

To: • Richard Stephens and Dave Chuter
- useMYdata

cc. • Amanda Pritchard, NHS England
• Vin Diwakar, NHS England
• Dr Nicola Byrne, National Data
Guardian

NHS England
Wellington House
133-155 Waterloo Road
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SE1 8UG

3 May 2024

Dear Richard and Dave,

Thank you for your recent letter, date 18 April 2024; Amanda Pritchard has asked me to reply on behalf of NHS England.

I'd like to take this early opportunity to apologise that you did not receive a response to the initial letter you sent in January 2024, and offer reassurance that colleagues have reviewed how we record and monitor replies to correspondence to ensure timely responses are provided in future.

I'm grateful for your positive feedback regarding the publication of the updated contracts for the NHS FDP-AS and NHS PET contracts, and that you believe they will offer reassurance to patients and the public; their publication delivers on our promise to work in the open and earn the trust and confidence of the public.

Public and stakeholder engagement

Seeking and understanding the views of the public and patients, and of stakeholders, is an integral part of the NHS Federated Data Programme.

Public and patient engagement activity took place prior to and during the procurement exercise, this included public deliberation activity and coproduction of public communications. We also worked closely with stakeholder groups who represent and champion the voice of the public and patients, as well as special interest groups. This helped to provide essential support to ensure communications were transparent, meaningful and accessible.



Post contract award, in November 2023, we formalised a sustainable programme of public and stakeholder engagement. A number of formal advisory groups now form part of the programme governance. These include:

- [FDP check and Challenge Group](#). This group provides strategic advice to the programme on communications, engagement, and transparency. It considers patient, public, professional, and ethical context, and complements the [Health Data Patient and Public Engagement and Communications Advisory Panel \(PPECAP\)](#).
- [Health Data Public and Patient Engagement and Communications Advisory Panel](#). A panel consisting of public and patient members and representatives from national organisations who represent the views of the public. It supports the FDP programme to develop meaningful and accessible public communications.
- Information Governance Specialist group. A group of external stakeholders with subject matter expertise in data and information governance.

Additionally, the [FDP engagement portal](#), which is hosted on NHS England's website, is a live tool to support the public to seek answers to their questions, provide feedback on the programme and to register their interest in future engagement activity.

We also regularly provide updates on the delivery of the programme, and future plans, with the [Data Strategy Advisory Panel](#), of which I understand you are a member.

The programme is actively planning a programme of FDP specific public engagement. Plans for this are being developed based on the initial feedback received via the engagement portal, input from the regions and our programme advisory groups. The session will include members of the public who registered their interest in taking part in engagement activity. This will be an opportunity to educate, inform, listen, and understand. The findings from this will help inform future strategy.

The programme have also been working closely with the DHSC teams to feed in requirements and help shape [the large-scale public engagement activity](#), a £2m investment as part of the national [Data Saves Lives Strategy](#). This will explore some of the themes that have emerged during previous engagement, such as opt-out policy and future use of data, with members of the public across the country.

On the topic of opt-outs, I note your comment regarding transparency to minimise the risk that people opt-out of sharing their data due to redactions in the available information. I'd like to offer reassurance that after an initial small spike in the opt-out rates, immediately following contract award (owing to media headlines and concerted efforts to spread mis-information), opt-out rates very quickly fell and returned to normal daily levels – as can be seen on the [National Data Opt-Out Dashboard](#).

To reiterate, NHS England is committed to communicating and engaging with key stakeholders, the public, and patients in a meaningful way throughout the life of the programme.

Suppliers

You asked, in your letter, about the contracts we hold with a number of other organisations in relation to the NHS Federated Data Platform. Our procurement strategy is built around four elements, the delivery of which to date can be summarised as follows:

November 2023 – [NHS FDP-AS contract awarded](#) to A consortium led by Palantir, which include Accenture, PWC, Carnall Farrar and NECS.

November 2023 – NHS Privacy Enhancing Technology contract awarded to IQVIA.

April 2024 – [KPMG awarded a contract](#) to provide technical support and implementation services to support NHS England to deliver transformational changes across NHSE, Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) and NHS Trusts in England, including building capability for the Federated Data Platform, and enhancing wider Data Services functions, platforms and integrating services. This will be the first of a number of support contracts awarded during the life of the programme.

The fourth element of our procurement strategy relates to our commitment to ensuring the development of products on the NHS FDP is supported by a multi-vendor landscape. We are currently engaging the market to inform the delivery plans for this aspect. The future procurement of product development services will all be undertaken in line with Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

NHS Privacy Enhancing Technology (NHS PET)

Earlier this month we published updated information on our [website](#), expanding the detail available previously; this included a high-level overview of how NHS PET will support protecting the privacy and confidentiality of patient information, and the privacy notice for NHS FDP-AS. Our check and challenge and patient and public advisory groups are currently supporting the development of a plain English explainer about the relationship between NHS PET and NHS FDP. This information will be published, once finalised, and will form the basis of a coproduction workshop to create an easy read guide to NHS PET, to compliment the [NHS FDP easy read guide](#).

The phases for the implementation of the NHS PET technology are summarised on our [website](#), with additional information provide in the [NHS FDP-AS privacy notice](#). Operational

project plans are used by the programme team to support the successful delivery of the programme, however these are internal working documents and will not be published.

Thank you again for getting in touch with me, and for raising issues on behalf of your members and patients more broadly. I hope you will continue to play an active role in the Data Strategy Advisory Panel. If you would like to receive regular, bi-monthly updates about the programme, please [register to receive the NHS Federated Data Platform Programme bulletin](#).

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ming Tang', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ming Tang

Chief Data and Analytics Officer and
Senior Responsible Officer for the NHS
Federated Data Platform programme

NHS England