

GMS IT – QMAS

This bulletin provides an update on several issues impacting on the use of Quality Management & Analysis System (QMAS).

- System upgrade Friday 25 – Monday 28 April 2008
- Revisions to the GMS Contract for 2008/09
- 2007/08 Year End progress update

System upgrade Friday 25 April – Monday 28 April.

In order to carry out an upgrade, the QMAS service will not be available from 1800 hours on Friday 25 April to 07:00 on Monday 28 April. The purpose of the upgrade is to improve the performance of the underlying QMAS technology as most of the service is provided using hardware commissioned in 2004.

There are no changes to the screens used by practices and primary care trusts (PCTs) so it will be back to business as usual on Monday 28 April when the system returns. We would ask users not to attempt to use the system over the weekend.

There is a small risk that users may be able to access the system whilst it is being transitioned and, if this is the case, there is a risk that any changes made will not be saved. We apologise for any inconvenience caused to users.

Revisions to the GMS contract for 2008/09

Agreement between NHS employers and the BMA on the QOF part of the GP contract for 2008/09 is being used to develop a technical specification for QMAS and GP system suppliers.

Until these systems have been upgraded to reflect the new agreement, QMAS cannot process 2008/09 achievement.

QMAS system status is therefore:

- 2007/08 QOF year – the system is not affected by changes to the QOF for 2008/09. Practices and PCTs will be able to complete the approval process as before.
- 2008/09 QOF year – the system will not report on achievement for this financial year until it has been upgraded.

Discussions are ongoing in respect of the scheduling of the upgrade and a further bulletin will be issued when an implementation date is agreed.



Aspiration payments

Aspiration payments will move from 60% to 70% as part of the 2008/09 contract.

This agreement has yet to be formally announced in contract documentation and aspiration payments in QMAS still show the 60% level which was calculated for the year ahead on 2 April. We are in discussions with the Department and Exeter payments bureau about how and when the uplift will take place.

Until arrangements are put in place, PCTs and practices are asked not to adjust payments off system.

End of year update

QMAS is working well during the end-of-year process. As is usual at this time of year, we are monitoring the system's availability and operation on an ongoing basis. So far, the volume of approvals is consistent with that achieved by this stage in previous years.

As of 21 April a significant number of approvals have taken place or were in the process of being finalised:

- 3806 practices have had their achievement approved by both practices and PCTs.
- 3181 practices have approved their achievement and were awaiting approval by PCTs.
- The remaining practices had yet to approve their achievement.

If there are any queries and concerns about end of year achievement we would like to remind PCTs and practices that these should be discussed between the PCT and practice rather than contacting the QMAS Helpdesk.

If appropriate, practice achievement can then be adjusted by PCTs using the normal QMAS functionality.

- For all QMAS bulletins and guidance notes visit: www.connectingforhealth.nhs.uk/delivery/programmes/qmas/
- For QMAS training visit: www.qmastraining.nhs.uk



Frequently Asked Questions

This section outlines the most common questions likely to be asked regarding upgrades to QMAS.

When will the upgraded QMAS software be implemented?

The upgraded software is expected to be available in the autumn of 2008.

What will I be able to see before then?

Existing QMAS functionality will be available i.e. all reports for 2007/2008 will be available to view. The end of year process for 2007/2008 will continue.

Will my 31 March submission be available to view?

Yes. You will be able to see your March submission.

When will the new QOF Read Codes be available?

NHS Employers and the Department are in the process of finalising the QOF Business Rules (which contain the Read Codes) and the guidance to support the new and revised QOF indicators. They will publish these as soon as they are finalised.

Does my clinical system continue to submit my achievement data?

Yes. This will continue to be submitted each month although submissions for financial year 2008/09 will not be shown on QMAS until the upgrade of QMAS is complete.

When will my GP clinical system supplier have their new data extraction ready?

All GP clinical system suppliers will receive the new QOF indicators and business rules once they are approved by the NHS Employers and the Department. They will then develop their software and their new QOF data extract will have to go through the NHS CFH testing process. Once this has been passed they will begin rolling out to their users. The GP clinical system suppliers will keep you informed of their plans. In addition, in a future bulletin, a link will be provided to an NHS CFH website where you will be able to check on each supplier's progress.

