. The Quality and Outcomes Framework data, which is currently held in the tab “How we perform”, will continue to be regularly updated and will remain in its current place on the profile pages.

View Three: Location Map

This same information is available from a view of the practice’s location detailed on a map.
3. GP Practice Patient Feedback

What is GP Practice Patient Feedback?
Since launch, NHS Choices has included a patient feedback facility, which allows patients, carers and their families to comment on and rate their hospital experience. Members of the public now have the opportunity to post online feedback on NHS Choices about their experience of visiting their GP practice and read the views of others online.

All comments appear on the respective GP practice’s profile pages, which are accessible via the Find and Choose section on the website. Elements of Patient Feedback also feed into the Comparison Tool.

Leaving a Comment
To leave a comment, users need firstly to access their GP profile page via the Find and Choose services section. They then click on ‘Add Your Views’ from the left hand menu or right hand comments box.
First, the user is asked to state whether they would recommend the practice. They are then asked to rate the practice in the following areas:

- Reaching the practice by telephone
- Making a convenient appointment
- Being treated with dignity and respect
- Being involved in decisions about care and treatment
- Provision of up to date information
Users are then invited to submit comments in free text boxes to describe:

- What they liked about their experience
- What could be improved
- Anything else

**Moderation and Safeguarding**

A number of safeguards are in place to protect practices and staff from unwarranted threats to their reputation.

All comments are pre-moderated by trained staff from the same company that moderate websites run by the BBC, the NSPCC and the Home Office. Comments that are racist, libellous, generally offensive, defamatory or that name either clinical or non-clinical staff are not published.

The patient feedback channel is not a channel for complaints; the authors of comments that raise issues of medical negligence are referred to the official complaint channels.
Although anonymous comments are allowed, users have to provide a validated e-mail address before a comment is allowed to appear on the site.

Should a practice feel that a comment is unsuitable, it can use an alert button to have it removed pending further investigation to ascertain if the moderation rules have been breached. If the rules have been broken, the comment will be removed permanently. If not, it will re-appear. Members of the public may also flag comments as “offensive or unsuitable” via the website.

Users are prohibited from using NHS Choices to campaign or make politically motivated comments; vexatious comments are not permissible - moderators will be able to identify multiple comments from the same ISP address.

Replaying to Patient Feedback
Once a comment has been published, an alert is sent to the respective practice making them aware that a comment has been published. The practice may then post a reply that will appear under the original comment. All patient comments are published on the profile page of the respective practice.

4. Further Information

For more information please contact the Choices Team at: thechoicesteam@nhschoices.nhs.uk or call 0845 650 4865