

**A message from BOA President Ananda Nanu about PHIN**

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For those members with a private practice you should all be aware of the organisation called PHIN, Private Healthcare Information Network and their current work towards publication of hospital and consultant data. We have been alerting members to developments at PHIN for some time and in June and July there will be significant further changes that I wanted to bring to your attention.

For several months, Consultants with a private practice have had access to a PHIN 'portal', allowing you to review the data that PHIN holds about your practice (including both data from private hospitals and NHS data from HES). I am aware that some have had difficulty initially in getting access to this data (mainly due to GMC holding old or incorrect email addresses). I am also aware that those reviewing the data have found various issues with data accuracy and completeness (there is a process for flagging up data issues within the portal). Can I remind any members who are still experiencing these kinds of issues that we are interested to hear from you about what has been happening and how these issues have been resolved. If you have any such feedback please email: [policy@boa.ac.uk](mailto:policy@boa.ac.uk).

PHIN have now confirmed that they are working towards the first round of consultant publication in late July. From 12th June the portal will have new functionality added that allows consultants to approve their data for publication.

The specific measures that are due for publication are volumes and lengths of stay. Publication of this information will occur on the PHIN website, to accompany hospital-level information that is already published. The information will only be published where it is signed off by the consultant using the PHIN portal. All consultants with a private practice should hear from their private hospitals about this. If you have any questions on these new measures, please contact PHIN at [consultants@phin.org.uk](mailto:consultants@phin.org.uk).

Here I provide a few thoughts from a BOA perspective on this:

I am very aware that publication of consultant level data can be controversial. Those of us with an arthroplasty practice have been involved in this for our NHS practice since 2013 but the remit here is broader.

The origins of the PHIN initiative came about because of a Competition and Markets Authority review of competition in this sector, which took the view that greater transparency was needed both on costs of private care and on information for patients about different consultants.

Since the time of the CMA review there have been further developments resulting in pressure for greater transparency in the private healthcare sector. These developments have included the case of Paterson and a greater spotlight on issues regarding quality of care in the private sector. A recent CQC report highlighted 'major concerns' about patient safety in the private sector and subsequently Jeremy Hunt wrote a letter to private sector providers including the following plea:

"We need much greater transparency from your sector. From the publication of surgical outcomes by clinicians to the publication of avoidable deaths by hospital trusts, the NHS is leading the world on transparency, and I am disappointed by the variation in voluntary progress to address the disparity of information on standards in private settings. I am aware of the positive impact that the Private Healthcare Information Network is starting to have, but I believe the Independent Sector needs to move much faster to achieve alignment with NHS standards. I would like specific assurances that every provider is submitting comprehensive data sets to PHIN, and we will explore whether the reporting requirements need to be strengthened to make them comparable with the NHS."

While I appreciate there have been some concerns about the PHIN initiative and I echo the concern regarding the absolutely vital aspect of accuracy in data publication, I think it is important that we engage with this and ensure that our personal data is fair and accurate - and for any members who continue to find issues in this regard please do contact the BOA Policy team.