



Update from the Consortium of Lancashire & Cumbria LMCs

Monday 18th May 2020

Coronavirus (COVID-19) update

Roadmap out of lockdown

In response to the [Government's announcement to ease some lockdown measures](#), the BMA stated that the plan is too fast, confusing and risky. Since then further guidance has been released and the BMA will continue to scrutinise this carefully and challenge government when necessary. Read the Government's recovery strategy [here](#). Read the full BMA statement [here](#).

In light of this announcement, Practices could be faced with new workload as people will be anxious about returning to a workplace where adequate social distancing measures have not been put in place. This could lead to more requests for fit notes and letters to employers, with people who cannot work from home being urged to return to work. Patients making requests should be directed to discuss this with their employers, and employers should be making reasonable adjustments and performing appropriate risk assessments for their staff. In this situation a fit note should not be required.

Please get in touch with the LMC if you need further guidance.

GP and practice COVID-19 toolkit

Following the announcement on easing lockdown, the Government has published [guidance for employers to help getting more people back to work and operating safely](#). However, as this does not specifically include healthcare settings, practices can refer to the BMA [toolkit for GPs and practices](#), and in particular the [section on reducing COVID-19 transmission](#), which refers to social distancing within GP practices.

Employment model for Hot Hubs

Given the recent development around Hot Hubs and the flexible use of staffing resources to work in those sites, questions have been raised with the LMC around the different levels of liability where staff are temporarily transferred into Hot Hubs from their regular employer, and how best to document those liabilities. The LMC have explored different options and as part of that process the HR team have engaged with our legal advisors to assess different models and have concluded that a formal secondment agreement best suits the needs of both the employer and the Hot Hub host.

Our legal advisors have produced a template secondment agreement that incorporates a section covering standard liabilities; this section can be expanded, with legal advice, to incorporate specific requirements that might arise from the current exceptional circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic.

If practices are unsure on whether a secondment agreement would suit their individual need, please feel free to contact the HR team to discuss in more detail hr@nwlmc.org





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Care home arrangements

Following the BMA lobbying of government on this issue, care homes are now being supported to quickly upgrade their ability to do virtual consultations. Changes include the rollout of [NHSmile](#) to care homes and domiciliary care providers, supporting remote consultations, and [reducing social isolation and loneliness for care home residents](#).

Practices can use the NHSEI [guidance on how practices can support care homes during the pandemic](#), working with others in their area to do what they can to support their local care homes at this critical time.

The [NHSEI primary care bulletin](#) (15 May) clarified that the clinical lead for the service is not medically responsible and accountable for the care of individual care home residents. Medical responsibility and accountability for the care of individual care home residents remains with their registered GP – and there may be residents with different registered GPs within a care home. NHSEI does not expect residents to be re-registered.

NHSEI have stated that a reimbursement mechanism for general practice will be established to help practices meet the additional costs of COVID-19 related activity which cannot be met from existing practice resources. Reimbursement will be managed through CCGs, on the basis of national guidance.

Remote consultations

The way consultations are conducted in general practice has been adapted to cope with COVID-19 and has made GPs revolutionise how they work in just a few short weeks. Read more in the BMA feature [wholesale transformation of general practice](#)

The level of change in general practice is also evident from the figures reported in [an NHSEI primary care bulletin](#) last week, which show that video consultations are now available in 97% of practices. However, there is still a need to see faster rollout of the necessary IT upgrades to support this way of working in a sustainable and resilient way.

The BMA [toolkit for practices](#) has been updated to include a [FAQ for locum doctors working remotely](#).

Misuse of COPI regulations for GP data requests

Following a BMA letter to NHSX asking for assurances on the misuse of COPI regulations to request GP data, the BMA has received the [attached response](#). NHSX, NHS Digital and PHE have, in response to the BMAs concerns, established a single front door to triage requests for data, including research, for COVID-19 purposes. Practices can now direct any requests they receive for data to the single front door via covid-19datasharing@nhsx.nhs.uk





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CPR guidance for primary and community care

The Resuscitation Council, together with RCGP, have published guidance for healthcare workers (HCWS) who are performing CPR in primary and community care settings. The guidance clarifies that as CPR is an aerosol generating procedure (AGP) in the context of COVID-19, AGP PPE is the safest option for HCWs when undertaking chest compressions and other resuscitation procedures on patients with suspected or confirmed COVID.

