



Update from the Consortium of Lancashire & Cumbria LMCs

Monday 20th July 2020

Coronavirus (COVID-19) update

LMC position statement RE NHS England letter 9th July

Please [see attached position statement](#) from the 5 LMCs in response to the [letter](#) that was sent out from NHS England on the 9th July regarding the update to GP Contracts

Government commitment for additional NHS funding

Following the Government's announcement that the NHS in England would receive £3bn in funding to help it prepare for winter and a possible second spike in Covid-19 infections the BMA put out a [media statement](#) reacting to parts of the announcement that had been trailed. Dr Chaand Nagpaul, BMA council chair, said that it was vital that we're given an understanding of how exactly this announced money will be used – and whether it is enough – to boost capacity both for a potential second wave, but also to meet the needs of millions of patients who have had care delayed during the pandemic. The BMA's comments were carried across national and regional BBC News bulletins as well as on the [BBC News](#) website.

COVID-19 Fund

Following the Prime Minister's announcement, Dr Richard Vautrey, Chair of the BMA GPC, wrote the [attached letter](#) to Sir Simon Stevens, Chief Executive of NHSE, calling for the promised COVID Fund to be released immediately. At the outset of the pandemic the Government committed to establishing a national COVID-fund, to reimburse NHS additional expenses related to the treatment of COVID-19. However, there has been a prolonged delay to releasing this funding, and whilst many CCGs have reimbursed these costs for practices, many have not. The impact of this is highlighted in the BMA's [most recent member survey](#) which showed that significant numbers of practices were not being reimbursed by their CCGs for out of pocket expenses directly linked to tackling COVID-19. Practices swiftly responded, in good faith and for the benefit of their patients, at the outset of this pandemic, but they have been let down by the failure of the Government to honour their commitments.

GPC England guidance on arrangements for GP services for remainder of 2020/21

NHSE/I released its [most recent letter](#) regarding arrangements for practices for the rest of 2020/21. The BMA have since updated their comprehensive [COVID-19: toolkit for GPs and GP practices](#) to reflect these new arrangements, including service provision, funding, and QOF. As they have done throughout the pandemic, practices can only work within their capacity and capability, and with the on-going constraints relating to social distancing, the use of PPE, risk assessments, workforce pressures and many other challenges, practices must be supported by CCGs and NHSE/I and not burdened with unrealistic expectations.





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Face coverings and evidence of exemption

Following the Government's announcement [that face coverings will be mandatory for people visiting shops in England from 24 July](#), the BMA called for measures to be introduced immediately rather than waiting for 11 days and that the policy must be extended for all places where social distancing cannot be maintained.

The [seventh BMA tracker survey](#) showed that 86% of doctors surveyed in England and Wales said it should be mandatory to wear face masks in settings where the public either cannot or will not social distance. Read the BMA statement [here](#)

The BMA have updated the [Reducing COVID-19 transmission and PPE section](#) of the GP practice toolkit, to include the new advice on face coverings. The Government guidance suggests there is no requirement for evidence for exemption. Therefore, practices do not have to provide letters of support for those who fall under the list of exemptions, or to those who do not. Please [see attached LMC guidance](#).

NHS pressures and backlog of services

The [latest tracker survey](#) and the newly released BMA report [The hidden impact of COVID-19 on patient care in the NHS in England](#), also show the struggle many face to tackle the backlog built up as social distancing remains in place.

The BMA's latest [commentary](#) on the most recent data release from NHSE revealed the continued indirect impact of COVID-19 on patient behaviour and NHS activity in May and June. The monthly number of GP-made referrals made in May has started to climb since dropping in April, however, the size of the waiting list remained low due to GPs being unable to refer. Despite this, more and more patients are waiting longer than ever for treatment. This reflects a large backlog of care needs that have accumulated beyond the focus on COVID-19, and the BMA have analysed the potential magnitude of these changes in their [Hidden impact of COVID-19 report](#). Read the BMA statement [here](#)

View the GP specific results of the tracker survey [here](#)

BMJ Learning clinical guidance: COVID-19 in primary care

BMJ Learning has updated their clinical [e-learning module on managing COVID-19 in primary care](#). The module provides practical support to GPs on the following issues:

- When and how to consult remotely and face-to-face during the pandemic
- Key clinical features and complications of COVID-19 in primary care, and how to manage them
- How to prioritise ongoing clinical care in general practice during the pandemic
- The role of GPs in identifying and advising shielded patients
- The importance of working safely in primary care during the pandemic, including appropriate use of PPE, and consideration of the wellbeing of GPs and other practice staff.





