

# HSJ Live 18.02.2014 care.data programme postponed by six months

18 FEBRUARY, 2014

NHS England has delayed plans to begin collecting patient data from GP surgeries to later this year following mounting criticism, plus the rest of today's news and comment.



**6.10pm** In response to the delay of the care.data programme, a Department of Health spokesperson said: "This is an NHS England decision which we support. This is a vital programme which will bring real benefits to patients.

"But concerns over how this has been explained to patients have been raised which must be addressed."

**5.32pm** The British Medical Association has welcomed the decision by NHS England to postpone its care.data programme by six months.

The BMA had called for the programme to be halted until patients were better informed about it.

Chaand Nagpaul, chair of the BMA's GP committee, said: "We are pleased that NHS England has listened to the concerns of the BMA and that the decision has been taken to delay the roll out of extractions to care.data until the autumn.

"With just weeks to go until the uploading of patient data was scheduled to begin, it was clear from GPs on the ground that patients remain inadequately informed about the implications of care.data.

"While the BMA is supportive of using anonymised data to plan and improve the quality of NHS care for patients, this must only be done with the support and consent of the public,

and it is only right that they fully understand what the proposals mean to them and what their rights are if they do not wish their data to be extracted.

“This is all in the best interests of patients and GPs, and the BMA looks forward to working with NHS England to ensure that the public is properly informed and that safeguards are in place before uploads begin.”

**5.27pm** NHS England has delayed plans to begin collecting patient data from GP surgeries by six months, following mounting criticisms of its care.data programme.

The British Medical Association previously called for the programme to be halted until patients were better informed about it.

The Royal College of GPs also wrote to NHS England requesting a six-point plan of action to reassure patients before it went live with the scheme.

Tim Kelsey, NHS England’s director for patients and information, said: “NHS England exists for patients and we are determined to listen to what they tell us.

“We have been told very clearly that patients need more time to learn about the benefits of sharing information and their right to object to their information being shared. That is why we are extending the public awareness campaign by an extra six months.”

Anna Bradley, chair of Healthwatch England, said: “This is a really positive move by NHS England. They have shown a willingness to listen to what the public have to say about the way their health and care services are run.

“Crucially they have agreed to Healthwatch England’s request to see the roll-out of care.data delayed to allow more time to ensure the public are fully informed.”

Nigel Mathers, honorary secretary of the RCGP, said: “We would like to thank NHS England for listening to the concerns of RCGP members and for acting so quickly to announce this pause.

“The extra time will provide it with the chance to redouble its efforts to inform every patient of their right to opt out, every GP of how the programme will work, and the nation

of what robust safeguards will be in place to protect the security of people's data."

**5.13pm** In *The Guardian*, Colin Leys argues that [there is a "policy vacuum" in health](#).

He writes: "Jeremy Hunt is momentarily protected by the legal fiction that he is no longer responsible for "providing" the NHS", but "the government will eventually be held responsible for what happens to our healthcare".

He adds: "Flooding affecting many thousands of people has finally produced an irresistible demand for a policy response. A major crisis in health care will affect everyone in the country except the very rich. Is it acceptable for the secretary of state for health to have a sign on his desk saying, "the buck stops somewhere else"?"