



Update from the Consortium of Lancashire & Cumbria LMCs

Monday 19th October 2020

New three tier lockdown approach and BMA recommendations to help reduce spread of COVID-19

The rapid rise in the number of people with COVID-19 is already putting a significant strain on General Practice services. GPs and their teams have responded incredibly well throughout the pandemic, remaining open, maintaining services and going the extra mile to care for patients. Recent media reports and briefings suggesting otherwise have not only been wrong but also deeply damaging to the morale of a dedicated and committed workforce. Dr Richard Vautrey, Chair of the BMA GPC, made this situation clear in a one-to-one meetings with Sir Simon Stevens and Jo Churchill, the health minister with responsibility for Primary Care, earlier this month, and they both acknowledged the central and important role General Practice has played and will play in dealing with the pandemic.

Last Monday, the Government [announced the introduction of a new three-tier \(medium, high, very high\) lockdown approach for England](#). Prior to this, the BMA called for new, stronger measures to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 infection and published a series of [recommendations](#) which could help reduce the level of infection as well as supporting businesses and those who are in vulnerable groups. The BMA still believes the government needs to do more to properly respond to the growing infection rates. BMA recommendations include:

- Modify the current 'Rule of 6' with the rule that only two (exclusive) households can meet (and not exceed 6 people) – ideally outdoors, rather than indoors.
- Making the wearing of face masks mandatory in all offices and working environments, unless you are working alone.
 - The LMC would encourage GP practices to do their own risk assessments in relation to this.
- Wear masks in all outdoor settings where two metre distancing isn't possible.

Read the BMA [statement about the new measures](#)

New advice for patients at high risk of COVID-19 infection

Following the announcement of a new three-tier lockdown approach, the DHSC published [updated guidance for those considered most clinically vulnerable, depending on the level of risk in their local area](#), in line with the new Local COVID Alert Levels framework.

This new guidance provides advice for the clinically vulnerable to follow in addition to the new rules and guidance for everyone based on the level of risk in their local area. The government are not yet suggesting the reintroduction of shielding arrangements that were paused in the summer. More restrictive 'shielding' measures could be considered in the future in areas facing highest risk and if that happens the Government will write to relevant people separately to inform them directly should they be advised to shield.

Read more in the BMA [updated guidance for patient at high risk](#)





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Re- start of Appraisals update

The appraisal and revalidation team at NHSEI sent the following message to doctors as per the update in last week's LMC Brieflet:

If you feel unable to undertake your appraisal due to COVID workload pressures, please get in touch with the appraisal and revalidation team at the generic email address below. For doctors who are not yet revalidation ready with a due date falling before the next appraisal, undertaking appraisal may be the most straightforward way to ensure your revalidation readiness – please discuss with the team if this applies to you. Some doctors may not feel able to undertake appraisal in the next few months but may be in a different situation in the new calendar year. If you have requested not to undertake appraisal in your appraisal month and decide you would like to do so up to end March 2021 (within the appraisal year), please contact the team and they will work with you to arrange this.

Please [find attached the Appraisal 2020 template](#) and an [example completed template](#) to assist you in making your decision. Also [attached is support information](#) - this support is available to all doctors who wish to access it. More information regarding the Appraisal 2020 process, including FAQs can be found at [The Academy of Medical Colleges](#)

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact the Appraisal Team: Lancashire & South Cumbria: england.lancsat-revalidation@nhs.net

Complaints (KO41b form) data collection for 2019/20

Following BMA GPC lobbying for a reduction in bureaucracy impacting practices, and particularly in light of the current pressures that General Practice face in responding to COVID-19, NHS Digital have confirmed that the annual complaints (KO41b form) data collection relating to 2019/20 will not be collected as usual. Practices are instead encouraged to continue to use the information collected locally for local service improvement purposes. Read more [here](#)

General practice "Green Fund"

BMA GPC have written [the attached letter](#) to Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Prevention, Public Health and Primary Care, Jo Churchill MP, last week to request support for primary care to meet net zero carbon emissions.

At a time when primary focus is on responding to the massive challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, we cannot forget and must do more as a country to reduce the serious impact of climate change. The NHS, including general practice, can play a role in this. BMA GPC have, therefore, called on the Minister to back the recommendation for a general practice 'Green Fund' to enable GPs to put in place more sustainable and environmentally friendly practices. BMA GPC have also called for an extension of arrangements in place during the pandemic such as promoting use of technology, labelling medicines to allow for carbon footprint tracking and continuing the ability to make use of previously prescribed but unused medicines to reduce waste.





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CQC state of care annual report

The [Care Quality Commission \(CQC\) state of care report](#) for 2019/20 was published last week. The report showed that before COVID-19, care was generally good. In primary care, the overall ratings picture remained almost unchanged, with excellent ratings of 89% of GP practices rated good and 5% outstanding. They suggested that this masked a more varied picture, with some practices deteriorating and a similar number improving.

Read Dr Richard Vautrey's response to this [here](#).

BMA GPC continue to call for CQC inspections to be suspended for the duration of the pandemic and do not believe their transitional regulatory approach is appropriate or necessary at this time.

LMC GP Support Scheme

The LMC GP Support Scheme is a free confidential independent counselling service offered to all GPs in Lancashire & Cumbria. It provides pastoral support to GPs who are experiencing problems such as stress, career or partnership issues, addiction, or general unhappiness/burn-out. It is also open to GPs who want general career advice. Mentoring is given by GPs in Lancashire & Cumbria on a confidential 1:1 basis. Mentees are offered a Mentor, usually from outside of their immediate practice area, and offers an opportunity to meet with an experienced colleague to find a way out of difficulties or at least clarify a particular issue. For more information visit the [LMC website](#) or contact [Mariah](#).

LMC Website

We will be launching our new website very soon and we cannot wait for you all to see it!

