

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

CESPHN Head Data Sharing and POLAR Licensing Agreement Renewal

1. Why am I being asked to sign a new agreement?

CESPHN has reviewed the Head Data Sharing and POLAR Licensing Agreement to ensure it aligns with current privacy, governance, information security and operational requirements. The agreement has not undergone a comprehensive review for many years, and the updated version provides greater transparency about how de-identified data is collected, stored, governed and used. This review is consistent with work being undertaken by Primary Health Networks nationally.

2. What is changing?

The updated agreement:

- Provides clearer information about how de-identified data is collected, stored and used
- Reflects current privacy and information security requirements
- Formalises contemporary data storage and analytics environments used by CESPHN
- Clarifies roles and responsibilities relating to data governance

3. What is not changing?

There are no changes to:

- CESPHN's commitment to protecting patient privacy
- The use of de-identified data only
- Practice ownership of clinical data
- The operation of POLAR within your practice
- Day-to-day practice workflows

4. Do practices retain ownership of their data?

Yes.

Practices continue to retain ownership of their clinical data. The agreement does not transfer ownership of data to CESPHN, Outcome Health or any other organisation.

5. Does CESPHN receive identifiable patient information?

No.

CESPHN only receives **de-identified data** through approved data extraction processes. Information used for quality improvement, population health planning, commissioning and reporting purposes does not identify individual patients.

6. How is practice data used?

De-identified data is used to support:

- Quality improvement activities
- Population health planning
- Health needs assessments
- Service commissioning

- Program evaluation
- Reporting obligations

The information helps CESP HN and general practices better understand the health needs of local communities and identify opportunities to improve care.

7. Will this affect how POLAR operates in my practice?

No.

There is no anticipated impact on POLAR functionality, reporting dashboards or quality improvement activities as a result of signing the updated agreement.

8. Do I need to install anything new?

No.

The agreement renewal does not require any additional software installation or changes to your clinical information system.

9. Why is CESP HN reviewing the agreement now?

The current agreement has been in place for many years. CESP HN is undertaking this review to ensure data sharing arrangements remain contemporary, transparent and aligned with current privacy, governance and information security standards.

This review is consistent with work being undertaken by Primary Health Networks nationally.

10. What happens if my practice does not sign the updated agreement?

Practices that do not have a current, signed agreement in place may:

- Lose access to the POLAR clinical audit tool
- Be unable to continue sharing data with CESP HN through POLAR or JSON file
- Be unable to meet PIP QI data sharing requirements through CESP HN supported arrangements
- Miss opportunities to participate in CESP HN quality improvement initiatives

To avoid any disruption, practices should complete the renewal before **30 November 2026**.

11. How does this relate to the Practice Incentives Program Quality Improvement (PIP QI) Incentive?

Participation in the data sharing arrangements supported through POLAR and submission of JSON files assists eligible practices in meeting the data sharing requirements associated with the PIP QI Incentive.

12. Who has access to the data?

Access to data is restricted to authorised personnel and managed in accordance with CESP HN's privacy, information security and data governance requirements.

Appropriate security controls are in place to protect information from unauthorised access, use or disclosure.

13. Is my practice required to do anything now?

Yes, when the agreement is issued via DocuSign, the authorised practice representative will be asked to review and sign the document by **30 November 2026**.

14. Who should sign the agreement?

The agreement should be signed by a person authorised to enter into agreements on behalf of the practice. If you are unsure who should sign, please contact CESP HN.

15. Will CESP HN provide support during the transition?

Yes.

CESP HN's Digital Health Officers will be available throughout the renewal process to:

- Answer questions
- Explain the changes
- Assist with signing the document and DocuSign
- Provide additional information if required

16. Where can I get more information?

For further information, please contact your CESP HN Digital Health Officer or email:

digitalhealth@cesphn.com.au