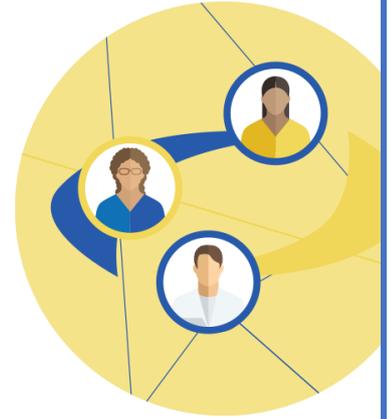


Beds & Herts LMC Ltd: Weekly Update for Practices, Friday 6th November 2020



1. Covid Vaccination DES

As you may be aware, yesterday GPC members voted to accept the Covid Vaccination DES proposed by NHS England. We fully support the role of General Practice in contributing to the delivery of this vaccine, so long as it does not put practices, their staff or patients at risk. At the time of writing, LMCs have not seen the DES or been informed of important details such as the funding arrangements. However, we are aware that the DES will be released either today or on Monday, and that practices will be given a very short window to make a decision about signing up (we think this may be as little as five days). Therefore, we feel it is important that practices start to consider their process for making the important decision as to whether or not to sign up.

Having not seen the DES we are unable to make specific comments about its content at this point, but we believe that practices should consider the three tests below to support their decision making (which apply to taking on any new service).

IS IT SAFE? The DES puts GPs in the difficult position of asking them to commit to delivering a (currently) unlicensed medication with no knowledge about the efficacy, side effects or contraindications. It is likely GPs will be asked to deliver the vaccine in older populations which were not included in the clinical trial. As clinicians you will need to weigh up these risks against the risks of not vaccinating your vulnerable patients (it is not yet clear who will be responsible for vaccinating patients should a practice choose not to sign up to the DES).

IS IT DELIVERABLE? Our understanding is that the DES will be very prescriptive in terms of how, where and when the vaccine will be delivered by general practice and PCNs. This model may work well for some and not for others. It is therefore imperative that every practice considers if they have both the physical and human resources available to them to deliver the vaccine in the manner dictated by the DES. At the time of writing we have not had any indication that NHS England is considering suspending any contractual requirements, QOF or other work in order to free up time for this new service, though we are aware that CCGs are looking at their own schemes.

IS IT FINANCIALLY VIABLE? We are aware that many practices are struggling with the uncertainty about their income brought about by Covid. Given the rigid structure that the vaccine will be delivered under, practices will need to make a decision as to whether they can deliver the DES without, at very least, making a loss.

As soon as we have had an opportunity to review the full DES specification we will communicate further.

2. General practice workforce initiatives

GPC has published a guide about the range of [workforce initiatives and schemes](#) in England. The guide includes helpful information about what is on offer in each of the schemes and how to apply for them.

They have also published a new guide to applying for the [GP partnership scheme](#), which will help practices navigate what can be a complicated application process. The scheme was launched on 1 July and supports clinicians who are interested in becoming a practice partner. You can read more in this [blog](#) by Krishna Kasaraneni, member of GPC England's Executive team and workforce lead.

3. Parental leave guidance

GPC has published [A guide for GPs – maternity leave and other types of parental leave](#) which contains key information and useful links on the full range of parental leave topics. It will serve as a checklist for each stage of your leave. You can read more in this [blog](#) by Sarah Westerbeek.

GPC will also be hosting a webinar and workshop for more in depth guidance to explain these issues:

- 2 December (12.30 – 2.00pm) – *Webinar - 'GP Maternity and Parental leave Guide: launch and introduction to the guide'*. The session will also touch on local maternity workshops and there will be a Q&A session. Register [here](#)
- 9 December (12.30 – 2.30pm) – *Workshop - 'GP maternity'*. An in depth run through everything you need to consider before, during and after maternity leave, including advice on leave and pay entitlements, notifying your practice, appraisals, CPD and returning to work. Register [here](#)

4. No change to CQC fees

The CQC fees scheme will not change in 2021/22. This means that, for most providers, their fees will remain the same as in 2019/20 and 2020/21, providing their registration or size does not change. The fees for General Practice remain fully reimbursable. Since the fees scheme will remain the same in 2021/22 as in the last two years, you can find the fees scheme, guidance and calculator at www.cqc.org.uk/fees

5. Impact of coronavirus on GPs

The BMA's [latest tracker survey](#) was published last week which shows that more than 74% of GPs responding are quite or extremely anxious about work in the coming months and 47% say their levels of stress, anxiety and emotional distress had got worse since the pandemic began. 64% of GPs reported higher than normal level of fatigue or exhaustion from working during the pandemic and 62% reported that they or a clinical colleague in their practice had been forced to self-isolate within the past two weeks - with 39% of all respondents reporting a 'moderate' or significant' impact on patient care. View the [GP specific results](#)

The survey also demonstrated that worries about workload pressures are more from non-covid related issues - underlining why more support is needed from NHSE/I if they are asking practices to maintain the same degree of services at a time when hospitals can and are stopping doing routine elective work.

