

To: All NHS Chief Information Officers (CIOs)

From: Ian Lowry

Director of Enabling Products

Technology Digital and Data, NHS England

Dear colleague,

NHS e-Referral Service (e-RS) – Major Incident Update January 2026

I'm contacting you regarding the priority 1 incident which has impacted the NHS e-Referral Service (e-RS) since 30 December 2025. This incident resulted in intermittent performance degradation, including slow response times and some users being unable to log into the e-RS application at times of high traffic during working hours. This resulted in some frontline users having a poor experience when completing and viewing referrals and managing appointments. It has not led to referrals or appointments being lost.

Since the start of the incident, technical teams from NHS England and e-RS delivery partner have been working round the clock on this issue as a priority. Throughout this week, additional technical resources have been brought in to support investigations and implement several mitigating actions, which allowed the service to recover when performance was affected.

I can confirm that following overnight fixes on Wednesday 7th January, the service has remained stable all-day on Thursday 8th and Friday 9th January with no service interruptions. There will be a period of heightened monitoring over the weekend and into next week to ensure continued service stability. Additional overnight maintenance tasks will be undertaken over the coming days as required.

The teams have also resolved issues with data extracts, which organisations depend on for operational purposes, which have been delayed during the week. All high priority extracts are now up to date and available for organisations to access. The remaining missing data extracts will be available from Monday 12 January onwards.

We recognise the frustration from our users in primary and secondary care since the start of this incident and apologise for the disruption to frontline colleagues.

Supporting patient safety and operational performance was a priority and our focus during this incident.

A full and comprehensive post incident review will commence shortly, ensuring that all contributing factors are thoroughly examined. Findings will inform corrective actions and future resilience measures. If you'd like to receive the detail of the root cause analysis, please email enquiries.ers@nhs.net

Yours sincerely

Ian Lowry