

**From the Director of Primary and  
Community Care Christine Jendoubi (Mrs)**



Department of  
**Health, Social Services  
and Public Safety**

[www.dhsspsni.gov.uk](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk)

AN ROINN

**Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta  
agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí**

MÄNNYSTRIE O

**Poustie, Resydènter Heisin  
an Fowk Siccar**

Room C5.4  
Castle Buildings  
Upper Newtownards Road  
BELFAST  
BT4 3SQ

Our ref:  
Your ref:  
Tel: 02890-522388  
Fax: 02890-520574  
E-mail: [christine.jendoubi@dhsspsni.gov.uk](mailto:christine.jendoubi@dhsspsni.gov.uk)

Date: 12 November 2008:

**To: Chief Executives and Primary Care Directors of  
Health and Social Services Boards**

**Dr Brian Dunn, Chair, NIGPC**

Dear Colleague

### **GP Patient Survey – Your Doctor, Your Experience, Your Say**

This letter confirms arrangements for delivery of the 2008 GP Patient Survey. The survey measures GP practices' performance against the standards set out in the Quality Outcomes Framework (QOF) Patient Experience Domain.

GP practices who are signed up to QOF and who intend to take part in the survey need to take no immediate action (other than read the attachments which describe this year's survey arrangements). GP practices who have not already signed up to QOF are encouraged to take the opportunity to do so immediately by contacting their Board. Practices are reminded that by signing up to QOF they agree to facilitate the delivery of the survey.

**GP practices that do not wish to take part in the survey and therefore intend to opt out of QOF need to alert the Department by emailing the GPPS mailbox at [GPPatientSurvey@dhsspsni.gov.uk](mailto:GPPatientSurvey@dhsspsni.gov.uk) by November 28th.**

Ipsos MORI, the survey provider, will then be instructed not to conduct a survey for these practices. Please entitle your e-mail '**Practice opt out 2008/09.**' Include in your response practice code and a contact name. GP Practices that have no intention of taking part in QOF should also opt out as the survey will be conducted for any and all practices that do not opt out.

By opting out of the survey, GP practices are advised they will not be entitled to payments under QOF that are dependent on survey results. Any aspiration

payments made may also be clawed back. GP practices are therefore advised to discuss the implications of any decision to opt out of the survey with their Board prior to confirming their decision with the Department. The Department will be unable to reinstate any GP practice into the survey following the receipt of an opt-out notice.

Thank you for your help and co-operation.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christine Jendoubi". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line at the end.

Christine Jendoubi

## **GP Patient Survey: Summary of arrangements for 2008/2009**

### **The Survey**

1. The GP Patient Survey is being conducted for the first time in Northern Ireland.
  - It is being delivered by Ipsos MORI, a specialist survey organisation.
  - Almost 241,000 questionnaires will be sent to selected patients from 5 January 2009 with a deadline of 2 April 2009 for responses.
  - The survey will address the following themes: -
    - (a) The GP surgery or Health Centre
    - (b) Getting through on the telephone
    - (c) Seeing the Doctor
    - (d) Waiting time in surgery
    - (e) Seeing a Doctor of choice
    - (f) Opening Hours
    - (g) Seeing the Doctor in the surgery
    - (h) Seeing a Nurse in the surgery
    - (i) Overall satisfaction
    - (j) GP Out of Hours Care
    - (k) Information about the patient
    - (l) Information on patients with long term conditions
  - Boards will be notified of the survey results in May so that achievement payments can be made to qualifying practices in the first quarter of the 2009/10 financial year.
  - Detailed survey results are planned for publication in June 2009 and will again support Boards to target action locally to improve access to services.

### **Extracting Patients' Details**

2. Survey recipients' details, the "sample data" (Patients' Health and Social Care Number, Full Name and Address, date of birth and sex) will be obtained for all practices participating in the GP Patient Survey using registered patient lists held and managed by Boards under the CSA System registration system. A random selection of eligible patients will be drawn for each practice.

## Data Protection Act

3. To ensure that survey data is processed lawfully, under the Data Protection Act 1998 the CSA has a data sharing agreement in place with Ipsos MORI.
4. The sample databases produced through the CSA System extraction process described previously will be transferred to Ipsos MORI, the appointed data processor for the DHSSPS. Ipsos MORI will process the data by using the patient name and address to send questionnaires to selected patients and will process the subsequent responses.
5. The CSA is the Data Controller for the patient details used for the survey. Whilst the CSA will not hold or process any patient identifiable information resulting from this data processing, the CSA controls the manner and purpose of the processing being carried out on its behalf by Ipsos MORI.
6. The data sharing statement will be available on the Department's website shortly.

## Patient Opt Outs

7. Completing the survey is voluntary. If patients do not wish to take part they do not need to return their questionnaire. However, if practices are aware of patients who do not wish to receive a questionnaire through the post, practices should email their names and Health and Care Numbers to the DHSSPS mailbox at [GPPatientSurvey@dhsspsni.gov.uk](mailto:GPPatientSurvey@dhsspsni.gov.uk) by November 28th. Please entitle the email '**Patient opt out 2008/09**'.

## Further information

8. The 'Primary and Community Care' part of the DHSSPS website contains further information (guidance, updates, frequently asked questions etc) which will be placed on these pages in preparation for the delivery of the 2008/09 Survey. The next planned guidance on the survey is to be issued later in November and will provide further details of the arrangements described here.
  9. Individual practices should contact their Board in the first instance, as any individual practice queries to the DHSSPS mailbox may not be answered.
  10. Posters for practice waiting areas will be mailed to practices by Ipsos MORI in November, along with an information leaflet for practice staff.
- Link to Primary Care Website:  
<http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/hss/pc-primary-care.htm>

- Link to Department of Health website:  
[www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/OrganisationPolicy/PrimaryCare/PrimaryCareContracting/fs/en](http://www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/OrganisationPolicy/PrimaryCare/PrimaryCareContracting/fs/en)
- GP practices and public enquiries can be e-mailed to the DHSSPS Mailbox: [GPPatientSurvey@dhsspsni.go.uk](mailto:GPPatientSurvey@dhsspsni.go.uk) However, they are reminded that they should contact their Board in the first instance.
- The survey website for patients is provided by Ipsos MORI:  
<http://www.gp-patient.hscni.net>

## Questions & Answers

### **Q. Does the Survey breach patient confidentiality?**

A. No, not at all. The CSA registration system selects patients at random from practices' registered lists without reference to appointment or referral information so there are no such concerns over confidentiality. The arrangements put in place to conduct the survey are sufficient to address the needs of the Data Protection Act 1998. Data processing agreements are in place between all relevant parties.

### **Q What is the Central Services Agency (CSA) system?**

Central Services Agency (CSA) System is a software suite used by all local health organizations in Northern Ireland and maintained by CSA.

### **Q. Will display materials be available for practice waiting areas?**

A. Posters and leaflets (for practice staff) will be mailed to practices from Ipsos MORI in November. Non-participating practices that receive this material should disregard it.

### **Q. When will further guidance be available?**

A. Further guidance is scheduled for November and will be available on the Primary Care section of the Department's website.

<http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/hss/pc-primary-care.htm>

### **Q. Is this survey available in Irish and Ulster Scots?**

A. Yes. To obtain a copy of the survey in either Irish or Ulster Scots please phone 0808 238 5385.