These survey figures clearly highlight the increasing pressure on general practice during the second wave of the pandemic. Practices are working harder, but people are very tired and concerned that they are going to have difficulty satisfying demand in the next few months.

The LMC has a pastoral care team to advise and support GPs on any issue in their personal circumstances. If you feel you need support at this time, it is important to remember that you are not alone, and that it is OK to not be OK. If you believe that a colleague may be suffering, please remind them of the service. The team are always available to provide confidential support to those who need it, for both personal and professional difficulties.

To access the team please call the LMC office on 01438 880010.

6. PCR testing for practices

We have been informed by GPC that NHS Test and Trace is making PCR covid testing available on a voluntary basis for self-administration in the next few days. This follows a number of pilots in practices over the last few weeks. This will be a supplementary option for practices and does not replace any of the existing routes to access testing. Members of the public will continue to be directed to regional testing centres or home testing kits in the first instance.

The tests will be part of the Pillar 2 process and can be offered to patients who are seen in practice when the practitioner feels that a test would be appropriate and difficulties such as language, disability, no internet access or mobile phone makes it difficult for them to access the standard routes for testing. They can also be used for GP staff and symptomatic household members. As with other Pillar 2 tests, the results are sent directly to the individual and the registered practice.

GPC has raised concerns that this could lead to patients contacting practices for tests rather than using the current drive in or postal routes and the programme has been delayed until the capacity in Lighthouse Labs has increased. They have also asked that there should be no media announcement about this. Practices will receive further information in the next week about how to order the tests. It is voluntary and practices will need to opt-in if they want them.

7. Letter of thanks to GPs and practice staff from Department of Health

Jo Churchill, health minister with responsibility for primary care, has asked GPC and LMCs to share this [letter of thanks](#) with you.

8. Primary Care Direct: All About You – A Wellbeing Occasion for Practice Management Staff



It's fair to say that the COVID-19 pandemic has left many practice management staff feeling drained, overwhelmed and even stressed to breaking point in some roles. Practice managers and PCN leads have told us that they have experienced feeling helpless, feeling anxious or depressed, and feeling 'guilty' for taking time out when you know your team are stretched.

Without good wellbeing, there cannot be good patient care. Strong, resilient wellbeing is needed now more than ever in primary care and our **free 'All About You – A Wellbeing Occasion for Practice Management Staff'** could be just the treatment you need and deserve.

Sponsored by Quality Compliance Systems, Moodbeam and Circular Wave, Primary Care Direct are inviting you to the launch of our Wellbeing Service on **Thursday 19 November 17.30-19.00** via Teams.

Take 5 minutes out with some mindfulness, play our wellbeing bingo game and win some great prizes along the way whilst finding out more about our service including how we can support you with our Well Being Buddy's, Help in a Crisis line, our partnerships with digital wellbeing services and how to deal with difficult patients and situations.

Sound good? Book your free place by Monday 16 November 2020 [here](#).

9. Welcome Back to Work for GPs in Herts & West Essex



'Without Welcome Back to Work I wouldn't have ever contemplated returning to general practice'

Are you a GP who is on the Performers List, who has had time out, and are now thinking about returning to work in General Practice - but feeling rather daunted perhaps overwhelmed by the thought?

Welcome Back to Work provides tailored support that is unique and personal to your circumstances. The programme is delivered by Dr Lucy Henshall and Penny Flack and all starts with a simple question 'How Can We Help?'

Commissioned by the ICS support is available to GP's across Hertfordshire & West Essex. This 60 second clip explains more about the programme <https://youtu.be/SpvGAViPXMU>
Please get in touch via the website www.welcomebacktowork.co.uk

Are you a GP on the Performers List and thinking about returning to work after a break?

Welcome Back to Work Programme has been commissioned by Herts & West Essex Training Hub.



It all starts with a simple question 'How Can We Help?'

Please get in touch via our website www.welcomebacktowork.co.uk

'Without Welcome Back to Work I wouldn't have ever contemplated returning to general practice'

10. Herts Practices Only – HERTS SARC Webinar, Wednesday 18th November

Information for Professionals - A GUIDE TO SERVICES AT THE HERTS SARC (Sexual Assault Referral Centre).



Please join this MS Teams webinar on **Wednesday November 18th 12:30hrs to 13:30hrs** where Mandi Ince – Forensic Nurse Examiner will provide Primary Care professionals with an overview of the Hertfordshire Sexual Assault Referral Centre and referral process, case studies and Q&A.

To join simply click on the link below on the day:

[Join Microsoft Teams Meeting](#)

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](#).

Contact Us:
Beds & Herts LMC, Tel: 01438 880010
Email: lmcadmin@bhlmc.co.uk
Website: www.bedshertslmcs.org.uk/contact_us

