



# Update from the Consortium of Lancashire & Cumbria LMCs

Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2022

## **LG digitisation - Process for destruction of empty scanned envelopes**

Please replace the version sent out on last week's Brieflet with the attached.

It appears that the processes needed to support the new system under the GP contract 2022/3 whereby patients do not need to print out records for deceased patients are not yet in place, so until an instruction comes out from PCSE, the previous position whereby these records need to be printed out still stands. The new process should be in place within the next few months.

## **Important information on the GP pension scheme – new CPI modeller**

The recent rising rate of inflation will have significant tax implications for some GPs' pensions. This applies to those who are active members of the scheme contributing at any point of the current 2022/23 tax year, as you could have very large Annual Allowance charges, when such charges become due, depending on your accounting / pensions administration.

The BMA Pensions Committee have launched a new [CPI modeller for the GP pension scheme](#) for GPs to look at their pension growth in 2022/23 and 2023/24 tax years, and to explain the problems with poor design of the Annual Allowance and how it will interact with the 1995 / 2015 GP pension scheme, and Annual Allowance taxation. It is important that you urgently take steps to at least understand your position and the potential impact this may have on future Annual Allowance charges. Entering your own data and numbers in the tool will only take a few minutes and will enable you to see how this might affect you personally – for many members they may need to estimate the value of their current pension based on their most recently available pension savings statements, subsequent contribution history and pensionable earnings.

The Pensions Committee continue to lobby Government on this significant issue and encourage members to raise this with their local MPs and help increase awareness with fellow GPs. Thanks to the Pensions Committee for their hard work on this.

## **Extending fit note certification**

From 1 July, legislation is changing which will allow more healthcare professionals to certify fit notes to patients.

- Currently only doctors can legally certify fit notes. DWP are now changing the legislation which will allow a further four professions to do this. These professions are nurses, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, and pharmacists.
- Not everybody working within these professions should issue fit notes. Professionals should be working in a suitable environment and have the necessary skills and training to have work and health conversations with patients. This task needs to be within their professional 'scope of practice'; therefore, new guidance and training has been developed which will help professionals to identify if this task is suitable for them.
- This legislation change applies across England, Scotland, and Wales.
- This change follows legislation changes in April which removed the need for fit notes to be signed in ink. This change made it possible for doctors to certify fit notes digitally and for patients to receive their fit note via digital channels (where GP IT systems support this).





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## Rebuild General Practice: support the campaign

The [Rebuild general practice campaign](#) continues to tackle the crisis facing general practice. The campaign has been building awareness of the key issues in the media, with the public and with politicians. We need your support to amplify the message and make the campaign a success.

Parliamentary event: We have written to all MPs across Lancashire and Cumbria to invite them to a parliamentary drop-in event on Wednesday 15 June. The aim is to engage politicians from all parties and raise awareness of the challenges facing general practice.

Have you signed the 'Letter to my patients'? The campaign is asking GPs across the nation to sign an open letter to our patients - showing them that GPs are on their side. Over 250 GPs have already signed. To add your signature, please email [Mariah](#) with your full name. You can [read the letter](#) on the campaign website.

## Working conditions of independent contractor GPs

BMA GPC England passed a motion regarding the working conditions of independent contractor GPs. This motion reaffirms GPC England's commitment to defending the independent contractor model, whilst highlighting the committee's concerns about the pressures GP contractors are under, and its recognition of how undervalued they are by the current Government. Representatives also firmly believe the interests of independent contractors, and defence of the model, are also best served by one united committee for all GPs in England.

## GP workforce and appointment data

The latest [GP data](#) from NHS Digital once again shows a decline in GP numbers. Compared with this time a year ago, England has the equivalent of 396 fewer full-time, fully qualified GPs – having lost a further 26 in the most recent month alone. To this end, 1,622, fully qualified full-time equivalent GPs have been lost from the workforce since 2015 (when the current collection method began). Meanwhile, the total appointments booked have reduced to 24.0 million in April 2022 from 29.7 million in the previous month – this is potentially due to there being fewer working weekdays in April compared to March.

Read the BMA full analysis about pressures in general practice [here](#) and the [full BMA press statement](#)

## Fees calculator

Doctors have undercharged for private and non-NHS fee-based work for years, effectively subsidising the system and taking the hit on their take-home pay. In response to this issue the BMA recently launched the [Fees calculator](#) and feedback has been extremely positive. It has come to light that many doctors rarely reviewed their fees, some looked to their peers to gauge what to charge, and others used guidelines that were years out of date. The Fees calculator helps doctors decide how much to charge for their services based on their own circumstances. [Find out more](#)

The Fees calculator uses your overheads to calculate a fee range for the time it takes to complete a piece of work. The calculations are specific to you, and you can see what rates you would need to charge to make sure your costs are covered. You can find out more about [how the tool can help you save money and save time](#).





