



Update from the Consortium of Lancashire & Cumbria LMCs

Monday 21st September 2020

Face-to-face appointments

Earlier last week [NHSE/I](#) briefed the media to suggest that practices were not offering face-to-face appointments to patients, implying that GPs are not available for patients in need.

The reality is that GPs and their teams have been working incredibly hard to keep their services as accessible as possible during the COVID-19 pandemic, with most offering telephone and digital triage as the first point of contact in order to help keep their workforce and communities safe. This is exactly what the Government has been encouraging.

Throughout the pandemic practices have continued to enable face-to-face appointments when it was clinically necessary. Any inference that in-person consultations were not provided when needed is an affront to the thousands of committed GPs who have continued to deliver the best possible care to their patients, despite the many challenges faced. This is also an insult to the memory of the GPs who tragically died from COVID-19 which they contracted during face-to-face consultations.

The anger and hurt within the profession is understandable, but that should not lead to abusive messages being directed towards individuals. BMA GPC have raised concerns with NHSE/I and with the Department of Health and Social Care about this unacceptable situation and highlighted how damaging to morale this has been for GPs and their staff. Dr Richard Vautrey, Chair of the BMA GPC, has also sent [the attached letter](#) to Simon Stevens calling for an apology and action to address GP concerns with this letter.

Read the BMA GPC full statement [here](#)

This was reported by the [Independent](#), where Dr Richard Vautrey said: "Any inference that in-person consultations were put on hold is an affront to the committed GPs who have continued to go to work throughout the pandemic".

LMC response to NHSE letter 14th September

Please see [attached statement](#) from the LMC regarding the letter sent out from Nikita Kanani and Ed Waller.

COVID-19 Media

Due to the false impression, undermining headlines and criticism of GPs painted by the media, the LMC will be writing to MPs and contacting the media to address the widespread inaccuracy that is influencing public opinion and potentially distressing the workforce and destroying morale. To help us do this, we have created a [survey](#) with a few questions. We would be appreciative if you could take a few minutes to answer these questions. This will enable us to obtain a true picture of what General Practice currently looks like.





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Pharmacy changes to reduce GP workload

Last week, BMA GPC sent a [joint letter to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care](#), Matt Hancock, calling for Government to amend medicines legislation to allow pharmacists to make changes to prescriptions and provide a different quantity, strength, formulation or generic version of the same medicine, if it is in short supply.

At a time of significant increase to GP workload and the problems with supply of medications, allowing pharmacists to make these changes so that patients can obtain their medicines in a timely manner would be helpful for both doctors and patients. BMA GPC are working to try to reduce the bureaucracy that contributes to GP workload pressures and changes like this will go some way in addressing that, especially as we head into winter and at a time when we are seeing the number of patients with COVID-19 increase again. Read more [here](#).

Flu Vaccinations letter

Please see [attached joint letter](#) from the Local Medical Committees & Local Pharmacy Committees regarding Flu Vaccinations.

Revised Network Contract DES guidance

NHSE/I has now published the [revised Network Contract DES materials](#), which include:

- [A cover note](#)
- Amended 2020/21 Network Contract DES Specification
- Amended 2020/21 Network Contract DES Guidance
- IIF Guidance
- SMR Guidance

BMA GPC will produce a brief summary to outline the key areas.

Template letter to private providers about screening

BMA GPC have co-badged a [template letter](#) with RCGP, that practices can use to write to private providers offering non-approved screening tests. Numerous private companies are offering screening that is not recommended by the UK National Screening Committee (UKNSC), and there is a lack of evidence of how results of private screenings are presented in NHS services and is of benefit to patients, which is a cause of serious concern. This follows the BMA GPC joint [Position Statement on Screening](#) by organisations which have not been approved by the UKNSC, which was published last year.

You can also access the letter [here](#)

CQRS update

The [attached documents from CQRS](#) contain a reminder of the payment declaration and details around the signing onto CQRS from the 23rd September.





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NHS Test and Trace App

The new NHS Test and Trace App will launch this week on 24 September. The QR codes are not intended for healthcare settings but for business and other public buildings that will be mandated to keep a record of those entering. If practices want to apply for and display a QR code they can do so voluntarily but there is no expectation or contractual requirement to do so.

NHS Clinical Entrepreneur Programme

Applications for the NHS Clinical Entrepreneur Programme opened on 15 September 2020. This is an educational workforce development programme designed for healthcare professionals who want to develop and scale their most innovative ideas for patient benefit.

The programme was launched in 2016 and has already recruited over 500 individuals including doctors, dentists, pharmacists and nurses from a range of diverse backgrounds. Places on this programme will be offered through a competitive process, to applicants who have developed clinical innovations to improve patient care and support service redesign through commercial and non-commercial enterprises. You can find more about this programme, and the application portal, [here](#).

Funding opportunity for nurses in Primary Care

The Queens Nursing Institute (QNI) has received funding from the Burdett Trust for Nursing to run a new programme specifically focusing on people with complex needs in primary care.

Please see the [following link](#) for further details. This may be an opportunity to improve quality of AHC and health action plans for people with complex needs, and or focus on STOMP STAMP, recognising ill health etc.

Increased GP costs due to texting and phoning

Paragraph 20 of the [COVID support fund letter](#) talks about other consumable costs incurred as a result of COVID - this should include telephony and similar costs.

While this is not included in the (non-exhaustive) list in the paragraph, BMA GPC have raised it with NHSEI several times, so regional teams should be advising CCGs that it is within the scope of this funding.

Close contact, Self- isolation and Testing

Please see [attached](#) Lancs & S Cumbria guidance for Close Contact, Self-isolation and Testing.

Schools resource pack

Please see [attached](#) PHE Northwest guidance: [Schools resource pack](#), which has been cascaded to all schools across the North West, so that GPs know what advice parents are getting. Please note this information is for Lancashire GP practices only.

