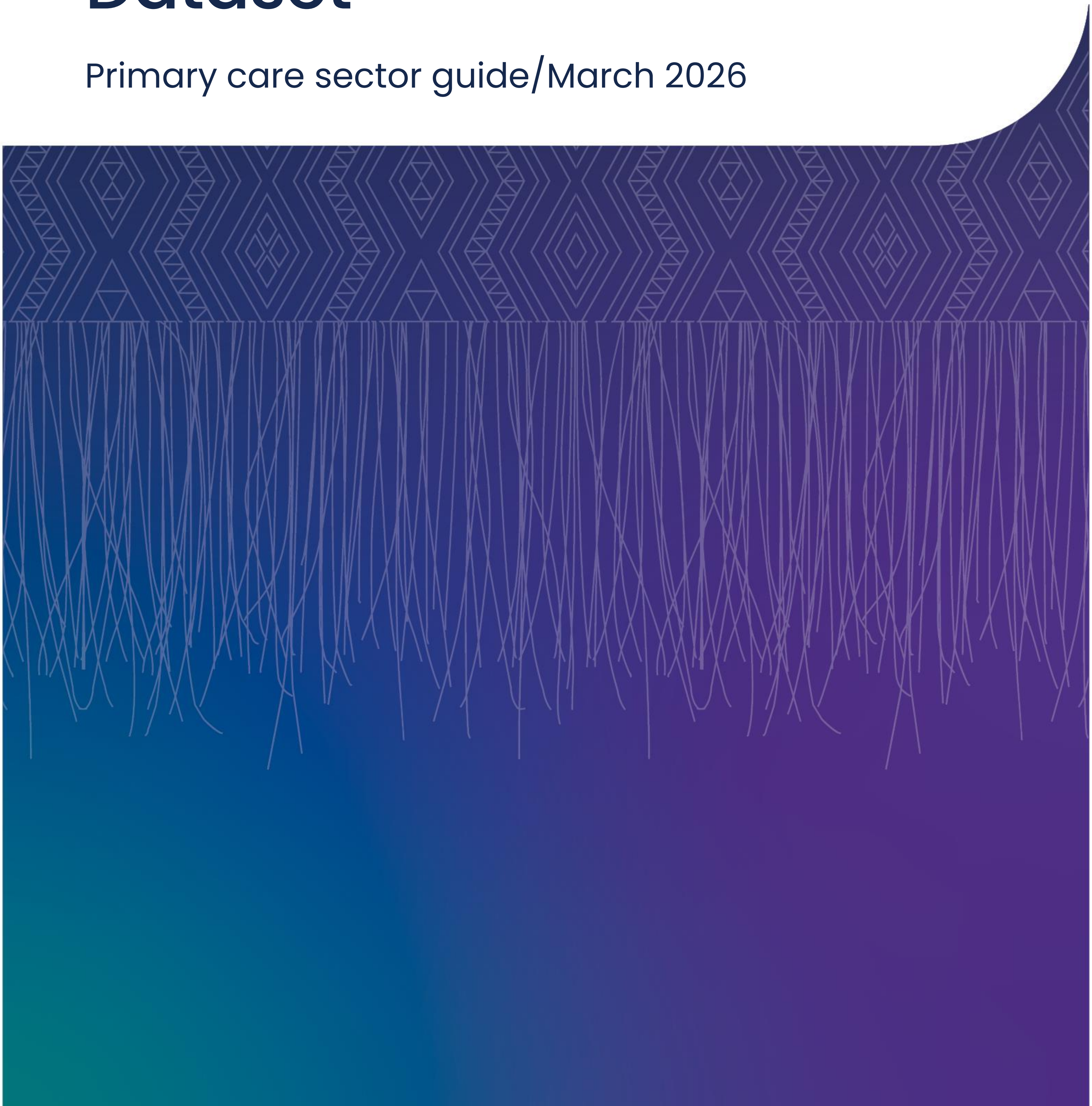
Health New Zealand
Te Whatu Ora

The National Primary Care Dataset

Primary care sector guide/March 2026



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Background

Good health starts with strong primary care. It's where prevention happens, where issues are caught early, and where people get the support they need to stay well. That's why we're focused on supporting primary care to work better for everyone.

