



## Health Research Authority

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05 February 2026

Nicola Johnson  
Care Quality Commission  
Research Team  
Data and Insight  
Care Quality Commission  
Citygate  
Gallowgate  
Newcastle Upon Tyne  
NE1 4PA

Dear Nicola Johnson,

**Application title:** 2026 Urgent and Emergency Care Survey  
**CAG reference:** 26/CAG/0003

Thank you for submitting a **non-research** application under Regulation 5 of the Health Service (Control of Patient Information) Regulations 2002 ('section 251 support') to process confidential patient information without consent.

This application was considered at the precedent set Confidentiality Advisory Group (CAG) meeting held on 16 January 2026 under category 11. Applications to administer patient surveys made by organisations on behalf of Care Quality Commission (CQC). This outcome should be read in conjunction the [minutes](#) of this meeting.

### **Confidentiality Advisory Group advice and Secretary of State for Health and Social Care decision**

The CAG agreed that the minimum criteria under the Regulations appeared to have been met, and therefore advised recommending support to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care.

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, having considered the advice from the Confidentiality Advisory Group as set out in the minutes, has determined the following:

- The application is **Fully supported**, subject to compliance with the [standard conditions of support](#).

**Please note that the legal basis to allow access to the specified confidential patient information without consent is now in effect.** A summary of the scope of support is provided in Appendix A.

Support provides a lawful basis to allow the information to be processed by the relevant parties for the specified purposes without incurring a breach of the common law duty of confidence only. Applicants must ensure the activity remains fully compliant with all other relevant legislation.

### Specific conditions of support

1. Confirmation provided from the DSPT Team at NHS England to the CAG that the relevant [Data Security and Protection Toolkit \(DSPT\)](#) submission(s) has achieved the 'Standards Met' threshold. **Confirmed:**

The NHS England **25/26** DSPT review for **Patient Perspective Ltd, Quality Health, Picker Institute Europe, and Explain Market Research Ltd** was confirmed as 'Standards Met' on the NHS England DSPT Tracker (05<sup>th</sup> February 2026).

This letter provides confirmation of final support, and all the above conditions are expected to be met within the stated timeframe. I will arrange for the register of approved applications on the HRA website to be updated with this information.

### Maintaining CAG support: Reporting requirements

Please note the following guidance on reporting requirements in order to maintain CAG support for the duration of the activity.

- **Annual review report:** It is your responsibility to submit an annual review report every 12 months for the entire duration that confidential patient information is being processed without consent. The next annual review should be provided no later than **05 February 2027** and preferably 4 weeks before this date. Further guidance and the annual review form is available on the [IRAS website](#).
- **Notifying amendments to the scope of CAG support:** Guidance on submitting CAG amendments and the amendment form is available on the [IRAS website](#).
- **Notifying the end of activity:** Guidance on notifying the end of activity and the end closure report form is available on [the IRAS website](#).
- **Register of supported applications:** It is a statutory requirement to publish all supported applications to process confidential patient information without consent. Supported applications are published on the [HRA website](#).

### Approved documents

The list of documents reviewed and approved at the meeting are as follows.

Document	Version	Date
CAG application from (signed/authorised) [UEC26_CAG section S251 form non research application]		
Confidentiality policy	1	
Other [UEC26_Data flow chart - post codes V1.0_PROTECT]	1	
Other [UEC26_Draft Sample construction spreadsheet 1 V1.0]	1	
Other [UEC26_Draft Sample construction spreadsheet 2_for central online tool_V1.0_PROTECT]	1	

Other [UEC26_Draft Sample construction spreadsheet 2_using approved contractor_V1.0_PROTECT]	1	
Other [UEC26_Draft Sample declaration form for in-house trusts_V1.0_PROTECT]	1	
Other [UEC26_Draft Sample declaration form for trusts using a contractor_V1.0_PROTECT]	1	
Other [UEC26_Draft Sampling Instructions_V1.0_PROTECT]	2	26 November 2025
Other [UEC26_Draft Survey Handbook_V1.0_PROTECT]	1.1	25 November 2025
Other [UEC26_GDPR declaration for additional data analysts_V1.0_PROTECT]	1	
Other [UEC26_GDPR declaration of data compliance_V1.0_PROTECT]	1	
Other [UEC26_GDPR Model service contract_V1.0_PROTECT]	1	
Other [UEC26_Information flowchart_V1.0_PROTECT]		
Other [UEC26_GDPR declaration for additional data analysts_V1.0_PROTECT]	1	
Other [UEC26_GDPR declaration of data compliance_V1.0_PROTECT]	1	
Other [UEC26_GDPR Model service contract_V1.0_PROTECT]		
Other [UEC26_Information flowchart_V1.0_PROTECT]		
Other [UEC26_Trust Press Release_V1.0_PROTECT]		
Other [CAT Assessment form ]		
Patient Information Materials [UEC26_Dissent poster English_Type 1_V1.0_PROTECT]	1	
Patient Information Materials [UEC26_Dissent poster English_Type 3_V1.0_PROTECT]	1	
Patient Information Materials [UEC26_Dissent_V1.0_PROTECT]	1	
Patient Information Materials [UEC26_Draft Multilanguage sheet_V1.0_Protect]	1	
Patient Information Materials [UEC26_Draft Type 1 Mailing letter 1_V1.0_PROTECT]	1	
Patient Information Materials [UEC26_Draft Type 1 Mailing letter 2_V1.0_PROTECT]	1	
Patient Information Materials [UEC26_Draft Type 1 Mailing letter 3_V1.0_PROTECT]	1	
Patient Information Materials [UEC26_Draft Type 1 SMS Guidance_V1.0_PROTECT]	1	
Patient Information Materials [UEC26_Social media cards 1-4 accompanying text_V1.0_PROTECT]		
Patient Information Materials [UEC26_Website Banner_V1.0_PROTECT]		
Patient Information Materials [UEC24 Easy Read Questionnaire_Type 1_V1]		
Patient Information Materials [UEC24 Easy Read Questionnaire_Type 3_V1]		
Write recommendation from Caldicott Guardian (or equivalent) of applicant's organisation [UEC26_Caldicott Guardian recommendation letter V1_Final]	1	27 November 2025

