



Update from the Consortium of Lancashire & Cumbria LMCs

Tuesday 2nd September 2025

General Practice Alert State (GPAS) - Why Your Weekly Input Matters

Dear Colleagues,

We know completing GPAS each week can feel like “just another form.” But trust me when I say that right now, it is the only mechanism that gives general practice a collective voice on system pressures. Without it, we lose visibility and influence at the very time hospitals are maximising theirs.

What is GPAS?

GPAS is the primary care equivalent of hospital OPEL alerts. It's being collected by us here at Lancashire and Cumbria Consortium of LMCs. Practices report their operational state (Green/ Amber/ Red/ Black) once a week. This anonymised data is collated across all practices and shared as a SITREP (situational report) with ICBs, NHS England, hospital trusts and locally to any interested LMC stakeholders.

Why does it matter?

Visibility and parity: Hospitals constantly report pressure through OPEL. If we don't keep reporting through GPAS, the system assumes we are coping fine.

Evidence, not anecdotes: GPAS is our proof of escalating demand, unsafe workload, and staffing gaps. It moves us from “GPs say” to “the data shows.”

Defence and protection: If you've declared Red/Black through GPAS, you have formally flagged safety concerns. This helps protect practices and clinicians if adverse events are scrutinised later.

Negotiating tool: The LMC uses GPAS data in direct discussions with the ICB and NHS England to push back on inappropriate workload transfers and to argue for support and resources. Without it, our position is weakened.

What happens if we stop?

We lose the only GP-friendly reporting mechanism we have. Hospitals dominate the narrative as “the only pressured part of the NHS.” Practices become invisible at system level just when workload is at its most unsustainable.

What we need from you?

GPAS completion rates have plummeted over the past six months. Staff burnout and apathy towards an uncaring system may have contributed to this, but this is the one tool that can at least try to help demonstrate all the hard work general practice does but never gets credit for!

1. Complete GPAS once a week (it takes under 2 minutes)
2. Be honest: Red and Black states are not a sign of failure - they reflect reality.
3. Encourage colleagues: The more practices who submit, the stronger our collective voice.





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Final word

GPAS is not about monitoring you. It is about protecting you. It is our only real-time, collective evidence base to show the pressures we all feel everyday.

If practices disengage, we risk silence - and silence will always be filled by the hospital narrative. Please continue to complete GPAS each week.

GP Estates - Statutory Compliance (Lancashire and South Cumbria ICB only)

The LMC has recently been engaged by colleagues in the Estates department at the ICB to outline their proposal to provide additional support to practices in regard to statutory compliance within GP premises. This refers to certificates and validations that practices need to ensure their buildings are compliant and safe for staff and patients.

As such the ICB wishes to provide a workshop and subsequent scheme that will allow practices to log their compliance to ensure certificates are up to date and any remedial actions are taken.

The LMC have insisted and clarified that this is not to be used to monitor or dictate to practices - it is to be a supportive offer only and engagement is not mandatory.

The LMC welcomes any offers of support from our ICB and have agreed to work with the ICB to ensure practices are compliant in these areas. This is something practices need to ensure is up to date for CQC and to be contractually compliant.

Whilst contractually practices only have to provide a simple eDeclaration for their statutory compliance, the offered support may be of use to practices that need extra assistance. If practices would like to discuss this with the ICB or the LMC, [please do get in touch](#).

Contract Variation Notice – Concerns Over Opening Hours

We are urgently awaiting national clarification from the BMA's GP Committee regarding the recent national Contract Variation Notice, which appears to go beyond the scope of the changes outlined in the NHSE letter regarding the 2025/26 GP Contract.

While the NHSE letter specified that the online consultation tool must be available throughout core hours for non-urgent requests from 1st October, the Contract Variation Notice appears to introduce more extensive requirements.

If taken at face value, it would suggest that practices must ensure all three access routes (in-person, telephone and online consultation) — are available throughout the entirety of core hours. Understandably, concerns have been raised to us that this could have far-reaching consequences for practices. Such a change would represent a significant reduction in practice-level flexibility, with serious implications, particularly for single-handed or smaller practices.

