From the leading independent National User Groups for General Practice clinical systems

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Dear Doctors and Practice Managers,

Your patients, your system, your choice

Your PCT will ask you in the near future, if it has not already done so, whether you want to change your clinical system. You do not have to change. Both the nGMS contract and Connecting for Health's GPSoC (GP Systems of Choice) protect your right to keep your current system and allow for further changes in the future if a better system comes along.

If you want to change, you should be offered a choice of systems from the eight suppliers accredited under the GPSoC agreement and one from your Local Service Provider (LSP), if available. LSP clinical systems are not part of the GPSoC contract. Once a practice has moved to an LSP system there is no further choice, so no path back, no option to change to any other system in the future.

PCTs and SHAs in many areas are improperly putting intense pressure on practices to move to LSP solutions and trying to impose a local monopoly of provision. This is partly because some SHAs are under pressure to install LSP systems to avoid paying heavy financial penalties to their LSP and to save PCTs paying £650 per practice under GPSoC for annual system support.

PCTs seek to share GP records with community teams and feel a single supplier achieves that end. LSP shared care does not cross regional boundaries. Any of the GPSoC clinical systems will be able to support shared care by exporting essential data to the NHS Spine. Electronic transfer of data between systems is already happening (e.g. GP to GP record transfer, pathology results) and this and other forms of data sharing are rapidly developing.

If you feel that you are being unfairly pressurised by your PCT to change system or being discriminated against in any way by your PCT because you have not chosen their preferred system, then we recommend you contact the BMA (info.gpc@bma.org.uk) and let your national user group know too at the email address below. They are both willing and able to help. If you want more information about your right to choose or about GPSoC, visit the GP Choice website at www.gpchoice.org.uk.

Yours faithfully,

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