



Update from the Consortium of Lancashire & Cumbria LMCs

Tuesday 13th July 2021

COVID-19 vaccination programme

Acceleration of second doses for all cohorts

The government has published guidance advising that appointments of a second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine should be brought forward from 12 to eight weeks for the remaining people in all cohorts who have yet to receive their second dose. This is to ensure everyone has the strongest possible protection from the Delta variant of the virus at the earliest opportunity possible. Read the NHSE/I letter [here](#).

COVID-19 booster vaccine and flu vaccine programmes

Following the [guidance](#) published by JCVI about the COVID-19 booster programme, and the subsequent guidance from [NHSE/I guidance on COVID-19 vaccinations](#), BMA GPC remains seriously concerned that this may be interpreted as a cap on general practice involvement in the flu vaccination campaign this winter or that practices will be limited in their ability to provide this to their patients as they would normally do because of overly restrictive arrangements set by NHSE/I.

BMA GPC are calling on the Government and NHSE/I to support practices and PCNs in delivering Phase 3, not just through appropriate funding, but also through the ongoing workforce support provided during phase 1 and 2, through managing workload (including the continued suspension of PCN service specifications), and improvements to IT systems.

Easing of COVID-19 restrictions

Ahead of the Prime Minister's [announcement](#) last week to end the COVID-19 restrictions in England on 19 July, including mandatory wearing of face coverings and social distancing, the [BMA urged Government not to 'throw progress away' and to keep some Covid-safe measures](#), such as the requirement to wear a mask in enclosed public spaces.

The BMA expressed serious concern that the government has decided to ease all mitigations, despite the Chief Medical Officer speaking about the alarming rise in cases, doubling of hospitalisations and certainty of more deaths.

The LMC are also concerned that there is no update on what restrictions (including mask wearing) should be in place in healthcare settings after this date. We await a national steer on whether it is still reasonable for patients attending practices to be asked to wear a face covering. We will of course support practices on the decisions they make regarding this.





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NHS Patient Survey results

The annual [GP patient survey](#) results were published last week, and with 83% of patients rating their overall experience of general practice as good, an increase on the previous year, this is testament to just how hard GPs and their teams have, and continue to, work in order to provide care to their patients and communities. To see an increase in overall patient satisfaction despite the really challenging year the entire NHS has faced - is incredibly positive.

Health and Care bill

The Government has introduced the [Health and Care Bill](#) this week, which will deliver significant health reforms in England. These include making ICSs (integrated Care Systems) statutory bodies, dissolving CCGs and transferring their responsibilities, staff and powers to ICSs, formally merging NHS England and NHS Improvement, removing Section 75 of the 2012 Health and Social Care Act and mandated competitive tendering, and conferring new powers over the NHS to the Secretary of State.

The BMA are lobbying to ensure the Bill addresses concerns and that reform is in the best interests for patients and doctors, and supports the NHS to be a publicly-funded provider to care for the health needs of our population.

Read BMA GPC's detailed analysis of the bill [here](#).

Review of the England Medical Performers list regulations

The Department of Health and Social Care has commissioned NHSE/I to review the England Medical Performers List Regulations in the context of the wider regulatory landscape in operation across England. This review has the potential to identify where regulatory requirements can be streamlined and simplified, while maintaining the high professional standards that ensure patient safety.

This questionnaire aims to gather information from stakeholders about their views of the existing regulatory landscape for GPs in England and thoughts on how this landscape might be transformed. The feedback will contribute to the content of a series of focus group discussions and inform an options appraisal that will be shared with the DHSC during autumn 2021. Take the survey [here](#)

New guidance for Health and Social care providers on CQC's monitoring approach

The CQC has published [new guidance for health and social care providers on their monitoring approach](#).

The BMA is seriously concerned about CQC's new approach to monitoring practices and have raised this with them directly. Practices will understandably be anxious about the implications, not least when they are struggling with record demand and significant workload pressures. Whilst CQC has a legal responsibility to inspect health care providers and ensure the safety of services to patients, it has been doing this throughout the pandemic through its Emergency Support Framework. BMA GPC have





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called for a continuation of this ESF approach which is much more proportionate and have misgivings about a move towards greater inspection numbers linked to a risk stratification approach that is new and not widely trialled.

PCSE pay and pension portal

BMA GPC continue to work at challenging the considerable shortcomings of the new portal. They are aware of the many unacceptable issues being faced by practices and GPs but it is of critical importance that users log these with [PCSE](#) to ensure that we can hold them accountable. They know that those interactions are also causing frustration and we are applying pressure for improvements and greater transparency around their customer service work. BMA GPC would advise practices to keep a record of the issues they are raising with PCSE and the length of time taken to get resolutions.

Regular and ongoing meetings have led to a considerable number of 'fixes' to the system but there are many more outstanding. This will take time, but BMA GPC are committed to ensuring a much-improved service for the profession to use. NHSE/I and PCSE have assured the BMA that the current run of global sum payments is going well but a close eye is being kept on this.

The LMC has also been trying to raise issues on behalf of our constituent practices and we continue to do so. If you have an issue please report it through the above channels and if you would like let us know so we can endeavour to assist you.

Weight Management and Long-COVID Enhanced Service

Practices should now have been asked by CCGs whether they wish to sign up to the Weight Management ES and Long-COVID ES. Whilst the national specifications were not negotiated with GPC the LMC office are happy to field any queries they may have whilst considering whether to sign up.

LMC Support

A reminder that we have a [wellness section](#) on our website that is available for use by all in General Practice. We also have our [GP support scheme](#) for Doctors and [Horizon Programme](#) for Practice Managers and aspiring Practice Managers.

LMC and non LMC events

To find out about all our upcoming events have a look on our [website](#).

