



Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire
Local Medical Committee Ltd

Your Local Medical Committee

*Who we are and
what we do*

The aim of Beds & Herts LMC Ltd is to support GPs and practices to aspire to excellence in patient care by advising on and promoting the development of all aspects of general practice.

British general practice is hailed as exemplary across the world and the Beds & Herts LMC Ltd believes passionately that general practice is the cornerstone of the NHS. Through supporting GPs and their practices in every way possible; upholding the principles of openness, fairness and equity; and working with all partner organisations in Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire, as well as with national organisations, the LMC Ltd promotes the delivery of excellent patient care.

Because of their adaptability, the way local LMCs are structured varies around the country. For Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire there is one LMC covering the two counties; the work is carried out by two sub-committees of elected GPs (one for Hertfordshire and one for Bedfordshire and Luton) and supported by a Secretariat based in Stevenage. In 2006 Beds & Herts LMC became incorporated as Beds & Herts LMC Ltd (see page 2)

FUNDING

The LMC Ltd is funded by a statutory levy paid by all GP practices in Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire, whether GMS or PMS. The levy is proposed annually by the LMC Ltd and has to be agreed by the representatives on the two sub-committees. It is based on the patient list size. In addition to this, GPs are asked to contribute to a voluntary levy which is used to finance the national GP Defence Fund (GPDF) which supports legal cases which are of significance for all GPs, and supports the work of the national GP negotiators on the GPC, the GP subcommittee of the BMA.

ROLES AND FUNCTIONS OF BEDS & HERTS LMC LTD

As the representative body for all GPs in Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire, the LMC Ltd supports practices in several ways including:

- Negotiating on behalf of practices with PCTs and other organisations on issues that affect general practice.
- Supporting individual practices going through periods of difficulty (such as partnership disagreements, contractual problems or performance issues).
- Providing information about local and national health policies, contracts, and legal and ethical matters pertaining to the running of the complex businesses that are general practices. This is done through a multitude of mechanisms including courses and lectures, a comprehensive website, a monthly newsletter, direct mailing and responding to ad hoc queries. The LMC is also happy to advise PCT staff on any of these areas.

WHAT IS A LOCAL MEDICAL COMMITTEE (LMC)?

Local Medical Committees are organisations recognised in the NHS Act 2006 as the elected professional body representing all local GPs. Set up in 1911, LMCs predate the NHS and have played pivotal roles in facilitating the functioning of the NHS. They have survived many NHS re-organisations and have adapted when necessary to new NHS structures. PCTs have a statutory duty to consult with their local LMC on certain issues.

STATUTORY OBLIGATIONS

As organisations recognised in the 2006 NHS Act LMCs have statutory obligations. For example, under Part 6 'Functions of Local Medical Committees' of 'The NHS (General Medical Services Contracts) Regulations 2004' (and comparable PMS regulations) LMCs must:

- Consider any complaint made by any medical practitioner against another, and report its findings to the PCT if there are concerns relating to the efficiency of services provided under a contract resulting from the complaint.
- Make arrangements for a medical examination of a practitioner when there are concerns that the practitioner might be ill, and to make a written report for the PCT regarding the practitioner's capability to carry out his or her role.

Part 7, of Schedule 6 (para. 99 (2)) of The NHS (General Medical Services Contracts) Regulations 2004 gives PCTs or practices the option of involving the LMC in resolving disputes between PCTs and practices. The committees are happy to be involved in helping to resolve such disputes.

ROLES OF BEDS & HERTS LMC LTD IN PERFORMANCE PROCEDURES

The role of the LMC Ltd in PCT performance procedures varies slightly between the two counties. In both counties the LMC sub-committees have been consulted about their PCTs performance procedures.

In Bedfordshire the LMC is not invited to sit on the Decision Making Group (DMG) but is invited to sit with and support (but not represent) a GP appearing at the DMG; a role usually undertaken by Dr Peter Graves.

In Hertfordshire, not only does the LMC support a doctor appearing at a DMG (usually Dr Peter Graves) but another representative sits throughout the hearing to ensure procedure is adhered to. He or she does not have any voting rights on the group.

Occasionally an LMC sub-committee rep is asked for specific advice about a specific case if there are further aspects requiring consideration outside the experience of the DMG.

