



# Update from the Consortium of Lancashire & Cumbria LMCs

Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2021

## COVID-19 Vaccination Programme

### **MHRA/JCVI and EMA statements on AZ vaccine**

[MHRA](#), [JCVI](#) and [EMA](#) have all made announcements on serious thromboembolic events with concurrent thrombocytopenia associated with the use of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine. This includes a small number of life-threatening and fatal cases presenting as venous thrombosis, including unusual sites such as cerebral venous sinus thrombosis, splanchnic vein thrombosis, as well as arterial thrombosis, combined with thrombocytopenia that can rapidly progress. Multifocal venous and arterial thromboses have been reported in serious cases. The majority of the events occurred within the first 14 days following vaccination but have also been reported after this period. Risk factors have not been identified.

### **Reintroduction of PCR testing**

[Confirmatory PCR testing has been reintroduced](#) (from 1 April). Current guidance in England specifies that all individuals who receive a positive LFD test result are encouraged to take a follow-up PCR, whether the LFD test was assisted or self-reported. Contact tracing will begin immediately after a positive LFD result (e.g. without waiting for the result of follow-up PCR). The tracing process will be stopped and self-isolation notices rescinded where there is a negative follow-up PCR test result obtained within 72 hours of the LFD test result. This is intended to reduce the number of people self-isolating unnecessarily because of false positives from antigen LFD tests at low population prevalence.

### **Vaccine certificates**

The Government confirmed that a COVID-19 status certification system will be developed over the coming months which could allow higher-risk settings to be opened up more safely and with more participants. Over the coming months, a system will be developed which will consider three factors: vaccination, a recent negative test, or natural immunity (determined on the basis of a positive test taken in the previous six months). Events pilots will take place from mid-April to trial the system. All pilots are checking COVID status, which will initially be through testing alone but in later pilots, vaccination and acquired immunity are expected to be alternative ways to demonstrate status.

GPC England has been discussing these proposals with the Government and NHS bodies to ensure there would be a minimal impact on GP practices, and this has been accepted. Both GPC and the LMC feel there is a need to avoid the expectation that people can secure evidence of vaccination or testing by obtaining a letter from their GP practice.





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## Access to vaccination for parents with children

BMA GPC were made aware of an incident in which a parent was prevented from bringing their dependent children to their vaccination appointment at a hospital vaccination site. BMA GPC took this up directly and after their intervention this matter has been addressed. They have published the **attached** guidance.

The VC operational guidance has been updated to reference the attached, along with the guidance for the National Booking Service including briefing notes for call handlers.

## Vaccinations and immunisations guidance

The BMA have now published [guidance](#) about the recent changes to the [provision of routine vaccination and immunisation in general practice](#) which come into place from 1 April 2021. The changes include:

- The provision of V&I services becoming an essential service for all routine NHS-funded vaccinations with the exception of childhood and adult seasonal influenza and COVID-19 vaccinations.
- The introduction of five core contractual standards to underpin the delivery of immunisation services.
- A single item of service fee for all doses delivered in vaccination programmes funded through the GMS contract
- The Childhood Immunisation DES with its 70% and 90% targets was retired on 31 March 2021 and a new V&I domain in the Quality and Outcomes Framework introduced for 2021/22.

## Free COVID-19 PPE scheme extended until the end of March 2022

The Government is extending the provision of free COVID-19 PPE to health and social care providers until the end of March 2022. Following the previous announcement of free PPE provision until the end of June 2021, the scheme will now be extended to the end of March 2022 as the expectation of clinical experts is that usage will remain high throughout the next financial year. This will ensure that general practice can continue to access rigorously tested and high-quality PPE. Providers should continue to access COVID-19 PPE via their current distribution channels.

Lancashire and Cumbria LMCs are represented on a national group that reports on PPE issues in different localities across the UK. If you have any problems with PPE please let us know so we can feed this into that group.

## Flu vaccination 2020/21 achievement plans for 2021/22

On 1 April 2021, a [letter from Professor Stephen Powis](#) was published both commending the achievements of practices and developments made with regards to the NHS Annual Influenza Vaccination Programme during 2020/2021, referred to as 'the most successful in the history of the





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programme', especially considering the roll out took place during a pandemic, and outlining further details for the 21/22 programme in England.