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### Fuller Stocktake report on the next steps for integrating primary care

NHSEI published the '[Fuller Stocktake report](#)' on the next steps for integrating primary care in England. Read the full BMA statement [here](#)

### Monkeypox

An [increasing number of monkeypox](#) infections are being identified with some spread in the community.

Whilst the risk is currently low, an increase in numbers is expected, and the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) is asking people to be alert to any new rashes or lesions on any part of their body.

Although this advice applies to everyone, initial infections are currently mainly in urban areas with a particular focus on gay communities and men having sex with men. Practices should remain vigilant as anyone in close contact with a case, including household contacts, will be at risk.

If you are concerned that a patient may have contracted the disease, use appropriate PPE, including mask and gloves. Isolate the person whilst seeking advice on next steps from the local sexual health clinic for urgent advice or your [local health protection team](#), and ensure the consultation room is cleaned appropriately afterwards based on [UKHPA advice](#).

The BMA have raised concerns with NHS England that specific guidance for primary care has not been provided.

If you have any specific concerns, the BMA can raise these with UKHSA.

Read more, including guidance for healthcare professionals, on the [UKHSA](#) website.

### Safe surgeries survey

[Doctors of the World](#) (DOTW) is working with UCL and the NHS to better understand issues facing underserved groups when accessing GP services. They want to hear from general practice staff (including reception staff, managers, clinical staff) to find better ways to support staff and patients to ensure that everyone can register with a GP. Part of this work will involve evaluating and redesigning the [DOTW UK Safe Surgeries Initiative](#), a BMA-endorsed programme and toolkit that supports GP practices to become more accessible to socially excluded groups.

This project '[Right to Care](#)' aims to identify barriers and facilitators to support socially excluded groups such as people experiencing homelessness, people with irregular or insecure immigration status, people who sell sex, and members of the Roma, Gypsy, and Traveller communities who may experience unique challenges to access primary care and to register with a GP.

GP staff perspectives will be highly valued and will help better support the needs of your GP practice and community. Please complete the 5 minute [survey](#) by 20 June 2022.

If you're interested in participating in a short online interview, please contact Kerrie at [k.stevenson@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:k.stevenson@ucl.ac.uk)





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## NHS Digital survey on the future of GP data sharing

Following discussions last year around the proposed GP Data for Research and Planning programme, and ultimately the indefinite delay to the programme. NHS Digital is now seeking views from the profession to shape their thinking in this area and more broadly in terms of data sharing across general practice. They have produced a 5-minute [survey](#) with a view to garnering feedback from all practice staff, so please forward on where appropriate. The survey will close on Friday 10 June 2022.

## GP Connect and Summary Care Record - additional information to continue beyond COPI

The temporary changes made to GP Connect and Summary Care Record Additional Information in response to the COVID-19 pandemic will continue in place beyond the end of the Control of Patient Information (COPI) Notice. You have the legal basis to continue to provide and use these vital services, under the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Common Law Duty of Confidentiality. [The changes made to both services have shown benefits, including improved patient safety](#)

## NHS Smartcard renewal pressures

NHS Digital expect a large influx of NHS smartcard renewal requests in the next four weeks as 140,000 cards are due for renewal on 27 June 2022.

Affected users have received automated messages on authentication that they have one month to renew. If you receive this message, please self-renew as soon as possible. If NHS Digital do not manage to increase the rate of renewal now, it will inevitably result in a rush of users requiring smartcard renewals through the Care Identity Service with increasing urgency. This could lead to delays in access to systems and services, due to backlogs of renewals being requested for processing by Registration Authorities.

Any impact on the Care Identity Service will not affect authentication and access to clinical systems for users with a valid smartcard. [Guidance on how to self-renew can be found on the NHS Digital website](#).

## Help improve the Electronic Prescription Service

NHS Digital would like to talk to prescribers and dispensers across different care settings about their experience of using the [Electronic Prescription Service](#) (EPS), including any challenges. User feedback is essential to help inform future improvements and the next generation of the service. If you can spare some time please do sign up to [provide your views and help us to improve EPS](#).

