

News from the GPC Chairman Katie Bramall-Stainer

Accelerated Access to Records Programme Update

GPC England has a new webpage with [guidance for practices](#) on how they can provide prospective access to their patients' GP-held medical records safely, where all our resources are available.

Legally, GPs must act in the interests of their patients. As data controllers, they must see to mitigate data protection risks. Practices are required to carry out a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) exploring the risks and any possible mitigations as part of the implementation of this programme.

GPC England is supportive of patients having access to their records so long as this is safe for patients and safe for GPs. We continue to put forward the case for making access to records on an opt-in basis.

If you have any examples of where your practice or patients are being put at risk as a result of the programme, please email us on info.gpc@bma.org.uk. Access our [template DPIA](#) and other resources on our updated [guidance page](#).

Read also: [GPs urged to adopt opt-in approach to online patient record access \(bma.org.uk\)](#)

Physician Associates

At the GPC England meeting we also passed an emergency motion tabled, expressing concern over the increasing trend of Physician Associates (PAs) where erroneously used to replace GPs, and to protect patients by ensuring appropriate processes and regulations are in place. This follows a [statement by UEMO](#) (European Union of GPs/Family Doctors) supporting GPs in the UK over our concerns.

The BMA recognises the vital role that multidisciplinary teams play in General Practice, but patients need to know and understand what each healthcare professional can and cannot do, and where their expertise is relevant. There have been some recent examples suggesting a potential blurring of lines between doctors and non-medically qualified professionals, leading patients to think they've seen a GP - when they haven't.

PAs are not doctors, they are not regulated, and they cannot prescribe. The distinction between GPs as expert medical generalists, and PAs, must be protected. PAs cannot be used as a substitute for GPs, or in place of a GP when supervising GPs in training.

The GP workforce crisis is a result of the failure of Government to plan for the recruitment and retention of GPs. Only by valuing and investing in the recruitment and retention of GPs will the experience and care of patients improve. While PAs may help reduce general practice workload in some well-defined cases and pathways, it should not come at the expense of patient safety.

Read my full statement [here](#)

GPC England committee pages and guidance for practices

Read more about the work of the [Committee](#) and practical guidance for [GP practices](#)

See the latest update on X (formerly Twitter) [@BMA_GP](#) and read about [BMA in the media](#)

Contact us: info.GPC@bma.org.uk

Read the latest GPCE newsletter: [GPC England meeting update | new GP workforce data | accelerated access to records programme guidance](#)

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