

Scottish Government

GP DACS

Update September 2021, Issue 2

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1. Exploring the market for a national GP DACS solution - Prior Information Notice (PIN) now published

In line with national procurement requirements and on behalf of the Scottish Government, NHS Scotland has now advertised the intention to tender for the future planned procurement of a National Online Triage Solution for General Practices across all Scottish NHS Boards by publishing a Prior Information Notice (PIN) on Public Contracts Scotland website.

The initial focus is on exploring the current options for the possible procurement of an online triage solution as an initial test of change with a proportion of practices and citizens across Scotland with the ability to scale to a national solution, working in partnership with NHS Scotland.

The PIN was published on the 30th of August 2021 in advance of the actual procurement exercise to explore the options available for the possible procurement of a GP DACS solution by obtaining up-to-date information and feedback for the market to understand current and, in development, market capabilities and solutions in relation to the functionality required. This exercise also includes the gathering of indicative costs associated with the incremental implementation and ongoing support of a suitable solution.

This exercise is being carried out in advance of any formal procurement process. It is not a pre-qualification or tendering exercise. The results of this exercise will be used to inform NHS Scotland's decision making process in respect of the implementation of a clinical solution and may or may not result in a future tendering exercise.

Submissions received in response to this exercise do not constitute any contractual agreement between the respondent and NHS National Services Scotland.

Timescales

As the GP DACS project is working to a tight deadline supplier responses to the market sounding questionnaire were requested by Monday 20th September 2021.

Next steps

Responses to the PIN will be collated and evaluated over a 2-4week period by a pre-selected NHS Scotland GP DACS evaluation team - membership includes GPs, GP practice managers, patients, Health Board representatives, procurement specialists and technical/systems experts.

Evaluation outcomes will then be collated and reviewed with the Scottish Government, a findings summary report will be made available to the suppliers that responded.

This market sounding exercise will help to inform the final requirements for a GP DACS solution and will assist on the journey to a procurement decision intended by the end of 2021.

2. GP DACS from the patient's perspective

We are working with The Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland (the ALLIANCE), [Home Page - Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland \(alliance-scotland.org.uk\)](https://alliance-scotland.org.uk). ALLIANCE is a strategic partner of the Scottish Government with close working relationships with many national NHS Boards, academic institutions and key organisations spanning health, social care, housing and digital technology. The ALLIANCE aims to support change in health and social care and their digital team is exploring digital and innovative technologies and ways of working to support people's health and wellbeing.

Plans are in place to hold a member's event in mid-October 2021 with a presentation on the GP DACS development with discussion focused on exploring pros and cons of this solution and help to inform from lived experience examples of how GP DACS can best improve choice in how patients access primary healthcare services in Scotland.

Whilst GP DACS is at the early stage of pre-procurement it is well recognised that when adopting the use of DACS, GP practices need to reflect the demographics and health care needs of the population that they serve. The success of digital product adoption depends as much on streamlining and aligning working practices and processes and training staff within practices, so work to support this outcome would need to be included as part of the overall national approach.

Online GP triage is a service for patients who are confident in using digital services and no one should be forced to use it. Practices must ensure that protocols are in place for patients who may need assistance to access healthcare services in other ways. A flexible approach and clear communication with patients will be key to success.

General Practices can decide whether to use DACS as an addition to other services they offer where appropriate to meet patients access needs and it is not intended to replace other methods of access patients may prefer or consider are warranted such as telephone or face to face.

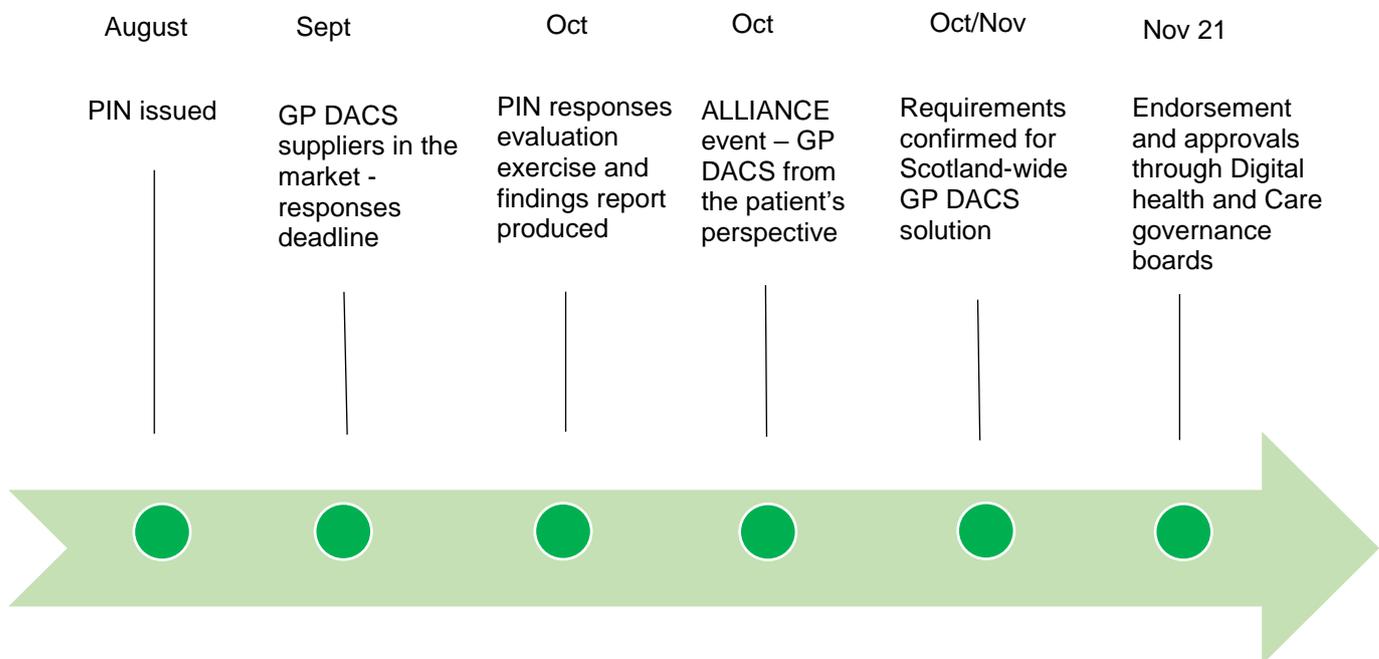
3. NHS Scotland Recovery Plan – Primary and Community Care

The NHS Recovery Plan sets out key headline ambitions and actions to be developed and delivered now and over the next 5 years and supports further expansion in digital use to offer greater choice in accessing Primary healthcare services.

'The plan acknowledges that Primary Care teams moved swiftly to utilise digital and telehealth services to deliver care through the pandemic, and these will continue to play a part in the delivery of care as part of the mix of service provision. This form of care will not be suitable in all circumstances or for all patients, but it is a welcomed option by many as it allows them to get care without disrupting personal and work commitments, and reducing unnecessary travel. To support this, we will continue to scale up the use of 'NHS Near Me' with £3.4 million a year.'

4. GP DACS Timelines

The timeline below lays out current estimates for GP DACS progression over the next few weeks.



That’s it for now

Please remember:

If you have any feedback or want to know more about GP DACS, you can submit your views and suggestions to our mailbox at nss.tec@nhs.scot.

You can also find the first issue of our newsletter and other resources [here](#).

28th September 2021