



Update from the Consortium of Lancashire & Cumbria LMCs

Tuesday 21st April

Help us grow our audience - LMC Distribution list

We would like to grow our LMC audience. If you know any GPs or PMs in your practice that don't receive this Brieflet and/or is not on our distribution list, please ask them to [get in touch with us!](#)

GPCE England Vote for GP Contractors/Partners Ballot Ahead of Collective Action

GPCE England met on the 16th May 2024 and unanimously [voted to move to Phase ONE of Saving General Practice, with the announcement of a ballot for GP Contractors/Partners across England](#) next month, ahead of prospective action commencing on the 1st August.

In March, 99.2% of nearly 20,000 GP BMA Members voted 'No' to reject the 2024/25 GP Contract. Almost 75% of the votes cast were from GP Contractors/Partners, who have told GPCE they are ready to take action and take it soon. The online ballot will outline a menu of actions which will not breach GP contracts. GP Contractors/ Partners are the key decision makers: able to take small steps leading to a big impact to "Protect Practices and Protect Our Patients."

The ballot will open on Monday 17th June and close on Monday 29th July ahead of action commencing from Thursday 1st August. Please login to bma.org.uk to make sure your details are correct. Please look out for an email from Civica which will allow you to vote.

GP contractors/partners will be asked to vote YES to send a message to Government.

If you experience any issues please email gpcontract@bma.org.

GPCE/LMC Roadshows

Dr Samira Anane and Dr David Wrigley will be hosting roadshows in Preston and Carlisle. The event will be free to attend and be taking place on Thursday 20th June. Please find below posters which includes further details. If you would like to attend please let [Rebecca](#) know.

Funding opportunity for innovative early cancer diagnosis projects

The NHS in Lancashire and South Cumbria is inviting organisations to bid for funding for innovative projects that will aid the earlier diagnosis of cancer in the area.

Lancashire and South Cumbria Cancer Alliance - the cancer team within NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB) - is launching an open call for applications from organisations across the health and care network including from primary and secondary care and the voluntary and charity sectors.

Bids for up to £100,000 per project are invited for projects that focus on earlier diagnosis of cancer that could impact stage shift (patients being diagnosed at stages one or two rather than three or four).



The application form includes details of the funding criteria. For more information please contact tanis.barnett1@nhs.net or lisa.flanagan1@nhs.net.

Please submit bids by 5pm on Monday 24 June to tanis.barnett1@nhs.net

SMS in General Practice (Lancashire & South Cumbria only)

As previously highlighted, the LMC is aware that L&SC ICB has communicated with practices on the issue of SMS in general practice and that the position outlined is causing concern. Previously, costs for all text messages sent from, or on behalf of, their constituent general practices that have not been funded by other means have been met, encompassing all text messages sent from practices. However, in 2024/25 the ICB have been allocated a set budget for this which will be apportioned to practice list sizes. This budget has been increased in recognition of the increased usage of this method of communication with patients etc. and the ICB are continuing to look at other avenues of funding to support general practice in this regard.

The ICB briefed the LMC whilst reviewing these arrangements and we had opportunity to feed into discussions that have informed recommendations to the ICB Commissioning Resource Group. We can assure you that at every opportunity we raised the concerns we know practices have and we queried the potential impact on individual practices throughout. We also discussed at length the need for extra support and training to practices in utilising their allocated fragments in the most efficient way - it has come to light that practices are unsure what support is available and feel unclear about allocations. Issues have been raised again with L&SC ICB via their Consultation and Negotiation meeting with the LMC and we are awaiting a response back from Digital colleagues at the ICB regarding the offer of support. We will keep you updated.

Furthermore, we are in touch with BMA GPCE and other LMCs as we know L&SC practices are not alone in querying the process of being invoiced if/when allocations are exceeded. Let us know if you have any queries that need highlighting.