There is already a lot of health information that can show us what's working well, what isn't, and where more support is needed to improve outcomes.

However, we have never had a single picture or dataset of primary care that tells the full story of what's going well and what needs attention across all the elements that can impact people's health outcomes. That's why we're creating a National Primary Care Dataset (NPCD).

This NPCD information will help build a clearer, more complete view of how primary care is performing and where improvements can make the biggest difference. This will include some information we already hold, and also add some new information from general practices. The data collected will be used for service planning and performance measuring.

Working with primary care stakeholders and representatives, we have endeavoured to make the introduction of this dataset as manageable and well supported a process for practices as possible, while still ensuring data is collected safely and to a high standard.

Dataset development approach

We have been working with the Primary Care Dataset Governance Group (PCDGG) to help shape the development of the dataset, beginning with the first set of data elements that will focus on general practice encounter and appointments data.

This group has been formally established through the Primary Health Organisation Services Agreement (PHOSA) and will have an ongoing role in overseeing the data framework for the National Primary Care Dataset. Its responsibilities include guiding how the data is defined, collected, and reported. The group brings together representatives from Health NZ, general practice, PHOs, and patients to ensure the dataset reflects the needs and realities of the sector.

We're also working closely with early adopter general practices who have tested the collection of the deidentified general practice encounter and appointment data. Their feedback is helping us understand what works well, what needs improvement, and how the information can be analysed and interpreted in a meaningful and consistent way.

Data collection

What information will be collected?
The first information we'll collect will focus on data related to encounters and appointments with people's general practice team. This includes details such as when appointments are booked, when people are seen, and the outcome of those appointments.

This data will help us measure how well primary care is doing at giving communities timely access to their general practice. The new health target is: *80% of primary care appointments are accessed within seven days of a person booking the appointment.*

The general practice encounter data and appointment elements that will be collected to support that can be found here.

Next steps - future data elements

The next stage of the National Primary Care Dataset will focus on developing and collecting a broader set of data elements. We'll work with the Primary Care

Dataset Governance Group to design these, making sure they're useful, consistent, and practical for general practice to provide.

These upcoming data elements will focus on information about the primary care workforce and people's health status.

We're also planning to include patient experience information, sourced from the National Patient Experience Survey.

Data privacy, security and access

Unless a general practice chooses to opt off from data sharing and does not sign a Data Access and Use Agreement, specified data will be collected by Health NZ from the practice management system (PMS) of each general practice and incorporated into Health NZ's data platform.

We have been carefully working through our processes to ensure your patient's health information will be respected and managed securely.

Legal and privacy requirements

All data collection for this dataset must meet strict legal requirements, including the Privacy Act 2020, the Health Information Privacy Code 2020, the Health Information Security Framework (HISO 10029:2022) and Health New Zealand's own data governance policies.

A Privacy Impact Assessment is in progress and will be kept updated to make sure every step meets privacy standards.

When information is included in the dataset, it is encrypted so that individuals cannot be identified. Only authorised analysts can access the information.

Patient level information is handled in a way that protects people's privacy. Any identifiable details are minimised, tightly controlled, and only accessible to authorised analysts who must follow strict privacy and security requirements at all times. Patient level information is handled in a way that protects people's privacy. Any identifiable details are minimised, tightly controlled, and only accessible to authorised analysts who must follow strict privacy and security requirements at all times.

Secure data storage and management

Health New Zealand retains governance and accountability for the data, and all storage and processing is designed to operate in alignment with New Zealand privacy laws and health sector security standards, with privacy protections embedded into system design and operation from the outset. Information is protected using multiple layers of security, including strong encryption, role-based access controls, and ongoing monitoring to keep people's information safe. -sector security standards, with privacy protections embedded into system design and operation from the outset. Information is protected using multiple layers of security, including strong encryption, role-based access controls, and ongoing monitoring to keep people's information safe.

Data access

Data access will only be given for authorised purposes to authorised analysts as outlined in the Data Access Framework, agreed by the Primary Care Data Governance Group.

The Data Access Framework, endorsed by the Primary Care Data Governance Group includes:

- What data can be collected
- How it is used (to make sure it is compliant with authorised purposes)
- The level of access and controls for different stakeholders

Find out more about access requirements here.

