ANNEX 10

GP RELEVANT POPULATION ESTIMATES – TECHNICAL NOTES

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Introduction

This notes explain how data on the GP relevant populations of Strategic Health Authorities (SHAs) and Primary Care Organisations (PCOs) are collected and processed. The data were collected in April 2010 and have been constrained to Office for National Statistics (ONS) 2009 mid-year estimates - based on the 2001 Census.

Definitions of Terminology

**GP relevant population**: Population registered with the constituent GP practices of a PCO and SHA; excluding special populations, adjusted to ensure consistency with ONS estimates.

**Special Populations**: Special populations are made up of -

1. UK **armed forces** with a usual address within the geographical boundary of a PCO; and foreign (US and Ghurka) armed services including their dependants.
2. Convicted **prisoners** who have served more than 6 months of a prison sentence.
3. That part of the **asylum seeker population** that is included in the ONS 2008 mid-year estimates and presumed to be unregistered with GPs.

Data Collection and Processing

GP patient registration data for each GP practice were extracted from GP registers via Connecting for Health in April 2010. Registrations were extracted at post code level, denoting the place of residence.

Where a postcode was missing or was unrecognised by the NHS National Postcode Directory, the registrations were re-assigned to the postcode geography of the rest of the GP list of which they form a part.

The data with postcode geography of residence was aggregated to Local Authority (LA) level and reconciled with ONS mid-year resident population estimates for 2009, minus special populations and aggregated for 38 age and sex intervals.

The special populations were subtracted from the ONS estimates as they will not normally be registered with GPs. The comparisons resulted in a set of 38 weighting factors for each LA, representing the differences between the ONS estimates and the number of GP patient registrations.

This reconciliation is carried out as the number of patient registrations is greater than the number of people living in England and Wales according to population estimates from the ONS. There may be a number of reasons for this, e.g. people leaving the country and not notifying their GP.

The reconciliation to ONS estimates was done at LA level because it provides a greater level of accuracy than PCO level reconciliation, as the registrations were reconciled to the age and sex breakdowns of 376 local authority districts, rather than 151 PCOs in England.

These weighting factors are then applied to all postcode–LA combinations to give a set of adjusted postcode level figures.

Finally, using a file of GP practice codes to PCO, the adjusted figures are aggregated up at PCO level, based on the practice code of registration, to form the final estimates of PCO level patient registrations.

Notes on the Spreadsheet

All figures have been corrected to the ONS estimates for the geographical populations of LAs.
As the figures collected from the PCOs are constrained to ONS estimates and then special populations removed - the figures bear no resemblance to actual people. Therefore no figures have been suppressed and the spreadsheet may contain figures of 1. However, this should not be taken to suggest that the figures are accurate to this level, as it is dependant on the combined accuracy of: the ONS mid-year estimates; FHS and GP practice registers; and the postcode to NHS organisation translations in the NHS Postcode Directory.

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