Health & Safety Compliance - (Lancashire & South Cumbria only)

It has been brought to our attention that L&SC ICB are commencing a fact-finding exercise to monitor and record levels of Health and Safety compliance within NHS buildings across the patch and choosing practices to participate. The LMC is currently looking into the rationale for requesting certain practices provide up to date certification for 12 elements of statutory compliance as part of the proposed pilot scheme. If you are contacted about this and have any issues, do let us know.

NWAS Calls (Lancashire & South Cumbria only)

We have recently circulated some guidance around Practices contractual responsibilities when it comes to attending a patient due to a 999 call. If you have not yet had sight of this letter and would like to know what your responsibilities are please [click here](#) to read our guidance.

The LMC have discussed this with both NWAS and the ICB, however if you are experiencing requests that are outside of your contractual obligations or reasonable Practice policy then please send us examples to raise directly with both NWAS and the ICB.

Premises Cost Directions

After almost a decade of pressure from the BMA, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) have published the long-anticipated update to the [Premises Costs Directions \(PCDs\)](#), which will bring changes to assist premises costs, including permission for commissioners to award improvement grants of up to 100% of the project value, (up from 66%), and new powers for commissioners to better support contractors.

These changes were initially agreed five years ago, as part of the multi-year GP contract in 2019. The full guidance will be published at a later date.

Responding to the announcement, Dr Gaurav Gupta, GPC England premises lead, said: "We're pleased to see positive steps to help GP premises owners, and any partners aspiring to buy into property-owning partnership in advancing their services to provide the best possible care for patients. But we still have a very long way to go, with no additional funds going into ICB budget lines. The past decade has seen us caring for an additional eight million patients, with over a thousand practices lost, and record numbers of appointments. It's clear to patients and GPs alike that we must push Government and NHS England for significantly greater investment into General Practice premises."

Read the full statement [here](#).

Accelerated Access to GP Held Patient Records - Update

Following engagement with the ICO and NHSE, BMA maintains the position outlined by the Information Commissioner. While the direction to provide prospective record access to patients is legal, mitigations outlined by practices in DPIAs submitted to the ICO should also be implemented to ensure that processing is compliant with the requirement of the Data Protection Act.

Where practices are facing pressure from ICBs to move ahead with prospective automatic access and have produced a DPIA, they should cite the ICO's response and continue in line with their DPIA.

Read more [here](#).

Cloud Based Telephony

Following changes that have mandated adoption of Cloud Based Telephony on NHSE's approved procurement framework GPC England has received extensive complaints from GPs being charged excessive costs for adopting new systems.

While we remain in discussion with NHSE to seek a resolution, we have been advised that GPs can raise concerns directly with NHSE about additional costs they are experiencing using the following email commercial.procurementhub@nhs.net.

Please continue to get in touch via info.lmcqueries@bma.org.uk with any concerns.

Changes to the Benefits Payment Process

The DWP and DHSC has published a [call for evidence](#) that will inform a programme of work announced at the autumn statement in 2023, to explore reforming the fit note process to support those with long term health conditions in accessing work and health support. The evidence will help to assess the impact of the current fit note process in aiding work and

health conversations, and the exploration of enhancements that GPs and other healthcare professionals would require for the fit note to better support people to start and stay in work. GPCE will submit its evidence in due course.

Medical Examiner System in England

The BMA continues to engage with stakeholders on the implementation of the Medical Examiner system in England which is currently scheduled for 9 September 2024. The Statutory Instruments and timeline of the ME implementation can be found [here](#) with the relevant legislation found [here](#).

LMC Vacancies

4 out of our 5 Committees have seats available for GP representation:

Lancashire Coastal - Please contact [Toni Parker](#) for further information.

North Cumbria - 2 seats available

Central Lancashire - 2 seats available

Morecambe Bay - 2 seats available

We are keen to hear from GPs, including GP Registrars/ Trainees, who may wish to get involved to represent your constituents. [Please let us know](#) if you are interested in being a LMC member or would like to find out more.