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Joint guidance for remote intimate clinical assessments

GPC England, NHSEI, RCGP and a number of other relevant organisations have developed the [attached joint guidance](#) setting out the *key principles for intimate clinical assessments undertaken remotely in response to COVID-19*.

The pandemic has accelerated the use of online and video consultations in general practice. The guidance is aimed at clinicians who are consulting remotely and focuses on how to safely manage the receipt, storage and use of intimate images taken by patients for clinical purpose, which must be guided by the principle of the interests of the patient. The approach to video consulting, image sharing, and storage should be the same as it would be for face-to-face interactions.

The principles described in the guidance aim to support patients to access care in a way that meets their needs and to support clinicians to provide care in a way that is in the best interests of their patients, whilst protecting both from the risks associated with remote intimate assessments.

Shielding guidance for staff on returning to work

Shielding will be coming to an end in England on 31 July, after which those who have been shielding will be able to return to work provided their place of work is 'COVID-19 safe.' The BMA has published guidance on [Making the NHS 'Covid-19 safe' and supporting return to work](#), setting out recommendations for safe return of staff:

- There needs to be clear guidance and protocols on how healthcare settings can be made safe for staff who have been shielding.
- Funding needed to ensure that practices are able to make the necessary adjustments
- Practices should be funded to cover the full pay of the staff that can't return to work as well as cover for their replacement.
- Every employer should undertake individual COVID-19 risk assessments which cover the basis of shielding properly and make a decision on return to work on a case-by-case basis.
- Employers should engage with staff on a plan for returning to work and make appropriate workplace adjustments, including access to adequate PPE.
- Employers should support staff to make informed personal decisions about returning to work, by providing honest and open information about risks and act on any concerns.

Read the [BMA guidance on Risk assessments](#). The [latest tracker survey](#) also showed that most GPs who are currently shielding do not feel safe returning to work. Our HR team have been supporting a number of practices in relation to the above and can be [contacted](#) if you have any specific queries.

Tax on COVID-19 testing by employers

The HMRC published guidance on 6 July which advised that employees would face a taxable benefit in kind when their employer pays for COVID-19 testing. The BMA raised concerns over this with the Department of Health and Social Care, and they have now advised that HMRC has removed the guidance. It is in the process of being updated to provide some clarity regarding NHS staff, with the expectation that they will not be subject to tax for COVID-19 testing.





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NHS Confederation report on PCNs

NHS Confederation has published a report about [Primary Care Networks – one year on](#), to mark the one-year anniversary of PCNs being established and assess their progress so far. The report sets out a national picture of variability but does describe how some networks are now delivering tangible benefits for the health of their populations and offering mutual support to their member practices.

LMC HR Training

Please [see attached](#) our upcoming HR events. Please contact [Rebecca](#) if you would like to attend any of the events.

Wellbeing – Sessional GP meeting - 29th July

The next Sessional GP meeting will take place virtually via Teams on Wednesday 29th July - 7-9pm. The first hour will involve CPD on wellbeing to help lift spirits particularly in the current pandemic. The aim is to improve mood, reflect on gratitude, good deeds and achievements. This will be delivered by Pete Reece and Kev Wyke. [All GPs are welcome to attend the CPD part of the meeting.](#)

This will be followed by the Sessional GP business meeting, chaired by Dr Sigrun Baier, involving an open forum to discuss any issues you have. This will be a good opportunity to raise any issues/ work related challenges you have faced during the pandemic. Please contact [Mariah](#) if you would like to attend.

Health Education North West GP Trainer Journey

Health Education England have introduced a 3-step pathway for GPs wishing to become trainers. The [attached document](#) outlines this new pathway, including dates, course objectives and eligibility criteria. Should you or your practice be interested in training and require more information, please contact gptraining.nw@hee.nhs.uk

Male victims of domestic abuse: invitation to virtual conference 5th August

One in every six men in Britain will suffer from domestic abuse in their lifetime and one in every three domestic abuse victims is male. In 2019, 180,209 men reported to the Police as being victims of domestic abuse – This represents a 70% increase since 2014 when 105,830 men reported to the Police.

Men reaching out and BEAP community have organised a virtual Conference on Wednesday 5th Aug 10am - Midday. The Conference will highlight how you can help to ensure male victims and their children in your communities can be supported, as well as explaining the experiences and barriers male victims face. You will also hear from survivors who will share their experiences.

Should you wish to attend, please email your name, organisation and job title to ianmcnicholl62@gmail.com. You will receive your invitation for the virtual Conference Monday 3rd August at the latest. Please [see attached](#) for more details.

