



# Update from the Consortium of Lancashire & Cumbria LMCs

Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> May 2021

## GP appointment figures and workload pressures

The latest [GP appointment figures](#) in England were published last Thursday which show that practices delivered almost 5 million more appointments in March than they did the month before, and nearly 3 million more than they did in the same month two years ago, long before the onset of the pandemic.

These figures underline the immense efforts that practices are going to providing care to their communities and the intense workload pressures that staff are under as we continue to respond to the pandemic alongside patients' wider health needs.

## COVID-19 vaccination programme

As of last Friday, people aged 40 and over are eligible to book an appointment via the [NHS national booking service](#) to receive the COVID-19 vaccination. Practice groups can invite these patients for their first vaccination if they have sufficient supplies alongside continuing with second vaccinations to those patients who are due to receive it.

Since the vaccination rollout began in December, more than 917,000 have been vaccinated in Lancashire and South Cumbria and more than 1.3 million doses have been delivered. There has also been more than 250,000 vaccinations delivered in North Cumbria.

## Sir Simon Stevens to stand down as NHS England Chief Executive

NHSE/I have [announced](#) that Sir Simon Stevens is to stand down at the end of July as NHS England chief executive. He has been a strong advocate for the vital role of General Practice within the NHS and we wish him all the best for the future.

## Domestic abuse bill receives royal assent

Last week saw the [Domestic Abuse Bill receive Royal Assent](#) to become the Domestic Abuse Act. This means the provisions in the Bill will come into law over the coming months, and probably before the Summer. The Bill contains a new measure which will prevent doctors from charging patients experiencing domestic abuse for letters to access legal aid. While BMA guidance has previously advised against charging for these letters, they continue to push for GPs to be removed from this legal aid process entirely – as the BMA believes the current system disempowers victims and is unnecessary bureaucratic.





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## Extension to the shingles immunisation programme

Individuals become eligible for routine vaccination against shingles when they reach age 70, and all those aged up to and including 79, are now eligible to receive the vaccine until they reach age 80.

Individuals who are eligible for the shingles vaccination programme who turned 80 years during the pandemic and missed the opportunity to be vaccinated can now be vaccinated until 31 July. There are no contractual changes to this programme, the offer of vaccination is opportunistic or if requested for the catch-up cohort. GPs will continue to be reimbursed via the standard item of service fee, which should be claimed manually.

## Launch of framework for suppliers of digital services to General Practice

The new [Digital first online consultation and video consultation framework](#) has been launched this week, which is intended to improve the standards of systems available for patients and practices. The new procurement framework means that PCNs working with commissioners can choose assured systems from a range of suppliers to better meet local needs.

The framework will allow products to be better tailored to user needs, including integrating online consultation systems with GP clinical systems and sending requests to other primary care services to reduce pressure on practices and navigate patients effectively.

## Appraisal 2020 survey

NHS England and Improvement is conducting a survey on Appraisal 2020. If you've used the new, streamlined format, which was introduced following concerns raised about workload pressures and the impact on wellbeing during the pandemic, then your thoughts will be valuable to help develop the format and make appraisal more useful for all doctors. Everyone who has used the new format is encouraged to take part, especially if you're a Responsible Officer. To take part please email [lily.tomkins1@nhs.net](mailto:lily.tomkins1@nhs.net) who will share a survey link according to your designated body.

## CSU IP Telephony Billing

The LMC is currently looking into concerns raised with us regarding increased costs for IP telephony services provided by the CSU. We do not believe that practices should increase payments for these services if they have not been agreed to. We will keep practices updated on this issue.

