

## **Additional guidance on when to visit a branch surgery as part of a GP practice inspection**

Note: This text provides an update to our existing guidance on inspecting branch surgeries (page 29 of the *Inspection Framework for NHS GP practices and GP out of hours services*). The existing text in the framework document will be updated with this text in the next couple of weeks.

As a general rule, each separate walk-in centre, GP-led health centre or a GP practice is classed as a location. If the provider you are inspecting has more than one GP practice, or main GP practice and branch surgeries, you'll need to consider the following:

- If the provider has more than one GP practice, each GP practice will be classed as a location.

Or

- If the provider has a main practice and branch surgery (or surgeries) associated with the main practice, the branch surgery can be registered under the main practice's location, as long as only patients from the same registered patient list are seen or treated at those places. If the branch surgery treats patients from a different registered patient list to that of the main practice, the branch surgery will need to be registered as a location in its own right.

Each separately registered location needs an inspection and a report: where a provider runs two separate GP practices which each see patients from their own lists of registered patients there should be two inspection reports each with its own rating (in PMS we do not give an overall provider level rating so these two or more ratings will not be aggregated to a provider rating).

### **Branch surgeries where the patient list is the same as the main practice**

Branch surgeries where the patient list is the same as the main practice are reported in one report. Details of all the branches managed from the main practice location (whether visited or not) will need to be listed in the 'background to <location>' section of the report.

Where the branch surgery providers care to patients from the same list as the main practice, you should consider whether you need to visit the branch surgery or not: Your final inspection report and the rating for the main practice needs to consider the quality of care provided both at the main practice and at any branch surgeries in order to reach the rating.

Whether this requires an actual visit to the branch surgery in order to do this, and how long this visit will take, is likely to depend on a number of factors which will need to be considered. These include:

- How the branch surgery is run and managed (for example how many days a week the branch surgery is open for; whether the branch surgery is managed from the main practice location or from the branch surgery premises)
- The level of risk identified in the main practice or the branch surgery. In many instances it may not be possible to identify any risk at the branch surgery without visiting the premises.
- If patients or commissioners have raised any concerns about the quality of services at the branch surgery
- If you become aware of specific issues at the branch surgery (for example, difficulties in recruiting staff, staff shortages)
- Where, due to the location of the branch and main surgeries, some patients only ever attend the branch surgery despite there only being one patient list

In some instances you may not be aware of any risks with the branch surgery until the inspection of the main practice. In these instances you may still need to visit the branch surgery. Where this cannot be done on the same day as the inspection of the main practice this should be done as soon as possible after the inspection of the main practice and the evidence gathered included in the report.