# Notes regarding Primary Care Networks (provisional)

First version: 3 Dec 2019  
Update: 5 May 2020

1. We are aware that Primary Care Networks (PCNs) are of great interest to many Fingertips users and we believe that the majority of our users is willing to accept some inaccuracy due to technical issues, and incomplete or still changing information if this is allowing us to publish as much information as possible at an earlier date.
2. This document tries to explain the caveats that apply to the data and any limitations which cannot be avoided in Fingertips.
3. To highlight that there is a degree of uncertainty and that data may need to change due to still upcoming PCN changes and to flag that the data is, in comparison to other geographies therefore less robust, we have added ‘(provisional)’ to the area type.
4. The first version was based on the GP-practice-to-PCN mapping table ‘epcn’, published on 28th November 2019 that has been downloaded from <https://digital.nhs.uk/services/organisation-data-service/data-downloads/gp-and-gp-practice-related-data> and used to define which practices are grouped into which PCNs in Fingertips.
5. The first version has been overwritten with changes from the epcn file downloaded on 4th May 2020 from the same location (Fingertips publication date: 2nd June 2020)
6. However, not all valid practices (defined by practice code) that are on the [list of current practices](https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/documents/Inclusionlist2019.xlsx) have been allocated to a PCN. In total there are now 182 more practices set to ‘is current’ in Fingertips and having a valid CCG parent than there are practices listed and mapped to PCNs in the latest epcn file. 22 practices are mapped to PCNs (epcn) that are not currently profiled in Fingertips.

Hence it cannot be expected that the sums from GP>PCN and PCN>CCG stack up perfectly and produce the exact same figures as GP>CCG or that PCN figures in Fingertips necessarily match exactly figures calculated using other means.

1. The Fingertips (PHOLIO) database can receive geographical data with a wide range of area codes however areas are only shown and only records are contributing to the calculations within the tool if the area is logged with a valid area code, a valid area type and a flag that says ‘Is current’.
2. For GP practices the practices where this applies are in the [list of current practices](https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/documents/Inclusionlist2019.xlsx) . This list was defined with the consideration in mind that the latest primary care data at this point in time (May 2020) is for 2018/19 and therefore our focus is on practices that were active at the end of March 2019. PCNs (and the latest generation of CCGs (since 4/2020)) are by definition looking at practices that were active after this date. The lion share of the practices that were active at the end of last financial year will still be active but if a practice has changed its code (e.g. due to a merger) or has been set up since April 2019 the practice(code) is for Fingertips not valid (= ‘is not current’) (compare list above) and hence its data will not contribute to higher geography aggregate values.
3. In other words, if an areacode ‘is not current’ its value will, regardless of any known child/parent mappings, not contribute to aggregate parent values such as PCN values or the latest CCGs.   
   Where values are based on aggregation of the known and ‘is current’ child-areas this is highlighted in Fingertips with an asterisk that says on hover over: ‘Aggregated from all known lower geography values’.   
   Easy ways to check which areas are contributing to the aggregate are the Compare areas and the Overview tab in Fingertips – select area type GP and area grouped by PCN(provisional) to see the list of practices with their values that contributed to the PCN value.
4. Because all matching and mapping is based on area codes even clear successor entities will not be contributing to an aggregate that is built on the above described principle of: Sum over all valid (i.e. ‘is current’) areas which are mapped to the parent geography in question.
5. Because there is currently no calculated and uploaded PCN data all PCN values both with PCN as area type and with PCN as area grouping, will be based on automated aggregation within Fingertips. Mathematically there are straight forward methods available e.g. for proportions and crude rates if the counts and denominators are of the contributing areas are uploaded. However, in order to minimise the risk of calculating wrong aggregate values we might not provide an aggregate value where a user would judge it possible to build one.