

Focus on: 2025/26 Advice and Guidance Enhanced Service

May 30 2025

The Advice and Guidance (A&G) process allows GPs to seek specialist input before making a formal referral when asking about the management of a patient's condition.

Changes to the GP contract from April 2025 offers this enhanced service to all practices with a fee attached to it. The use of Advice and Guidance remains optional for GPs.

NHS England has published a national specification for the enhanced service and has confirmed that this must be followed across all systems. Where a local system is requesting a process over and above the national specification, this needs to be flagged to your LMC, or raised directly with GPC England by emailing info.gpc@bma.org.uk

Key points:

- **Purpose:** Advice and Guidance services provide a way for GPs to get advice from specialists on treatment plans, test results, and referrals. This can help manage non-urgent cases more effectively.
- **Methods:** The advice can be given synchronously (e.g. via a phone call) or more usually asynchronously, e.g. through the NHS e-Referral Service, bespoke software used in some areas or by email.
- **Benefits:** A&G may assist GPs in receiving timely specialist advice on patient care and supporting decisions regarding referral
- **Incentives:** The 2025/26 GP contract includes a £20 item of service (IoS) fee for each eligible A&G request, recognising the extra work involved for GPs. £80 million of new money has been added to the overall national GP contract funding pot to pay for the IoS fees, which is ringfenced and cannot be reduced by ICBs (integrated care boards).
 - ICBs will receive funding according to activity delivered, so they are not incentivised to withhold it from general practice, with a ceiling on spend per ICB for the financial year. ICBs are likely to advise local practices that there will be a cap on their funding of the enhanced service. NHSE has confirmed that the national specification should apply universally; if LMCs become aware of local changes then please escalate those to us.
 - ICBs have also been encouraged to look at extending the A&G service beyond the £80 million cap where it is demonstrably having a positive impact on local elective reform (waiting lists).



FAQs

When will the service be available?

The Service was available on [CQRS](#) from 30 April 2025 and Commissioners must have invited all GP practices to participate in this ES (enhanced service) on CQRS by 13 May 2025. Practices must be offered this enhanced service, but it is not mandatory to use it.

GP practices must record their agreement to participate in this ES in writing to the Commissioner.

How is a claim for Advice and Guidance made?

Practices now have until Tuesday 3 June 2025 to sign up to participate on CQRS, and any claims made can be backdated to 1 April 2025.

See NHS England guidance here: [NHS England » Enhanced service specification – General Practice Requests for Advice and Guidance](#)

How many fees can be claimed for A&G?

One only for each episode of care. Any ongoing communication between the referrer and the respondent regarding the same episode of care will not attract a further IoS fee.

What code should we be using in patients notes to record the advice and guidance?

It is important that practices ensure that all A&G requests are recorded correctly in order to claim for all eligible interactions. This includes any from 1 April 2025.

You may have support from local teams in helping you code these episodes of care. There is an appropriate code that can be used in EMIS and TPP and you can type this into the problem heading in the patient notes – ‘Choose and book advice and guidance request’. This relates to the SNOMED CT code 820641000000100.

You may need to collate the number of requests done each month via searches of the clinical system to then submit the number via CQRS. We would expect ICB support for this process.

We hope this FAQ is helpful. If you have further queries or suggestions, please ask your LMC or contact us via info.gpc@bma.org.uk