81% of people aged 65 years and over were vaccinated and 52% of those under 65 years who are at clinical risk. This was a remarkable achievement and down to the hard work of many practices. The letter also outlines that practices should plan for the immunisation of 50-64 year olds again. BMA GPC are seeking clarification on this as it has not been clearly stated before.

## **Budesonide for patients with COVID-19**

You may have seen the [Therapeutic Alert](#) issued through the Central Alerting System (CAS) on 12<sup>th</sup> April that states:

'Inhaled budesonide is **not** currently being recommended as standard of care but can be considered (off-label) on a case-by-case basis for:

- symptomatic COVID-19 positive patients
- aged 65 and over OR
- aged 50 or over with co-morbidities, in line with the published [Interim Position Statement](#)'.

This Interim Position Statement clarifies that this includes co-morbidities that are 'consistent with a long-term health condition from the flu list.'

The PRINCIPLE trial [reported](#) a 3-day median benefit in self-reported recovery for patients with COVID-19 in the community setting who received inhaled budesonide.

There is no expectation that inhaled budesonide will be routinely prescribed for patients in the eligible cohorts with COVID-19. Advice to patients on the management of COVID-19 has not changed. However, as stated in the Therapeutic alert, prescribers may *consider* prescribing it to reduce symptoms in eligible cohorts who are being managed in the community. This would be on a case-by-case basis using a shared decision-making approach.

## **Improving GP appointment data**

NHSE/I has published information aimed at improving the quality of [GP appointment data](#). This is to ensure that published general practice appointment data fairly represents the appointment activity carried out across practices and general practice providers in England. This year's PCN Investment and Impact Fund provides additional funding to support this through an indicator covering the mapping of appointment slot types to the new set of national appointment categories by all practices within the PCN. This should only require a short one-off exercise, mapping each slot type that the practice uses to one of the national categories. Practices should note that this only relates to appointments from 1 April 2021 onwards and shouldn't require changes to wider processes or appointment books.





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## Salaried GPs vaccination reimbursement

BMA GPC have received reports of salaried GPs being asked by practices to volunteer for vaccination on a goodwill basis with no payment or time off in lieu from their practice. BMA GPC have stated, while any clinician can volunteer to support vaccination clinics, funding models should not rely on this, and employees should never be coerced into doing so. GP practices are paid to administer COVID vaccinations and payment of staff is included in the costing of this funding. Salaried GPs should be fully remunerated for any vaccination shifts and should not feel pressured to take these on a goodwill basis.

## Inspiring the female GP leaders of tomorrow

On March 25, the BMA held a hugely successful female GP leaders of tomorrow webinar chaired by Samira Anane (GPC education, training and workforce policy lead). More than 250 guests logged on to hear Nikki Kanani (medical director for primary care, NHS England), Margaret Ikpoh (RCGP council, associate director of primary care Hull Medical School), Farah Jameel (GPC England executive team and Camden LMC chair), Helena McKeown (BMA representative body chair) and Katie Bramall-Stainer (CEO Cambridgeshire LMCs, deputy chair UK LMC conference) discuss their personal leadership journeys, and share tips and advice. Please use [this link](#) to watch a recording of the event.

## Delayed applications to New to practice partnership scheme

NHSE/I have informed BMA GPC that they have amended the deadline for the individuals that sent through applications. Their team will be working through all the applications submitted so far and have advised that due to the pressures caused by the pandemic this year they will still accept their application. They have advised that that they will be reverting back to the six months deadline for any further applications.

## Sessional GP Meeting

Our next Sessional GP Meeting is taking place at 7pm on 22<sup>nd</sup> April via Teams. The meeting will include a Gynaecology update HRT & the menopause presented by Simon Jones – Consultant Gynaecologist.

If you are a Sessional GP and would like to attend please email [Rebecca.noblett@nwlmc.org](mailto:Rebecca.noblett@nwlmc.org)

## LMC elections results

Following the LMCs recent elections we have now appointed our new committees. Information about your LMC and its members can be found on our [website](#) which has now been update to reflect these results.

