



# Update from the Consortium of Lancashire & Cumbria LMCs

Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2022

## Comms to share with your patients

Following the [announcement from Thérèse Coffey](#) relating to GP access, see [LMC responses on our website](#) including one for Lancashire & South Cumbria and one for North Cumbria.

The LMC has created an [iceberg diagram](#) to highlight to patients the work that takes place in General Practice that they don't see.

Please share these posters widely. We will be engaging with local stakeholders and media on this. You can also find other comms to share with patients on our [website here](#).

## General practice in crisis

The [pressures](#) practices are under are evident from the most recent [GP appointment data](#) which shows that in August, practices in England delivered a staggering 3 million more appointments than in the same month in 2019.

The BMA are recommending practices to take urgent action to preserve patient care and their own wellbeing. They have updated their guidance on [Safe working in general practice](#), which is designed to enable practices to make decisions as to how to prioritise care, and deprioritise certain aspects of day to day activity, within the confines of the GMS contract. As part of this guidance, the BMA strongly recommend practices take immediate measures to move to 15 minute appointments, move towards capping consultation numbers to a safe number per day – safe for clinicians and safe for patients. Excess demand beyond these levels should be directed to NHS 111, extended access hubs, or other providers.

You might also want to read BMA guidance on *How to improve the safety of your service and wellbeing of your workforce* ([attached to email](#)), setting out safe limits of the numbers of patient contacts per day, and what is considered 'essential services' under the GMS contract.

If you have any feedback on how the LMC or the BMA can develop resources or tools to support you, please let us know.

## Survey on how inflation and energy costs are impacting your practice

GP practices are feeling the impact of inflation and high energy costs. Please complete the BMA GPC survey so that they can collect the evidence needed to advocate on your behalf. The survey asks for a range of information relating to practice costs including energy, staffing and other expenses.

It may be that your practice manager is best placed to complete the survey, and while it is encouraged to complete the whole survey, if you do not yet have the information, please still complete the parts you can. The BMA GPC need to hear from as many practices as possible to enable them to make a strong case to NHSEI, DHSC and the government to seek solutions.

[Take the short survey here](#) (closing Thursday 20 October).





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## **FIT Testing**

The national guidance around FIT testing has just been released. The LMC have recently issued a statement to the Cancer Alliance around their local guidance and are raising questions on elements of it. We will issue a further statement on this in the upcoming week.

## **Proposed repeal of the IR35 tax reforms**

As part of the recent '[mini-budget](#)', [the government announced](#) that it intends to repeal the 2017 and 2021 IR35 reforms of the [IR35 off-payroll working rule](#). The changes are expected to come into force from April 2023 and once confirmed, the BMA will produce further guidance in due course.

## **This week's snapshot question**

In each update the BMA GPC will include a question on a current issue, which will be used to help inform thoughts at GPC and in negotiations: What would you be willing to give up in order to reduce your workload? Please answer the multiple-choice question [here](#).

## **Mental health and wellbeing**

[World Mental Health Day](#) took place Monday 10 October. The day is dedicated to raising awareness of mental health and the theme of the day this year is to 'make mental health and wellbeing for all a global priority'.

We encourage anybody who is feeling under strain to seek support and check in on your colleagues' wellbeing. We also encourage practices who could not participate on 9 September to reflect and focus on their wellbeing, to consider identifying another time when they could meet as a practice to focus on wellbeing and how to reduce workload.

A range of wellbeing and support services are available to doctors and practice staff on [our website](#).

## **PCN DES opt out window**

As practices may be aware, at the end of September [NHSE published a letter](#) outlining support for practices and PCNs. This includes changes to the ARRS (including changes to reimbursement rates to reflect the Agenda for Change pay award and the introduction of 'GP Assistants' and 'PCN Digital Leads'), removal/postponement of some IIF indicators, and a new PCN 'capacity and access support payment', funded from the reduced IIF indicators.

As these changes have been introduced by NHSE in-year, an opt-out window for the PCN DES has been triggered. Within this opt-out window, practices can choose to opt-out of the DES without risking a breach of contract. The BMA have developed [this guidance](#) as a primer to support practices that are considering opting out of the DES.

