



Update from the Consortium of Lancashire & Cumbria LMCs

Tuesday 13th June

BMA secures significant reduction in NHSPS service charge claims for practices

The BMA has successfully assisted 5 Practices in significantly reducing years of unsubstantiated service charge claims demanded by NHS Property Services (NHSPS) – with one practice seeing NHSPS' claim against them reduced by more than £400,000, a reduction of more than 80%.

The landmark cases, brought in 2020, were started after practices began to struggle to afford soaring service charges set by NHSPS, despite there being no prior agreement or explanation for the price hike. BMA lawyers challenged NHSPS on two issues: the legal basis on which the charges were being imposed, and the magnitude of the fees.

During the first phase of the case, the BMA and the practices sought a legal declaration that NHSPS could not rely on its Consolidated Charging Policy as a basis for issuing the new charges, and that the imposition of the higher charges was, therefore, unlawful.

Despite the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic and the extraordinary pressure this placed GPs under, NHSPS launched a countersuit against each of the practices demanding recovery of the historical service charges, transforming the dispute into a major commercial lawsuit. In June 2020, NHSPS admitted that its charging policy had not been incorporated into or retrospectively varied the practices' legal terms of occupation and existing service charge obligations. The BMA then assisted the 5 practices in settling with NHSPS the fees and service charges sums outside of court, for the period between 2013/14 and 2019/20, securing reductions on the amounts claimed by NHSPS for the 5 practices ranging from £25,000 to more than £400,000, a total reduction of more than £750,000.

The BMA has created [guidance](#) for practices in a similar position, to help advise them on what to do if they are also facing disproportionate service charges. You can also get in touch with [Ross McDuff](#), LMC estates lead. Read the full statement and comment by Gaurav Gupta, GPC premises lead at the BMA, [here](#).

Estate bids – Lancashire & South Cumbria

As Lancashire & South Cumbria ICB implement their plans for Fuller, and in particular the support that CHP are providing to PCNs in developing their estate strategies, the LMC would like to remind practices that they are still able to bid for both Improvement Grants and Capital funding for new builds etc as these are still being considered at the ICB. If you would like further information on how to bid for these monies, the ICB Primary Care Estate Leads are:

- Phil Hargreaves Philip.hargreaves@nhs.net Blackpool, Fylde & Wyre, Morecambe Bay, and Blackburn w Darwen
- George Hurst Georgehurst@nhs.net West Lancashire, Pendle, Ribble Valley, and Rossendale
- Geoff Lavery Geoff.lavery@nhs.net Chorley & South Ribble, Greater Preston, Burnley, and Hyndburn

The LMC is also happy to assist in this process. Please contact our LMC Estates Lead [Ross McDuff](#).





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GP Access Recovery Plan Support Offer - Lancashire & South Cumbria

Practices and PCNs should now be aware of the GP Access Recovery Plan support offer and some of you may have attended the regional webinar last Thursday on this. Please note we are still waiting for some guidance, particularly around any funding attached to the offer. If practices/PCNs would like to take up the national offer at this early stage, then they will be supported by the LMC.

Lancashire & South Cumbria ICB are holding a webinar on the 21st June at 1pm, to talk about the ICB's local plan for implementation and provide further clarity on the guidance. You can access the webinar [here](#).

Suspected Skin Cancer Pathway - Lancashire & South Cumbria

Lancashire & South Cumbria Cancer Alliance are keen to get views and opinions of the current pathway for suspected skin cancer and understand what improvements would best support you to enable patients are referred to the right service at the right time and receive their diagnosis and treatment in a timely way.

Primary care colleagues are invited to participate in an interview (of around 15-20mins) as part of the project development. If you are interested to arrange a time convenient to you to participate, please contact Kelly.McCormick@sanofi.com.

Accelerated Access to Records

Following the imposition of the GP contract, practices will be expected to provide automatic prospective record access to all patients from 31st October 2023. While the BMA GPC remains committed to finding a way forward whilst acknowledging the reality on the ground for GPs, the BMA have prepared [guidance](#) outlining steps practices should take ahead of the planned switch on. If you have any questions not addressed in the guidance, please let us know.

Parliamentary activity

The BMA GPC have written to the Primary Care Minister, Neil O'Brien to highlight the motions passed at [LMC UK conference](#) regarding increased costs of running practices and pay restoration for practice funding. The Minister has agreed to meet to discuss these issues. In addition, BMA GPC and the Sessional GPs committee have written to Sir Keir Starmer to outline key concerns and priorities for the future of general practice following their recent [NHS plan](#), and offered a roundtable with him and his team to discuss Labour party policy in this area. Following this meeting the BMA GPC were encouraged to see Labour MP Karin Smyth and [raise concerns](#) regarding spiralling costs to practices during health questions in the House of Commons.

