



# Update from the Consortium of Lancashire & Cumbria LMCs

Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2022

## Requirement for COVID-19 vaccination as a condition of employment

NHS has recently published updated Vaccination as a Condition of Deployment (VCOD) [implementation guidance](#) to support providers in preparing and planning for when the regulations (which are still subject to parliamentary passage) are introduced. In the guidance there is a flowchart, [attached](#), that covers which healthcare workers are required to be vaccinated as a condition of deployment which you may find useful.

NHS have also published a [letter](#) and [frequently asked questions](#). Note that this is not a NHSEI-led commissioning requirement but a legal one related to CQC registration and the regulations.

The BMA GPC are currently developing a set of [FAQs](#) which will address redeployment, termination and implications for practices which should be released before the end of the month.

The Royal College of Nursing has also produced a [COVID-19 workplace risk assessment toolkit](#) which may also be helpful.

## Confirmatory PCR tests temporarily suspended for positive lateral flow test results

Following the announcement by the [Health Security Agency](#) that asymptomatic people who receive positive lateral flow device test results for COVID-19 now won't be required to take a confirmatory PCR test, NHSEI has published [guidance on the implications for the NHS](#) and advice for practices for actions to take:

- 1:1 conversation with staff who has not had both doses of the vaccine
- robust local monitoring processes are in place for regular staff LFT testing
- staff (even if vaccinated) to carry out asymptomatic twice weekly LFD and [report](#) results
- COVID-related sickness absence recorded in ESR where that is available
- staff offered continuous learning regarding [UKHSA's IPC guidance](#)

Note that anyone who develops one of the three main COVID-19 symptoms are still required to take a PCR test, and self-isolate if they get a positive test result.

Read our simple [flowchart](#) regarding NHS staff isolation.

## Respiratory Protective Equipment, risk assessments, and provision of respirators

Omicron is more transmissible than previous variants of COVID-19 which increase the risk of general practice workforce contracting the disease. To reduce this risk BMA Occupational Medicine Committee is drafting guidance for workplaces to advise that employers should carry out risk assessments and provide mitigations to reduce risk of contracting COVID. This guidance will be published in full shortly.

In the meantime an [abbreviated guideline](#) has been developed by the BMA GPC for Practices to use, which includes a template letter to CCGs requesting support with getting RPE supply.





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## **PPE consultation response and extension of free PPE to the health and care sector**

The government has announced its decision to extend the central, free provision of all items of COVID-19 PPE to the health and care sector by up to one year to March 2023 or until the infection prevention and control (IPC) guidance on PPE usage for COVID-19 is either withdrawn or significantly amended (whichever is sooner). The press release announcing the decision to extend is available [here](#).

The government has published its response to the public consultation. The formal response is available on GOV.UK [here](#).

## **COVID-19 vaccination programme**

A [Patient Group Direction \(PGD\) and national protocol](#) have now been published for Comirnaty 30micrograms/dose COVID-19 mRNA vaccine V06.00

## **2022/23 priorities and operational planning guidance**

NHSEI has published [guidance on priorities and operational planning for 2022/23](#), based on a scenario where COVID-19 returns to a low level and the NHS make significant progress in restoring services and reducing the COVID backlogs in the first part of the year. The guidance includes future funding arrangements.

## **GP contracts and variation notices**

The [model contracts and contract variation notices have now been published](#), including the general practice pay transparency obligations. The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care has confirmed the implementation of general practice pay transparency will be delayed until at least Spring 2022. Read the BMA [guidance on declaring earnings](#).

## **Medicines Supply Tool**

The DHSC and NHSEI have now launched an online [Medicines Supply Tool](#), which provides up to date information about medicine supply issues. To access the Medicines Supply Tool, you will need to register with the [SPS \(Specialist Pharmacy Service\) website](#).

## **GP practice sponsorship process**

The BMA has partnered with legal firm Magrath Sheldrick, who oversee the BMA [immigration advice service](#), to develop a webinar on navigating the GP sponsorship process. The webinar is aimed at GP employers and offers practical tips on how to navigate the current sponsorship process to recruit non-UK nationals and addresses FAQs on the process itself. Access the [webinar](#).

If you have any questions or would like to share your experiences of navigating the sponsorship process, please contact Caroline Strickland, Senior Policy Advisor, International Affairs ([cstrickland@bma.org.uk](mailto:cstrickland@bma.org.uk)).





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## Fit notes for Statutory Sick Pay purposes

The Department for Work and Pensions suspended the requirement for fit notes for benefit purposes between 17 December 2021 and 26 January 2022. Claimants whose fit notes expire, and those who make new claims due to a health condition between 17 December and 26 January (and are still ongoing), will need to provide medical evidence from 27 January, and may, therefore, contact their GP for a fit note in advance of this date. These should be issued.

Fit notes for Statutory Sick Pay purposes will be required for absences which begin on or after 27 January and last for longer than 7 days. Individuals whose sickness began between 10 December and 26 January inclusive will continue to be able to self-certify their absence for up to 28 days.

## NHS Property Services

The BMA is supporting 5 GP practices in a legal case against NHS Property Services (NHSPS). The hearing is listed for March this year.

The Lawyer magazine has selected the case as **one of the top 20 cases to watch in 2022**. The case has taken a lot of time and effort from everyone involved. This case has significant wider implications as it affects other NHS providers as well as GPs. 31% of NHSPS tenants are NHS trusts according to the Public Accounts Committee report in 2019.

Irrespective of the outcome this case proves that the BMA is prepared to support doctors in difficult circumstances. We will continue to keep you updated as things develop further.

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

## LMC training events

See our list of training events for 2022 [here](#).

## LMC conflict management training

The LMC delivers conflict management training to support practice staff in dealing with conflict from patients. If you are interested in having this training, please see future dates on our [website](#). We also offer this training to individual practices if you have 10 or more staff that need it. To find out more get in touch with [Rebecca](#).

