



# Update from the Consortium of Lancashire & Cumbria LMCs

Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> November 2021

## LMC England conference 2021

The Annual Conference of England LMCs was held 25-26 November.

A variety of debates were held on a number of different topics including the negative impact of inappropriate transfer of workload from secondary care to primary care; the use of 'advice and guidance' which cannot be mandated; GP representation in Integrated Care Systems; review of NHS 111; and sustainability and carbon neutrality in general practice.

The Conference passed motions on online consultations; PCN DES guidance, GP contract reforms; and the COVID vaccination programme. There was also a very powerful and moving themed debate on Wellbeing for those working in general practice – something that is the focus of the BMA [Support Your Surgery campaign](#).

On Friday afternoon, conference also discussed the results of the indicative ballot of GP practices in England. This was launched by the BMA after the profession rejected the Government's winter 'rescue package' for general practice. There was a 35% response rate on the indicative ballot with 84% of respondents saying they would welcome non-compliance with COVID-19 exemption certificate requests, 80% said they would change the way they reported appointment data, and 58% said they would support withdrawal from the PCN DES at the next opt-out period.

Read the BMA [press statement](#) and full [transcript of Dr Farah Jameel's speech](#).

Following the motions that were passed, the new GPC negotiators will take this forward with NHS England. We will keep you updated on this.

In the meantime, a list of resolutions and a recording of the event will be published on the [BMA website](#).

## Health Select Committee inquiry into the future of general practice

Last week the Parliamentary Health and Social Care Committee (HSCC), chaired by former Health Secretary, Jeremy Hunt MP, launched a timely [inquiry into the future of general practice](#). The inquiry presents a key opportunity for the BMA to push GP campaign asks, as well as to raise wider concerns and recommendations.

The BMA will submit a formal response, and you can share your views on review by emailing [publicaffairs@bma.org.uk](mailto:publicaffairs@bma.org.uk) by **Wednesday 1 December**, to support the BMA response.

Members of the public can also [submit their comments](#) directly to the inquiry by 14 December.





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## DVLA

We have been receiving many queries from practices regarding requests from the DVLA 'Section 88 of the Road Traffic Act'.

During COVID many drivers' licences have expired. The DVLA initially gave extensions so that drivers could continue to drive and work. For many drivers, however, this extension is coming to an end. Some Drivers are now being told by the DVLA to ask their GP if they are "fit to drive" so that they can continue to drive under Section 88 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 (RTA 1988).

GPs receiving requests from the DVLA should only provide relevant medical information and not to provide an opinion, as GPs are not usually qualified or indemnified to certify someone fit to drive. It is the responsibility of the DVLA to make the decision on whether a patient is fit to drive.

As this is not NHS work a reasonable fee may be charged.

If you are receiving an increase in these requests, practices may wish to publish an explanatory note on your websites or noticeboards so that patients are forewarned of your policy around DVLA requests.

## Professional Associate Recruitment

We are looking for a wide variety of practice team expertise interested in working with us on our Practice Team Support and Development Programme and our resilience programme. This includes PMs, GPs, Nurses & other Health Care Professionals across Lancashire & Cumbria.

There will be a presentation taking place on 8<sup>th</sup> December, from 12:30 to 1:30pm, which will include a Q&A session. Please visit our [website](#) for more information.

## GP appointment data

The [GP appointment data for October have now been published](#), showing an increase in the number of GP appointments, including the number of those being seen face-to-face.

Last month practices delivered more than 4 million more appointments than they did in September, a total of 33.9 million in October, and more than 3 million more than they did in the same month pre-pandemic in 2019. Meanwhile the number of people being seen face-to-face continues to rise, which underlines how wrong suggestions are that practices are closed and not seeing patients in person.

Read the full BMA statement [here](#)

## New interactive ESA 113

The new interactive ESA 113 form, which healthcare professionals fill in if the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) asks for information in connection with Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit, is now live on the [gov.uk website](#).





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## Updated infection control guidance

New [infection prevention and control \(IPC\) guidance](#) has now been published by the UK Health Security Agency, issued jointly by the Department of Health and Social Care, NHSE and the devolved nations' public health departments. It covers seasonal respiratory viruses and supersedes the previous COVID-19 specific guidance.

It recommends that face masks for staff and face masks/coverings for all patients and visitors should remain as an IPC measure within health and care settings over the winter period (especially with the new OMRICON variant). It also recommends that physical distancing should be at least 1 metre, increasing whenever feasible to 2 metres across all health and care setting, and that it should remain at 2 metres where patients with suspected or confirmed respiratory infection are being cared for or managed.

This follows the specific recommendations for changes to [IPC guidance in primary care](#) published last month. The BMA have already stressed that 1 metre social distancing will be difficult for some smaller surgeries and as such there will still have to be a reduced capacity in some practices. The guidance strongly emphasises that local decisions and risk assessments will ultimately decide whether a face-to-face consultation is appropriate and where physical distancing can be safely reduced. It is, therefore, for practices to determine what arrangements they have in the surgery.

## TPP Patient access to records

Following the announcement that patients registered with TPP practices would be granted access to their records from December 2021, BMA GPC England wrote to NHSX calling for a delay, citing clinical safety and workload issues. Last week the BMA received a response confirming that initial rollout will now be delayed until April 2022 with time given to work with NHSX to ensure that it happens safely and with minimal disruption. We will provide more information on any further changes as and when it is received.

## Updated PGD and national Protocols for COVID vaccination programme

Updates to the following PGDs and national protocols, for the COVID-19 vaccination programme have been published:

- [National protocol for COVID-19 mRNA vaccine BNT162b2 \(Pfizer/BioNTech\)](#)
- [National protocol for Comirnaty® COVID-19 mRNA vaccine](#)
- [Patient group direction for Comirnaty® \(Pfizer BioNTech\)](#)
- [Patient Group Direction for COVID-19 mRNA vaccine BNT162b2 \(Pfizer/BioNTech\)](#)

## BMA Sessional GP Newsletter

Read the latest BMA Sessional GPs newsletter [here](#).