The interim general practice Primary Care Health Target Information Sharing Agreement

In March we will be asking PHOs to support general practices to sign an interim general practice Information Sharing Agreement to allow data collection to begin in April.

The scope of this agreement is limited to primary care encounter and booking appointment data needed to report on the Primary Care Health Target. The agreement includes standard clauses around security, incident response, and subcontractors, with Health New Zealand responsible for the actions of its agents. The agreement mirrors relevant termination and notice provisions from existing PHO agreements to keep things consistent.

It is separate from the access and use agreement outlined below, that will include two-way sharing and how information is accessed and used.

The Data Access and Use Agreement

Once finalised, we will ask PHOs to support general practices to sign a ‘two-way sharing’ Data Access and Use Agreement.

This part of the process will cover the requirements for both the National Primary Care Dataset and the Shared Digital Health Record, ensuring general practice don’t have to carry them out twice.

The Data Access and Use Agreement sets out the nationally consistent terms that will apply between Health New Zealand and each general practice.

The Data Access and Use Agreement will clearly describe the expectations on both Health NZ and contracted providers for security and data protection processes, breach management, liabilities, and use of external information management vendors.

We will support PHOs to work with their general practices from early March to support any practice who wants to sign the Data Access and Use Agreement to do so.

Third-party agencies that collect health information from practice management systems must also follow strict privacy and legal rules, as outlined in their own Data Access and Use Agreement with Health New Zealand. This is included to reassure practices that their data does not leave the primary care system without clear controls, even when a third party is involved in collection.

The Data Access and Use Agreement is supported by a set of schedules that outline the specific requirements for each dataset. Practices will sign the main agreement once and then complete the relevant schedules for initiatives such as the National Primary Care Dataset, the Shared Digital Health Record, and any future datasets added over time.

Related sector funding

Contingent capitation funding is available to general practices to support the introduction of the National Primary Care Dataset, and practices need to let their PHO know if they choose to opt out. Practices have until 31 March 2026 to opt out of receiving this funding and sharing data.

PHOs can also use any available underspend funding to help them support their practices through the process, answer questions, guide them through the Data and Use Agreement and support any further changes needed to enable practices to participate in data sharing.

In the future information from the dataset may also be used to measure performance linked to additional agreed funding for the primary care sector.

Patient communication

A Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) is in progress for the collection of general practice encounter and appointment information. We are using existing, safe, settings for health information collection for analysis which are trusted. This means that this data can be collected in a way which will not change the existing methods to consent and inform patients or healthcare workers that their information being used for health system planning and performance.

To help patients understand how their health information is used and protected we will also be creating a public facing web page to direct patients to where we will provide detailed information about the collection and use of the patient and staff information.

We'll share a flyer and a set of patient-focused Q&As that general practice teams can use to support conversations with their patients.

The Shared Digital Health Record

The Shared Digital Health Record (SDHR) will be rolled-out in similar timeframes as The National Primary Care Dataset, but it has a different purpose. The Shared Digital Health Record is a clinical data connector that will enhance data flow to shared health record systems and the National Primary Care Dataset is collecting data for planning and improving primary care services. For practices that choose to participate, the SDHR will securely share patient-level clinical information so providers across the system (such as GPs, after-hours services, and hospitals) can access key information when people need care. SDHR is also being introduced in the coming months.

We are working in alignment with the Shared Digital Health Record developments so organisations can sign one Data Access and Use Agreement, with additional schedules used to cover different datasets and purposes.

Find out more about the Shared Digital Health Record here.

Other Health NZ data collections

Health NZ also holds other national datasets such as the Aotearoa Immunisation Register, national screening data, and enrolment and funding records. These collections also help us plan services, monitor performance, and support better health outcomes. Find out more here.

Questions and support

We are working directly with PHOs to support them to engage their general practices through this process.

Questions can be sent to **primary.care@tewhatuora.govt.nz**.

Your patients can can contact the **Health NZ customer contact centre** if they have questions.

