



# Update from the Consortium of Lancashire & Cumbria LMCs

Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2022

## Access to Patient Records update

The NHSEI programme allowing patients with online accounts to access new entries to their medical record has now been delayed until [July 2022](#).

The BMA GPC IT Policy team have been having weekly calls with NHSEI to look at all aspects of the programme and to raise concerns. We will keep you updated on this.

## GP contract negotiations and future of general practice

Despite negotiations between GPCE and NHSE about amendments to the five year contract deal agreed in 2019, [NHSE](#) announced that the contract amendments will come into effect from 1 April, without an agreement or endorsement by the BMA.

Read the full BMA statement [here](#) and their [response to misleading comments](#) about their involvement in the contract changes.

## Policy Exchange report on the future of general practice

The [Policy Exchange report of future of general practice](#), supported by the Secretary of State, recognises the importance of what GPs and their teams do for their communities, and understands that there are some deep-seated problems that need to be urgently addressed, and begins to articulate some ways to make general practice services sustainable for the future.

The BMA will be providing a more detailed critique of this report in the coming weeks.

Read the [BMA statement in response](#).

## Data on the pressures facing general practice

Pressures on general practice such as workforce shortages are still as severe as ever, and is evident in the latest data from [NHS Digital for the GP workforce](#) in January which shows that there is now the equivalent of 1,608 fewer fully qualified full time GPs than in 2015. This is in addition to the average number of patients each GP is responsible for having increased by around 300 since 2015.

The Institute for Government has produced a [performance tracker for general practice](#) for 2021, which draws together data from various sources on the state of general practice and the challenges facing it in the context of the pandemic.

The BMAs webpage on [pressures in general practice data analysis](#) includes key figures on workforce and appointments that are updated each month, alongside what the BMA has been calling for, for general practice.

## Mandatory vaccinations for healthcare staff to be revoked

The proposed requirement of [mandatory vaccinations](#) for health and social care staff, which was supposed to come into force in England on 1 April, has been [revoked on 15 March 2022](#).

If you have been affected by this issue, please contact the LMC [HR Service](#).





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## **BMA successfully challenges threatening letters from solicitors**

Several solicitors have been threatening doctors with legal action if the doctor does not provide COVID-19 exemption for the solicitor's clients. The BMAs Medico Legal Committee (MLC) has written to the Solicitor's Regulation Authority (SRA) and has been assured that solicitors should not be "writing in offensive, threatening or intimidatory ways. And we also do not expect solicitors to pursue matters which they know have no legal merit."

If doctors receive intimidating letters, please advise your Medical Defence Organisation, and share a copy with the GPC at [info.gpc@bma.org.uk](mailto:info.gpc@bma.org.uk) so that the MLC may pursue further via the SRA.

Furthermore, the GPC and the MLC have met with the COVID-19 Exemptions Team at the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC). It is understood that further guidance on COVID-19 exemptions will be published, and this will clarify the role of doctors in providing exemption certificates, make it clear what conditions do and do not warrant an exemption, and reiterate that there is no appeal. The GPC have asked for departmental support that any legal action is against the policy, and thus the DHSC, and not the GP/ practice. Both committees hope to see a swift and satisfactory conclusion to this matter.

## **NHSPS service charges dispute update - trial dates**

The BMA is supporting five test claimant GP practices who have received demands from NHS Property Services (NHSPS) to pay inflated service charges based on its "full cost recovery" approach, outlined in NHSPS' Consolidated Charging Policy ('the Policy'). These court proceedings were brought against NHSPS for a declaration that the Policy does not form part of their tenancy and, therefore, NHSPS cannot base their charges on it.

The trial will begin on 17 March 2022 and will be concluded no later than 5 April 2022.

Read the [statement from the BMA legal team](#) at Capital Law.

## **Kings Fund report on Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme (ARRS)**

The King's Fund has published a major [report on the ARRS](#), which focuses on four roles — social prescribing link workers; first contact physiotherapists; paramedics and pharmacists — to examine the issues related to the implementation of these roles, looking at the experiences of working in these roles and of the people managing them.

