

LMC advice to practices when responding to requests regarding compliance with 1st October 2025 contractual changes

The LMC is now being contacted by practices who are being asked for assurance around their online access following the contractual changes on 1st October. It is important practices are clear in their response, and understand the following:

What is the contractual requirement?

The contractual requirement on practices from 1st October 2025 is defined in schedule 6, paragraph 4 of [this document](#):

*The contractor must take steps to ensure that all of the following means of **contacting the contractor** are available for patients throughout core hours—*

(a) by attending the contractor’s practice premises;

(b) by telephone; and

(c) through the practice’s online consultation tool within the meaning given in regulation 71ZD(2).

Note that this refers to **contacting the contractor** only.

Online consultation tools

Regulation 71ZD(2) qualifies this and defines an online consultation tool:

71ZD(2) An “online consultation tool” is an online facility provided using appropriate software—

(a) through which (i) a patient, or an appropriate person acting on behalf of the patient,

may, in writing in electronic form, seek advice or information related to the patient’s health or make a clinical or administrative request, but

(b) which does not require the response to be given by the contractor in real time.

This reiterates that the practice must have online access available during core hours for patients or their representatives to make non-urgent requests that do not require a same day response.

What should practices do?

Practices should ensure their online tools allow routine requests such as the ordering of repeat medications and the ability to make routine appointments with members of staff (there is no requirement for which roles these are; a practice may choose to put routine phlebotomy, smear or chronic disease review appointments available to book online for instance. They do not have to be GP appointments).

The contract does not require GP consultations to be bookable online throughout core hours, and the use of “online consultations” interchangeably with “online consultation tool” is creating confusion and raising expectations which are not contractual requirements.

For your information, the section relating to GP connect functionality being switched on is regulation 68 and “*requires that practices take all reasonable steps to ensure this is operational at all times*”.

Template response:

If your practice receives a request for assurance from the ICB, we suggest you respond with the following:

I can confirm that our practice is compliant with the contractual requirements in Schedule 6, paragraph 4 of the amended National Health Service General Medical Services Contracts and Personal Medical Services Agreements Regulations 2025, and Regulation 68A of the same.

The BMA has produced a template letter that practices may choose to send to ICB Place teams if you wish to have a more detailed discussion about any assurance requests, which is linked here:

[13099_gp-dispute---template-letter-from-gp-practices-to-icbs-regarding-1st-october-changes-to-contract-on-online-consultations.pdf](#)

If you have specific queries about your practice’s compliance or need support with discussions with the ICB, please contact the LMC at humberside.lmcgroup@nhs.net

Humberside LMCs

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