



**NHS GPs in England set to enter 5<sup>th</sup> year in breach of contract  
- THIS MUST BE STOPPED**

According to NHS Choices, [440 GP surgeries in England](#) continue to use 084 telephone numbers.

Clear contractual conditions were introduced on 1 April 2010 to totally prohibit their use, with 12 months grace for those who needed to switch to a geographic rate (01/02/03) number. All providers of surgery telephone systems permit such a change within their arrangement.

On 4 November 2013, [a circular letter was issued by NHS England](#) requiring those practices who have still failed to comply with the terms of their contract to provide details of their plans for doing so. We have subsequently written to the 27 Area Managers seeking confirmation that all practices will have complied by 1 April 2014. Sadly, no such confirmation can be provided.

We believe that it was generous to allow 1 year for a process that takes only a few weeks. To find that it will not have been completed after 4 years shows the commitment of the GP profession to the principles of the NHS falling well short of what we expect. GPs, not public servants, have been chosen to lead Clinical Commissioning Groups, spending most of the NHS budget in England.

**The practices remaining in breach of their contracts**

A fair, if imprecise, indication of the telephone numbers being used by GPs may be found by consulting the NHS Choices listings. The latest position ([see this list, with summary totals](#)) shows 440 surgeries still using 084 numbers. This reflects some cases where use has ceased, but also fails to reflect cases where it continues. Our summary totals show that patients in **Leicestershire & Lincolnshire, West Yorkshire** and **Birmingham & the Black Country** are particularly badly served.

**Action required**

To ensure that GPs do not enter a fifth year in breach of their contracts, we call for the following parties to swiftly get seriously involved by declaring their position and support for compliance with the principles of the NHS - not to mention legally enforceable contractual terms!



**The General Practitioners Committee of the British Medical Association**

This body opposed the introduction of the measures and has subsequently sought to misrepresent their terms. It must now encourage its members to move to compliance, without incurring unnecessary termination penalties.



**Daisy Group Plc**

Daisy has always offered its NHS customers the option to use its "Surgery Line" system without the benefit of subsidy at the expense of patients. It must now ensure that all are aware of this offer and the contractual need to adopt it.



**NHS England (27 Area Teams)**

Having been in existence only since 1 April 2013, these bodies can put aside the failure of their predecessor PCTs to secure compliance. As a National body, NHS England cannot permit patients to be subject to unfair treatment in any locality.



**Members of Parliament**

Efforts by individual members of parliament have been seen to be very effective, often in conjunction with local media, in persuading GPs to consider the financial interests of their patients before their own. More effort to this end is required.