## **Pneumococcal vaccine claims**

From April 2022 it will no longer be possible to submit claims to the NHS BSA for reimbursement of locally procured PPV23 vaccines administered, and practices should only be using centrally procured PPV23 vaccine for immunising their eligible population.

From 1 April 2022, the pneumococcal vaccines (both the PPV23 and Pneumococcal polysaccharide conjugated vaccine) will be removed from the bulk vaccine list, for which claims are made via the FP34PD/D appendix form, and practices will need to submit pneumococcal vaccine reimbursement claims via a prescription form (FP10) for each administration instead.





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## Smoking Cessation service

From 10 March 2022, an NHS Smoking Cessation Service (SCS) will start to be commissioned from community pharmacies as an Advanced service within the Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework. The service allows NHS trusts to refer patients to a community pharmacy of their choice to continue smoking cessation treatment which was initiated during an inpatient stay in hospital (the Ottawa Model for Smoking Cessation).

While this is not a service that general practices can refer into, a requirement of the service is to notify a patient's GP of the outcome of the service provision. Therefore, as the service gradually rolls out over the next two years (with both NHS trusts and pharmacies opting into provision of the service), practices may receive these notifications as and when their patients are discharged from the service.

Further information on the SCS can be found [here](#).

## A reminder - healthcare staff who test positive for COVID-19

Healthcare staff who have tested positive for COVID-19 should not attend work until they have had two negative LFD test results taken 24 hours apart. The first test should not be taken before day 5 after their initial positive test. [Guidance is available on the UKHSA website](#).

## Improving staff retention: A guide for line managers and employers

Supporting NHS colleagues to stay and stay well is more vital than ever. [Improving staff retention: A guide for line managers and employers](#) is an updated resource from our National Retention Programme and NHS Employers, which aims to support line managers, employers, and leaders to retain talented and skilled staff. The guide incorporates learning from COVID-19, supports the ambitions in the NHS People Promise and equips line managers and employers to have regular conversations with colleagues to discuss how they could support them to stay. Read more in [this blog](#) by acting chief people officer, Em Wilkinson-Brice.

## Sessional GPs committee regional elections

The BMA Sessional GPs committee is currently seeking regional representatives to join its committee, which has 16 elected members.

If elected, candidates will take up their seats on the committee in July 2022 and will serve for three BMA sessions, from 2022-2025. You must be a BMA member to nominate in this election.

To submit your nomination please visit <https://elections.bma.org.uk/> The deadline is noon Tuesday 29 March 2022.

If you have any questions about the elections, please email [elections@bma.org.uk](mailto:elections@bma.org.uk) or get in touch with [Mariah](#) at the LMC.





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## National Living Wage increase

From the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022, the National Living Wage is set to rise by 6.6%. This level of uplift, which has to be applied as a statutory obligation, may impact on Practices in terms of potential to erode pay differentials between different categories of staff, particularly given the anticipated level of increase anticipated for NHS staff of just 3%. An unfortunate consequence of this potential differential in pay awards may be some level of dissatisfaction from longer serving or senior staff around the erosion of pay differentials, but Practices are advised not to take ad hoc initiatives to remedy this in the short term due to perceived risk of:

- Setting precedent for the future
- Potential for discrimination claims from different staff groups
- Financial pressures being stored up for the future

It should also be noted that the DDRB is still to set out recommended uplifts for Doctors in General Practice which may add further to pressures on Practice pay budgets.

If you require any further guidance on the matter, please contact the [LMC HR team](#).

## Telephony system bills

We have been contacted by a handful of practices who are receiving higher telephony bills than usual and have had no explanation as to why they have increased so dramatically.

Please contact the [LMC office](#) for advice on these bills/statements and we will be happy to assist.

## LMC Support Services

Visit our [LMC Support page on our website](#) to see the range of services we offer:

- Support & Development Service
- Partnership Agreement Drafting Service
- Sessional GPs
- LMC HR Service
- NHSE GP Resilience Programme

The LMC are also here to offer advice and guidance on all things General Practice.

## LMC Training Events

See our upcoming training events [here](#).

Please get in touch with [Rebecca](#) if you would like to book on.