EXPECTATIONS UPON PCTS IN RELATION TO THE LMC LTD

PCTs are expected to consult LMCs on many decisions relating to the commissioning of primary care services in their area. In summary, the areas where PCTs are expected to consult with LMCs include:

- Planning and provision of primary medical services
- Enhanced Services
- List closure and patient assignments to practices with closed lists
- Quality & Outcomes reviews and when the accuracy of recording is being questioned by a PCT
- Out of Hours arrangements, particularly if a PCT refuses to grant out of hours approval for proposed arrangements
- Contracts, contract reviews (at request of practice or PCT) and local contract variations
- Premises, including quality standards
- Vacancies and practice splits
- GP Appraisal

Under Practice-based Commissioning, PBC Consortia are now expected to consult with the LMC on any of the above issues in which they are involved.

STRUCTURE OF BEDS & HERTS LMC LTD

In October 2006, the Beds & Herts LMC incorporated to become a company limited by guarantee (not shares) as Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire Local Medical Committee Ltd for the purpose of carrying out the work of the Beds & Herts LMC and in order to allow adequate liability insurance for all LMC representatives. Therefore, all work carried out by the organisation

is done through the limited company. The levies collected by Beds & Herts LMC are granted to the LMC Ltd. The main strategic and policy functions of the LMC Ltd are delegated to the two sub-committees which are made up of elected GP representatives.

The Board

As a company limited by guarantee, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Local Medical Committee Ltd has to have a board of directors, the names of whom are registered with Companies House (as are the Articles and Memoranda of Association) and are available to anyone at any reasonable time at the LMC Ltd offices in Stevenage.

The Secretariat

The Secretariat team is led by the Chief Executive, Dr Peter Graves, a GP with previous PCT experience at medical director level. He is supported by a Director of Operations, Viv Seal and two LMC/PCT Liaison Managers, Carl Raybold (Bedfordshire and Luton) and Rachel Lea (Hertfordshire). The Secretariat staff also includes three Administrative Officers, Joan Dunleavy, Sue Rollinson and Mandy Clements and a Finance Officer.

The Committees

The main LMC sub-committees meet on alternate months (excluding August). On the months between main meetings, Executive sub-committees meet to carry out and monitor progress of main committee work, discuss urgent matters arising between the main committees, and guide and comment on the work carried out by the Secretariat. Each sub-committee has a Chair and a Vice-chair, with the Vice-chair acting as Chair of the relevant Executive committee. The LMC representatives are democratically elected by the constituent GPs of the two counties. Elections occur every two years, when half of the committee is re-elected; each representative stands for a period of four years, and may be re-elected to stand for another four-year term. The chairs of the committees are elected by

the LMC representatives. GPs can be co-opted by the sub-committee to vacant positions for up to two years and will then be put forward for election at the next opportunity. Under the LMC constitution, up to 4 GPs can also be co-opted if the committee considers their experience or expertise would be of value in its deliberations.

LOCAL REPRESENTATION

The LMC sub-committees consist of GPs elected on a constituency basis, based on the old PCT areas, and include representation from GMS and PMS GPs, freelance and sessional GPs and GP Registrars. In addition, members are co-opted when appropriate.

For up to date information about current members and Chairs, please see the LMC Ltd website.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LMCs, GPC & BMA

The General Practitioners Committee (GPC) is a sub-committee of the British Medical Association (BMA) and is recognised as the national negotiating body for all NHS GPs. The GPC negotiates with the Department of Health and NHS Employers on GPs' terms and conditions and pay.

Local Medical Committees are the link between local GPs and the GPC and each LMC has a regional GPC representative. This way, the views and opinions of all GPs can be represented at national level via the LMCs to the GPC. Every year all LMCs send representatives to the two-day Annual Conference of LMCs where policy is debated and members vote on what negotiating position the GPC negotiators will be taking in the coming year. GPs from both committees are well represented at Conference each year and make sure that the views of local GPs are put forward.

*Working in partnership for excellence in
General Practice*

SERVICES PROVIDED BY BEDS & HERTS LMC LTD

As well as the statutory roles of the LMC, Beds & Herts LMC Ltd also provides a range of services for GPs and practices and we are also happy to advise PCT staff on a range of contractual or other issues . These services include:

- Arranging and running conferences, lectures and workshops in order to help GPs understand local and national policy
- Producing regular newsletters and an annual report
- Running an office which acts as a central source of information for ad hoc queries
- Communicating urgent or important matters, via fax or e-mail
- Providing Listman – a list server for GPs and Practice Managers through which they can communicate concerns or debate issues
- Providing personal one-to-one support for whatever reason
- Ensuring quality assurance of the appraisal process including the recruitment and training of GP Appraisers (currently Hertfordshire only)
- Providing and commissioning of education for general practice staff
- GP recruit website for practices to advertise GP vacancies
- Nurse bank to find locum nurses



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