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New ICO advice on handling Subject Access Requests

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) have recently released a blog containing further advice for GPs and practices on the right of access for patients, commonly called Subject Access Requests (SARs). The blog is titled 'Why the right of access to patient data needn't be a headache for GPs'. It recognises that since May 2018 practices have been receiving an increasing number of SARs, particularly from third parties, eg solicitors and insurers. The blog offers practical advice and tips for practices in dealing with these requests.

The new national GP Contract also recognises the pressure that the increase in SARs has had on general practice and a three-year annual Global Sum uplift of £20 million has been agreed to acknowledge the workload burden of SARs on practices. NHS England believes that the digitalisation of current Lloyd-George paper records will be completed in three years. Once it is completed, patients will then have online access to their electronic and digitalised records and will be able to directly access the relevant SARs information themselves.