



eHealth Leads

Copy to:

Integration Authority Chief Officers
Primary Care Leads
Clinical Change Leadership Group
Co-Chairs of the Joint GP IT Committee

30 October 2020

Dear Colleagues,

PRIMARY CARE DIGITAL IMPROVEMENT 2020-21

I am writing to confirm the 2020-21 Primary Care Digital Improvement board allocation for territorial health boards, which should be used to improve how digital technology supports primary care staff to deliver services.

I am pleased to be able to tell you that the Scottish Government is providing an additional £2.0 million to health boards in 2020-21 to support improvements to primary care digital technology.

The impact of COVID-19 is fully acknowledged both on the capacity of health boards to progress existing or start new work programmes, the ongoing delivery of healthcare services whilst ensuring the focus on the COVID-19 response is effectively maintained.

In laying out Scottish Government expectations, it is our intention to strike a balance between providing assistance to health boards whilst not losing clear sight of accountability for public money and use of funding for the purposes stated.

This funding is being allocated to territorial Health Boards to support GP IT infrastructure development, which is a vital element in ensuring the use of digital technology to complement the planning, organisation and delivery of primary healthcare services within a secure, safe and resilient IT framework.

It is acknowledged that health boards will need to decide where and how to focus their efforts supported by this funding to progress digital technology in primary care during 2020-21. Health boards are encouraged to consult with GP subcommittees when developing their plans for use of this resource.

Cyber Essentials Plus

The Government-endorsed IT Security certification programme provides the minimum standard for healthcare providers and partners to demonstrate that they have implemented the most basic cyber security controls and to help organisations protect themselves against common cyber attacks.

With all Primary Care services to become compliant with Cyber Essentials Plus (which includes a hands-on technical verification) by mid-2021, this will ensure that workstations, operating systems and GP clinical systems / allied software are robust and interoperable to keep patient data safe and enable the sharing of it securely and lawfully, always being clear about why it is used.

In your reporting we ask that you tell us what progress your health board has made for primary care compliance against the critical controls as assessed by the external certification body you are working with.



GP IT Re-provisioning

Given the current delays in GP IT replacement systems, it is recognised that health boards are operating within an IT landscape that has to focus on maintaining existing systems and infrastructure.

Where health boards utilise this funding to support these efforts we would like you to reference how this funding contributes towards the successful management of this landscape.

Digital maturity of Primary Care Services

Given the variance in the populations served and the competing demands on healthcare provision, digital maturity inevitably varies across health boards. Yet levels of digital maturity are a critical factor in our ability to fully capture and understand the context in which digital technology can best complement the organisation and delivery of primary healthcare.

Where health boards utilise this funding in this context we ask you to reference the progress made on expanding digital maturity and identifying key strengths and gaps in provision of digital services. This includes the extent of patient access to, and services delivered through, digital technology to support delivery of healthcare and the extent underlying infrastructure is in place to support these capabilities.

Patient choice and empowerment

We live in an increasingly digital world and we have seen the power of this inter-connectivity to transform interactions between people and primary care services during the outbreak of COVID-19.

However for maximum benefit there is a need to finesse the way patients can and do engage with healthcare services. Where digital technology works well, its use can enable a shift from a demand-based to a needs-based primary care service to benefit all patients with decision made based on clinical need facilitated through equality of access to primary care.

Where this funding provides a contribution to identified work programmes we would like you to reference measurable progress through patient primary care services feedback on the widening of patient choice and empowerment, alongside the professional, to take control of their health and care that helps them to better manage their conditions. In addition progress and measures to ensure services are adapted where necessary to accommodate patients without digital access or capacity.

We ask health boards provide a report to the Primary Care Reform Digital Programme Board by 15 April 2021 setting out how your board has used these funds in each or any of the funding categories above. Please send responses direct to us at the e-mail address below.

The funds should be used entirely for the purposes listed above and should not be top sliced or used for any other purpose. Funds will be allocated on a *non-recurring* basis in a single tranche. This funding is provided for the current financial year. If an underspend arises or is expected to arise in this financial year, this must be notified to us as soon as possible so we can arrange for this to be returned to Scottish Government.

Further details for the allocations to territorial Health Boards are set out at Annex A.

Any enquiries about the contents of this letter should be emailed to: laura.cregan@gov.scot

I look forward to continuing to work with you in this critical year for Primary Care in Scotland.

Yours faithfully,



Aidan Grisewood
Director, Primary Care

Annex A

Table A1 below sets out the amounts which are being allocated to each Health Board.

TABLE A1

health board	allocation / £
NHS Ayrshire and Arran	147,583
NHS Borders	42,150
NHS Dumfries and Galloway	59,382
NHS Fife	136,365
NHS Forth Valley	108,603
NHS Grampian	197,421
NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde	445,603
NHS Highland	128,946
NHS Lanarkshire	246,280
NHS Lothian	299,255
NHS Orkney	9,692
NHS Shetland	9,735
NHS Tayside	155,987
NHS Western Isles	12,998
Total	2,000,000