

**Sent via email**  
To all GP Practices

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5 March 2021

Dear Colleagues

### **VMS in Primary Care**

GP VMS was deployed to practices on 17 February 2021 and is in use by 173 of our 321 practices with 22433 vaccinations recorded by 1 March 2021.

We understand some of you have concerns about using this new system to record vaccinations and we are keen to continue to support you to get up and running. It is our expectation that all practices will use VMS for vaccination recording. There is a public health imperative around this as a Chief Medical Officer priority for the return of society to normal. This is a UK wide initiative and will be extremely important in the coming months for monitoring total vaccinations and critically the potential for vaccine failure. While we understand that the use of VMS is not as straightforward as would be the case with your current GP clinical system and eg historical flu vaccination, recording Covid is not the same as flu in terms of mortality and public health impact and VMS reflects that. As vaccine supply increases it is imperative that practices use VMS to record vaccines given.

### **Vaccination records - returns from Practices**

Practices have begun sharing the vaccination data recorded on local GP CIS to date. Over 150 practices had completed this exchange by mid-morning on 3 March. The inclusion of these 250 00+ primary care vaccination records will give VMS a complete set of data. This means VMS users can track individual patient status – vaccinated or booked in for vaccination elsewhere.

We understand some practices had some issues with logins and have not yet sent their searches to their Practice Support Manager. In these instances we are happy to extend this date to Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> March. If you are having any issues with these extracts or running the searches provided, please contact [GPIP.Support@hscni.net](mailto:GPIP.Support@hscni.net)

### **Data feed from VMS to GP CIS**

The team continue to work closely with GP systems suppliers to exchange VMS data back to clinical systems and this is on track to be complete by mid-March for Merlok and Vision; we are working closely with EMIS who may be ready by later in March.

We understand completely that practices would have wished to have this write back in place before using VMS but this hasn't been possible. Be reassured that we are pushing UK suppliers to complete this work ASAP . We have an interim solution to generate within VMS an exportable Excel report of all patient data recorded in VMS

### **Record in VMS – do not record in both systems**

We must be clear with practices. We understand that change from recording in the GPCIS which is familiar and change is not comfortable but VMS needs to be the sole entry. When we have write back from VMS to GP this will make a GPCIS entry. If practices have recorded an instance of vaccination into their GPCIS and also VMS, when write back becomes available then that practice will be looking at 2 entries of the same information: their original CIS entry and the write back version which will add confusion to GP CIS record.

Practices have already been making use of the status report available within the App. A short user guide will be made available on the VMS section of the Primary Care Intranet which we hope will help practices to utilise this reporting functionality.

<http://primarycare.hscni.net/general-medical-services-gms/coronavirus/vaccination-management-system-vms/>

### **Data Agreement**


**Be reassured that DH colleagues and the ICO have been involved. While we appreciate that it would be better to have DAA/DPIA in place before sharing data both external parties recognise the public health necessity for retrospective DAAs for this work. This is not a bar to practices using VMS**

A Data Access Agreement is being finalised and will be sent to each practice, tailored for your particular clinical system. The DPIA is completed and will be issued next week. Practice governance leads are asked to sign and return these agreements to their Practice Support Manager as soon as possible.

### **Survey Monkey**

We intend to discontinue the use of the survey monkey tool for vaccination reporting. We now have functionality for centralised reporting and dashboards. However, we cannot switch off survey monkey until all practices are using VMS and have submitted their once-off final search.

Yours sincerely



Dr Margaret O'Brien  
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Dr Alan Stout  
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