Key dates

Feb 2026

- Workshops for PHOs engagement leads
- Webinars for primary care sector
- 28 Feb: deadline for general practice to advise PHOs if they want to opt out of capitation funding related to sharing information with the dataset

Mar 2026

- PHOs work with general practice to sign interim general practice Primary Care Health Target Information Sharing Agreements
- 31 March – Contingent Capitation opt-off deadline

Apr 2026

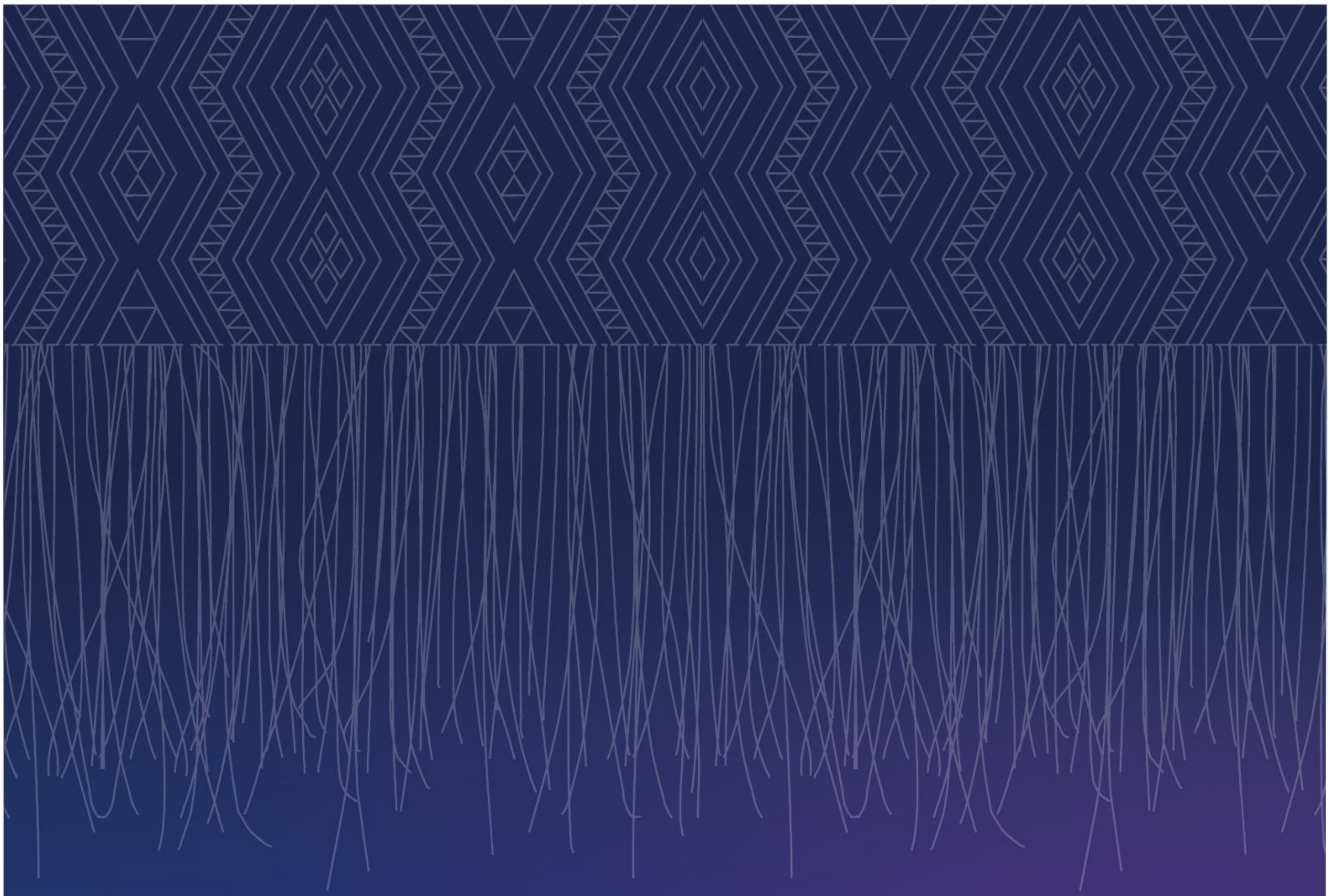
- Encounter and booking appointment data flows begin for participating practices
- TBC – Data Acces and Use Agreement onboarding begins
- Patient flyers and Q&A shared with practices to help answer patient queries

Jul 2026

- Encounter data collected from 1 July is included in Primary Care Health Target reporting

End of 2026

- Primary Care Health Target Q1 25/26 public reporting



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