Preparing for balloting on industrial action

Please join the BMA as they prepare for potential industrial action. By law, only BMA members can participate in a ballot on industrial action, and the more BMA members working collectively sends a powerful message to government that the present situation must urgently change. If you are a member, make sure the details they hold for you are up to date to ensure your vote counts. Update your member details on www.bma.org.uk/my-bma or [join us as a member](#) today.





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COVID therapeutics

CMDUs (Covid Medicines Delivery Units) are ceasing from 27th June. NHSE has written to ICBs to ensure provision of Covid therapeutics is commissioned. Practices should have a clear pathway to refer/signpost patients to continue access to COVID therapeutics for vulnerable patients. This cohort of patients will have been contacted and may call practices about how to access their locally commissioned service (other services can also refer/signpost directly such as 111).

Read BMA guidance, which will be available shortly, [here](#).

Sessional GP Week 2023

To support and celebrate valued sessional GP colleagues, the BMA has created '[Sessional GP Week taking place 12-16 June](#)'. This will be a week-long celebration highlighting the value of sessional GPs and promoting sessional GP as a positive, diverse, and enriching career choice. The focus for the week is 'respect, reward, retain'.

Resources will be shared throughout the week, and a different theme each day. Please encourage your colleagues to get involved. You will also find out more about what the sessional GP committee is doing and how they are supporting you. Read more on the [sessional GPs Committee page](#)

Show your support for your colleagues on [Twitter @BMA GP using the #SessionalGPWeek2023](#)

Sessional GPs Conference – Save the date

The Sessional GP Committee will be hosting a conference for members and non-members across the UK on Friday 22 September, at BMA House, 10-5pm. It will consist of plenary sessions, CPD type breakout groups and a platform to hear from grassroot members. A final programme will be circulated with the registration link in due course but for now save the date.

See [attached](#) a poster for practices and register your interest: confunit@bma.org.uk

NHS.net email for locums

The licences for Microsoft Apps for Enterprise for those in the locum container of NHSmail will continue to be provisioned for the next financial year following work by NHSE. These licences are required to use desktop versions of Office 365 (e.g., Microsoft Word) which can link into clinical systems for the creation of referral forms. The Sessional GPs Committee repeatedly raised the necessity of such access when issues first came to light in January 2021 after parts of the country moved to Office 365 and continues to make the case for ongoing access on your behalf.

For more tips on the use of the locum container, see the blog by Mark Coley, GPC England IT lead, [here](#)





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Our Future Health research programme

[Our Future Health](#) is a new research programme designed to help people live healthier lives for longer, through the discovery and testing of more effective approaches to prevention, earlier detection, and treatment of diseases. The aim is to collect and link multiple sources of health and health-relevant information, including genetic data, across a cohort of up to 5 million people that truly reflects the UK population.

Volunteers will give consent to join the research programme and provide secure access to their health records, complete a questionnaire, have a blood sample taken, and physical measurements. They will also be offered information about their own health, including BP and cholesterol levels. The programme aims to minimise workload for GPs advising patients not to contact practices except in limited circumstances.

Our Future Health has held some webinars for GP practices – the webinar slides, recording and other documents are available [here](#). Please email engage@ourfuturehealth.org.uk for further information

LMC UK Conference 2023

The [2023 UK LMC Conference](#) took place 18-19 May. The motions, debates and speeches throughout conference highlighted the UK wide crisis in general practice, and the need for further changes.

You can see the [resolutions and election results](#) and a [recorded webcast of the event](#).

Updated Network Contract DES

NHSE has updated the [Network Contract DES service specification](#) to bring the maximum reimbursable amounts under the Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme (ARRS) in line with the new 2023/24 Agenda for Change pay scales. The ARRS uplifts will apply from July 2023 onwards. The [2023/24 Ready Reckoner](#) has also been updated.

Communicating with your patients

See our website for posters together with other materials you can use to [communicate with your patients here](#).

LMC pages and guidance for practices

- ❖ See your LMC GP representatives [here](#)
- ❖ See our LMC support services [here](#).
- ❖ See upcoming LMC and non LMC training events: [Training & Events](#)
- ❖ Follow us on Twitter: [@nwlmc](#)s
- ❖ Contact us for advice and guidance on all things General Practice: enquiries@nwlmc.org