Practices are advised to read the guidance and consult with their staff and fellow PCN members as to whether to utilise the window to leave their PCN. If practices choose to stay in their PCN, the next opt-out window is expected to be April 2023.





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### Winter preparations - variants of COVID-19 and respiratory challenges

Pulse oximeters continue to be available to enable systems to provide better support for people at home. Pulse oximeters are available to request free of charge and can be [ordered online](#). For queries, please email [england.home@nhs.net](mailto:england.home@nhs.net).

### Increase in cases of diphtheria amongst asylum seekers and refugees

UK Health Security Agency have confirmed that since February 2022, there have been five confirmed cases of diphtheria caused by toxigenic *C. diphtheriae* identified in asylum seekers in the UK with early reports that this situation is mirrored across several European countries. Many cases have presented with cutaneous lesions.

Clinicians are reminded that the two key diphtheria causing strains, *C. diphtheriae* and *C. ulcerans*, may present with cutaneous and/or respiratory presentations and can lead to severe disease in those who are not immunised or fully vaccinated.

Healthcare staff involved with supporting new arrivals should consider investigating for suspected diphtheria in individuals presenting with cutaneous lesions and ensure careful use of PPE when assessing patients. It is important that all staff are fully immunised. Vaccination status should be assessed and any new arrivals with incomplete schedules should be caught-up as per the UK schedule. [More information can be found in national guidance](#).

### Preparing to offer patients online access to their future GP health records

On November 1<sup>st</sup> patients with online accounts (such as through the NHS App or other patient online apps) will automatically be able to view new entries in their health records. Practice staff have attended awareness webinars to help support them in preparing for this change – [there's still time to book on one](#) if you haven't yet done so.

Following representations made to NHSE, the BMA GPC has not received satisfactory assurance that the patient access to records programme can go ahead. Against a backdrop of sky-high pressures on general practice, the necessary planning and resourcing required to launch the programme at this time cannot be put in place to enable a safe and successful rollout. The BMA are supportive of the initiative to enable patients to view their medical records, but this cannot be rushed especially when there remain risks to patient safety. We will keep you updated on this.

### Sessional GP Newsletter

Read the most recent BMA [Sessional GP newsletter here](#).





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## Take part in digitising Proxy Access

NHSE would like to create a standard approach that allows a patient to grant someone else, usually a trusted family member, close friend, carer or care home, access to their GP online account to order repeat prescriptions or view their GP record on their behalf. This is known as proxy access. [Registrations for expressions of interest \(EOI\) are open to work with NHSE to help co-design how proxy access is delivered in the future.](#) NHSE invite GPs, practice managers, safeguarding leads, patient representatives and those with an interest in proxy access to take part.

## Improvements to the Register with a GP Surgery service (case study)

During [September's General Practice webinar](#), NHSE presented a demo on the improvements that have been made to the 'Register with a GP Surgery' online service. [This case study provides further information about the new online registration service](#), including feedback from both GP practices and patients who have been involved in testing the new online form.

## Data Protection Webinar with DR Solicitors - 6th October 2022 Recording

Please see the [following link to our YouTube for the Data webinar with DR Solicitors](#) held on Thursday 6th October 2022 which covers the following:

1. A brief word on the **NHS Digital Data Extraction**
2. **Subject Access Requests:**
  1. When can you decline to do it?
  2. When can you charge?
  3. Do you have to give everything?
  4. Managing 'entwined data' (i.e., contains third party information)
  5. What are the common pitfalls which land practices in trouble?
3. **Freedom of Information Requests** from the media:
  1. What constitutes a valid FOI request?
  2. When is a GP practice is a public authority for FOIA purposes?
  3. What do we have to give and do?

## Music video - A tribute to the NHS

Dr Alex Watson, a GP in Surrey, has shared a song that he wrote earlier this year called 'Change' about the impact of the COVID pandemic. It is intended to be a tribute to the NHS and all those health and care workers who lost their lives. The final production can be seen on YouTube [here](#).