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries following this letter. I would be grateful if you could quote the above reference number in all future correspondence.

Yours sincerely



(Richard Reed)  
Approvals Administrator

On behalf of the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care

Email: [cag@hra.nhs.uk](mailto:cag@hra.nhs.uk)

*Included:*                      List of members who considered application  
                                        Summary of scope of support

## Confidentiality Advisory Group Precedent-set meeting 16 January 2026

### Present:

Name	Capacity
Mr Dan Roulstone	CAG Alternate Vice Chair
Dr Pauline Lyseight-Jones	CAG Member (Lay)
Ms Rose Payne	CAG Member (Lay)

### Also in attendance:

Name	Position (or reason for attending)
Ms Katy Cassidy	HRA Confidentiality Advisor
Mr Richard Reed	HRA Approvals Administrator

## Appendix A – Summary of Scope of Support

### Summary of application

This non-research application submitted by Picker Institute Europe, (on behalf of the Care Quality Commission), sets out the purpose of conducting the Urgent and Emergency Care Survey 2026 (UEC24). The 2026 Urgent and Emergency Care Survey will be the eleventh carried out to date, and falls within the NHS Patient Survey Programme (NPSP). The NPSP was initiated in 2002 by the then Department of Health, and is now overseen by the Care Quality Commission (CQC), the independent regulator of health and social care in England. Any outputs provided will be anonymous. This statistical dataset is used for a wide variety of purposes, with the ultimate aim of supporting the improvement of patient experience in England.

The CQC has commissioned the Survey Coordination Centre (SCC) at Picker to manage and coordinate the survey programme.

A recommendation for class 1, 4, 5 and 6 support was requested to cover access to the relevant unconsented activities as described in the application.

### Confidential patient information requested

The following sets out a summary of the specified cohort, listed data sources and key identifiers. Where applicable, full datasets and data flows are provided in the application form and relevant supporting documentation as this letter represents only a summary of the full detail.

<b>Cohort</b>	<p>The population of interest are people aged 16 and over who attended a Type 1 emergency department in February 2026 or a Type 3 urgent care department (Urgent Treatment Centres, Urgent Care Centres or Minor Injuries Unit) in February 2026.</p> <p>If trusts are unable to draw the required sample size from their Type 3 department in February alone they will be instructed to also sample consecutively back into January 2026 until sample size is achieved.</p>
<b>Data Sources</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Electronic patient records within all eligible acute trusts in England (120 trusts)</li><li>2. NHS England - NHS Spine Personal Demographics Service (PDSS) – DBS checks undertaken by approved contractors</li><li>3. NHS England - Emergency Care Data Set (ECDS) – linkage undertaken centrally by SCC</li></ol>
<b>Identifiers required for contact purposes</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Title (Mr, Mrs, Ms, etc.)</li><li>2. Initials or First name</li><li>3. Surname</li><li>4. Address Fields including postcode</li><li>5. Mobile phone number</li></ol>

	6. Patient unique identifier. This code is printed on the covering letter as part of the online log-in details and the questionnaire itself.
<b>Identifiers required for deceased checks</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. NHS Number</li> <li>2. Full date of birth</li> </ol>
<b>Identifiers required for linkage</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Patient postcode</li> </ol>
<b>Identifiers required by SCC for analysis purposes</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Trust code</li> <li>2. Patient unique identifier</li> <li>3. Full Postcode - to use to map to deprivation index</li> <li>4. Year of birth</li> <li>5. Gender</li> <li>6. Ethnicity</li> <li>7. Department Type</li> <li>8. Designated UTC</li> <li>9. Time, Day, Month and Year of Attendance</li> <li>10. NHS Site Code</li> <li>11. Sub-ICB codes</li> <li>12. Mobile Phone Indicator</li> <li>13. NHS Number – for linkage to ECDS</li> <li>14. Chief Complaint</li> <li>15. Diagnosis codes</li> <li>16. Acuity</li> <li>17. Person Score</li> </ol>