However, it is recognised that this may not always be achievable in a primary or community care setting depending on the availability of PPE. In the absence of AGP PPE, non AGP PPE if available for clinical care, must be worn as a minimum for resuscitation events. Read the guidance [here](#).

BAME risk assessment guidance

The Office of National Statistics published [data on Covid-19 related deaths by ethnic group](#), which showed that those with Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds are more likely to die from the virus. The BMA is deeply worried and has been lobbying government to take urgent steps to address this as this data highlights the need to protect BAME communities from COVID-19 and that they are effectively risk assessed. Read the BMA statement [here](#) and the LMC statement [attached](#).

Various national organisations have developed resources that you may find of use: The Faculty of Occupational Health Medicine: [Risk Reduction Framework for NHS staff at risk of COVID-19](#); NHS Employers has published: [guidance on risk assessment for staff](#); Public Health England is carrying out a [review into factors impacting health outcomes from COVID-19](#)

The BMA have highlighted to NHSEI that primary care needs a nationally agreed tool for risk assessment that practices can use to take an appropriate and consistent approach in protecting staff. In the meantime, you can see the [attached examples](#) of risk assessments that you may find of use. Please note the risk assessments in the attached are not LMC recommendations but have been shared for your attention in the absence of a nationally agreed toolkit at this time.

Preparing for flu immunisation 2020/21

NHSEI has published the [annual flu letter for the 2020/21 programme](#). It is recognised that delivering the flu immunisation programme is likely to be more challenging this year because of the impact of COVID-19. NHSEI will publish further guidance nearer the planned start of the programme in September 2020. In the meantime, practices should continue to plan for the programme as usual. The letter sets out which groups are eligible for flu and how to prepare for this autumn's vaccination campaign.

LMC HR: Updated COVID FAQs for Employers

Our LMC HR legal team at Freeths have updated the [FAQs for employers](#) on their website.





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NHS Digital national GP data extraction to support COVID-19 planning and research

NHS Digital has issued a DPN outlining a framework for a tactical GPES extraction for planning and research related to COVID-19. This extraction was requested by the BMA and RCGP as means of relieving the burden being placed on GPs at this time to provide data for research purposes. Under this interim arrangement, NHSD will become the data controller for a predetermined set of data extracted from GP records with all requests to practices redirected to them.

The BMA and RCGP will have sight of the process for requesting this data and will regularly meet with NHSD to review applicants who wish to use it. The [DPN](#) contains all relevant information on the extraction and in this [NHS Digital circular](#). NHSD have asked that all practices register by 27 May.

NHS 111 referring into general practice and COVID-19 tests

In a recent [NHSEI primary care bulletin](#), practices are reminded that if they receive a referral from NHS 111, whether from the national CCAS or from a local service, then the practice should assume clinical responsibility for the patient. It is up to the local practice to decide on the best course of action for their patients, including the option to re-triage. However, the patient should not be re-directed back to NHS 111 as this could result in delay of urgent clinical care, nor should they be directed to NHS 111 to co-ordinate [testing for COVID-19](#).

GP Support Scheme

The LMC offer free and confidential pastoral support to all GPs in Lancashire and Cumbria. The mentors on the support scheme have confirmed they are happy to talk to GPs through video call during this time. Please get in touch with [Maria](#) if you are a GP and would like advice and support or if you would like to know more information.

COVID-19 webpage and guidance

[The BMA COVID-19 webpage](#) is updated regularly with guidance and links to official information:

- [General practice toolkit](#)
- [Model terms of engagement for a GP providing temporary COVID-19 services](#)
- [Terms and conditions for sessional GPs](#)
- [BMA's COVID-19 ethical guidance](#)

You can also see the [LMC Hot Topics](#) section on our website for guidance.

