

Dear Practices and PCNs

Re: NWL Online Consultation solutions from April 2025 - **Update on Procurement process**

On 5th December 2024, the NWL ICB Primary Care Executive committee made the decision to delay the re-procurement of Online Consultation solutions until April 2026 and to extend the existing contracts of the incumbent providers from the 2022 procurement – Patchs and eConsult (Ealing only)

We are not alone in this decision as other London ICBs have indicated they are also unwilling to embark on online consultation procurements. This is mainly due to the current lack of guaranteed NHSE funding, which limits procurements to 1 year and in turn causes uncertainty and disruption if repeated annually. The other main concern is the lack of an approved Framework from which to choose software solutions.

This position, although not ideal, presents an opportunity to align patient messaging (i.e. future of currently funded Accurx) and online consultation budgets which may offer practices better solutions to manage access for 26/27.

We understand that presently there are multiple Online Consultation solutions utilised across NWL practices which are self-funded. **All alternative online consultation solutions must undergo an approval and technical safety evaluation process led by NWL Digital Transformation and IT teams (DDAT) – this is mandatory.** If you are unsure if your practice or PCN has followed the correct assurance process regarding your self-funded online consultation solution, please contact NWL ICB IT service desk [nhsnwl.servicedesk@nhs.net](mailto:nhsnwl.servicedesk@nhs.net) to check and ensure compliance.

We acknowledge that this decision may be frustrating for some practices and PCNs who might have hoped to explore other products and rest assured we will be seeking feedback from interested parties for the procurement in the future