



Beds & Herts LMC Ltd

Weekly Update for Practices: Friday 28th August 2020

1) Consultation on regulation changes to support the rollout of COVID-19 vaccines

The government has today launched a [consultation about changing the Human Medicine Regulations](#) to allow

- a COVID-19 vaccine to be rolled out before it has been licensed (but after it has been tested)
- an expansion of the people who are legally allowed to deliver vaccines, along with changes to PGDs to cover an unlicensed product
- the promotion of an unlicensed vaccine to the public and healthcare professionals
- the moving of vaccines between service providers without the need for a wholesale licence

The consultation also includes information about liability and indemnity.

The consultation is open until September 18th.

2) Flu vaccination for Locum GPs

We have had some reports of Locum GPs being refused a vaccination last year by their registered practice so we would like to remind you that Locum GPs are eligible for a flu vaccination from their registered practice under the Flu DES (see pages 23-25 of the [Flu DES specification](#) for a full list of eligible groups). While some Locum GPs will be vaccinated by a practice or organisation where they work, many who do not have a regular employer will need to get the vaccination from their registered practice. This year, there is an aspiration that 100% of healthcare workers will be offered flu vaccination and we would encourage you to make sure Locum GPs are not refused a flu vaccination to which they are entitled.

3) NHS Property Service legal action

As many of you will know, the BMA is supporting five GP practices who have started court proceedings against NHS Property Services (NHSPS) to clarify the basis on which NHSPS calculates service charges. Since 2016, many practices have received increasingly costly service charge demands from NHSPS. In defence of these expensive non-reimbursable charges, NHSPS had argued that it was moving to a "full cost" approach to the recovery of charges via a "consolidated charging policy". The BMA position was – and continues to be – that the consolidated charging policy cannot be unilaterally incorporated into the terms of individual practices' tenancy agreements.

NHSPS has filed Defences and Counterclaims in each of those claims. Within the five Defences, NHSPS has finally conceded that the consolidated charging policy has not varied the existing leases and that the service charges are not due pursuant to the policy. Supported by the BMA, the test claimants are now applying to the High Court to ask that it upholds their claims against NHSPS and issues declaration that the 'consolidated charging policy' does not form part of their tenancy. Although such judgments would not automatically bind any GP practices beyond the five test claimants, they will be highly

persuasive evidence that other GP practices in similar circumstances can rely upon when facing disputed demands from their landlord.

More information is available in the BMA letter to practices [here](#).

4) GMC fees and maternity leave

The aim of the GMC's [income discount scheme](#) is to assist doctors whose overall financial circumstances makes it more difficult for them to afford the full annual fee. However, some doctors may miss out on the discount if their period of maternity spans two registration years, with the result that their income does not fall below the threshold in either year. The BMA challenged the GMC about this and following their intervention GMC will be undertaking a review of their discount scheme, as it recognises the need to allow all women on maternity leave (irrespective of the time of year their baby is born) to access a discount if their income falls below the threshold while they are on maternity leave. In the meantime, the GMC will offer doctors a discount if they expect their income to be below the £32,000 threshold during a 12-month period that overlaps with their period of maternity leave. This discount is available for one registration year, so doctors will need to indicate on the [income discount application form](#) which year they would like the discount to be applied to.

The GMC will be updating its information to reflect this interim change – for further information please contact the GMC directly (contact details are on the [income discount application form](#)).

5) BMA analysis of NHS England - phase three of the response to COVID-19

Following [NHS England's letter announcing the start of Phase Three of its response to COVID-19](#), the BMA has produced an analysis, which can be read [here](#), outlining what this means for doctors and for the health service.

6) Mask exemption letters for air travel

We are aware of some airlines that are still asking for letters from GPs for mask exemption. To restate our previous guidance, this is not required as per the [government advice on exemption cards](#), which states: "Those who have an age, health or disability reason for not wearing a face covering should not be routinely asked to give any written evidence of this, this includes exemption cards. No person needs to seek advice or request a letter from a medical professional about their reason for not wearing a face covering. Some people may feel more comfortable showing something that says they do not have to wear a face covering. This could be in the form of an exemption card, badge or even a home-made sign. This is a personal choice and is not necessary in law."

7) Registering patients prior to their release from secure residential estate (England)

Practices have a GMS contractual obligation to support with registering patients prior to their release from the secure residential estate. GP practices are asked to ensure that processes are in place to support this, with information on how to do this [here](#). Plans are also progressing to enable patients to register with a GP in their place of detention in the same

way as they register with a community GP. This change will enable a patient's general practice record to transfer to their place of detention, allowing clinicians working in these settings full access to the individual's medical record and history. This will be rolled out next year in a phased approach across England. BMA guidance will be updated to reflect this clarification and will be circulated as soon as possible to LMCs.

8) LMC Education

- **Free Education Webinars: Mental Health Updates, Friday 25th September**

Topics: Anxiety Management, Perinatal Update, Eating Disorders.

For more information visit our [webpage](#).

[Register here](#)

- **Free Education Webinars: Level 3 Children & Adult Safeguarding for Hertfordshire practices only**

Topics: Domestic Abuse, Markings in children, Suicide prevention strategies, Adult referrals, Radicalisation.

Various dates. For more information visit our [webpage](#).

[Register here](#)

9) Join the Team!

As some of you may know, Michelle our Office & IT Administrator is off on maternity leave soon and we want to wish her all the very best at this special time.

This does mean we have a temporary vacancy for maternity cover (12-14months), so if you have any friends or family you think may be interested, please ask them to look on our [website](#) for the application and job specification.

BHLMC Job Board Advertise your practice vacancies with us on our Job Board on the website [here](#). If you are interested in posting an advert please contact lmcadmin@bhlmc.co.uk for more information.

If you have missed any of our regular bulletins for practices, please visit the [Weekly Updates](#) section of our website.

If you are a Locum and would like to receive mailings and updates from Beds & Herts LMC Ltd please click here to complete the [online form](#) with your details and we can add you to our database.

Wellbeing for GPs: [Visit our webpage](#).

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