We will provide further updates as soon as national guidance is issued or clarification is received.





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Medicines Optimisation

We are aware that practices continue to raise concerns about the Medicines Optimisation LES, particularly around the achievability of targets, the lack of clarity in funding mechanisms, and the increasing expectation placed on practices. Questions also remain around the scope and responsibilities of the Medicines Co-ordinator/ Manager role, which are not consistently recognised or supported.

The LMC has raised these issues with the ICB on numerous occasions and will continue to press for a clear and fair resolution. We will keep practices updated, but our position remains that practices should not be disadvantaged by unrealistic targets or unfunded expectations.

GP support hub launched for all GPs during the unemployment crisis

The BMA have launched the [GP Support Hub](#) – a dedicated space to help you navigate challenges such as underemployment, unemployment, and financial uncertainty.

The BMA have also raised unemployment concerns with the Secretary of State and written to Stephen Kinnock MP, Minister of State at DHSC, urging a meeting to address this growing problem.

LMC Buying Group update –26-27 Flu Vaccine information now available

In April, the Buying Group launched a new members' portal to replace its old website. The portal allows members to view details about suppliers, request quotes and see which suppliers they've used over the last four years.

The 2026-27 flu vaccine offers have recently been released and this information which includes pricing and how to order have been added to the members portal. If you haven't yet registered for access for the members' portal you won't have been sent this important information.

To set up login details go to: <https://buying.plexusportal.co.uk/Register>. Please note that the email to set up your password is automated so may end up in your junk/spam folder so check there and mark the email as not junk/safe sender so any future notifications go direct to your inbox.

Over the next few months, the Buying Group will be offering free cost analyses to members so if you'd be interested in taking part look out for an email from the Buying Group's Jenni Brooks.

The Buying Group is managed by Plexus Support Services Ltd and their contact details are below if you have any questions:

Tel: 0115 979 6910

Email: info@plexussupport.co.uk

Website: <https://www.plexussupport.co.uk>





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Morecambe Bay Practice Locality Event (Morecambe Bay Only)

The GP Leadership Team would like to invite Morecambe Bay General Practice to a hosted Practice Locality event on **Wednesday 17th September**. This event is directly following the PLT session, and will be held at Crooklands Hotel, Nr Kendal.

This session aims to update member practices on significant system changes strategy direction.

- Present key developments:
 - NHS 10-Year Plan, Contract options
- Explore the opportunities and implications for general practice.
- Facilitate open discussion to gather views, concerns and insights from practices.
- Support practices in deciding whether to collectively lead in shaping these changes

They would like to hear:

- **Your views:** What are your hopes and concerns?
- **Your priorities:** What support would you need to participate in or lead these changes?
- **Your voice:** Should we, as local general practice, take a leadership role

To register for the event or for further information please contact h.donegan@nhs.net

Event Details:

Time: 18.00 (arrival from 17:30h)

Location: Crooklands Hotel, Crooklands, Cumbria, LA7 7NW [Crooklands- Google Maps](#)

This is a pivotal moment. Your input will help decide whether general practice leads the future of neighbourhood care — or is shaped by it.

Help Us Grow Our Audience

We understand that you are busy and are likely to receive many emails on a daily basis. However it is important for you to receive communications from us because we can help and support you.

We know there are many colleagues who do not receive our brieflet, so please help us by sharing this with your team and letting us know to add them to our distribution lists.





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The LMC is pleased to offer a new Occupational Health Service designed to support General Practice and their employees.

WHAT WE OFFER

- ☒ Absence Medicals – £300
- ☒ Ill Health Retirement Reports – approx. £600–£700*
*(subject to case review)

WHY CHOOSE US

Services delivered by experienced GPs with occupational health expertise.

- ☒ Confidential
- ☒ No referral threshold
- ☒ Quick turn around
- ☒ Accessible & Local



SERVICE LOCATIONS

- Castle Medical Group, Clitheroe
- Garstang Medical Practice, Preston
- Site visits for bulk requests can be arranged.
- Video consultations will also be considered.



CONTACT



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