



Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire LMC Ltd: Weekly Update for Practices, Wednesday 23rd December 2020

A Message of Reflection and Thanks from the LMC

As we head into 2021, we leave behind a year that for most will have been one of the most difficult of their lives. Alongside the personal challenges of adapting to the new world, those on the front line of general practice have also had to deal with the seismic changes in their working lives, the expectations of both patients and commissioners and the illness and death of friends, colleagues and loved ones.

While it is tempting not to dwell on this year as it passes, and instead focus on the new challenges that 2021 will bring, it is worth taking some time to reflect on the pivotal role general practice has played over the past 12 months. In adapting to the restrictions brought about by Covid-19, practices have developed and implemented new models of care, embracing technological changes that would have been labelled impossible at the start of the year. Practices have supported struggling secondary care trusts by taking work traditionally done by acute trusts to ensure that patient disruption and suffering is minimised. The development of hot hubs and PCN Groupings have seen practices working together on an unprecedented scale, often with clinical directors taking on complex leadership roles they never signed up for. This has culminated in general practice designing, developing and delivering a vaccination campaign in a matter of weeks that would usually be done over the course of years.

None of these changes have been easy, and have often involved unsavoury political games, financial uncertainty and ethical dilemmas. However, our practices have risen to each of these challenges and more, and have done so to protect the most vulnerable amongst us, ensuring that whatever other restrictions are placed on patients' lives, their access to general practice is not one of them.

Like every organisation it has been a difficult year for the LMC. Alongside the challenges brought about by Covid-19 we have undergone changes in the CEO role and the retirement of some of our most experienced representatives. But like general practice, we have adapted and grown with each challenge. None of this would have been possible without the support of our board, GP and practice manager representatives, and most importantly the herculean efforts of our secretariat team, whose commitment, work ethic and wisdom has been ever present throughout the year.

It just leaves us to say thank you for your ongoing support of the LMC. We feel honoured to have played a part in the role general practice has taken on during this crisis and are immensely proud of all our practices and colleagues. Yes, this has been a year like no other, but thankfully we have a general practice workforce like no other.

Michael Harrison and Dr Nicky Williams, Co-chief Executives, Beds & Herts LMC

In this bumper edition of the LMC weekly update, please find information about the following:

A) Covid-19 vaccination

1. Data sharing agreements
2. Care homes – item of service fee
3. Care homes – staffing support
4. Covid-19 vaccination SOP
5. 6th dose of Covid-19 vaccine
6. Transfer of vaccine information (EMIS practices)
7. Vaccinating patients of non-participating practices
8. Early Learning Webinar (Hertfordshire only)
9. Patient information in other languages
10. Vaccination of shielded patients

B) Other Covid-19 related information

11. Lateral flow antigen testing in primary care
12. PPE reimbursement
13. General Practice Covid-19 SOP
14. Communications to shielding patients

C) Non-Covid-19 information

15. Upcoming vote on future negotiations on the PCN DES
16. AISMA and ICAEW joint statement about account issues for PCNs
17. Extended Hours and Extended Access arrangements
18. Herts Safeguarding Webinar: Safeguarding in Virtual Consultations
19. LMC wellbeing support

A) COVID-19 VACCINATION

1. Data Sharing Agreements

Practices that are working together to deliver Covid-19 vaccination and/or are subcontracting to another provider such as a federation, will need to ensure they have the appropriate data sharing and processing arrangements in place. LMC Law has produced a data sharing agreement specifically for covid vaccination which is available from the LMC on request.

2. Item of Service fee for vaccinating care home residents

In order to increase the speed in which care home residents can be provided with protection from Covid-19, NHS England has agreed to increase the payment to support the additional time and resource needed to deliver the vaccine to care home residents in the care home setting. There will now be a supplement of £10 per dose on top of the current £12.58 Item of Service fee, for Covid vaccines delivered in a care home setting. We have been told by GPC that this will apply to care home staff vaccinated at the care home as well as residents. The supplement will be payable on completion of the second dose for all vaccines administered between 14 December 2020 and 31 January 2021. Where exceptional circumstances (as defined in the enhanced service specification) mean that only one dose was able to be delivered, and this dose was delivered on or before 10 January 2021, the supplement will be payable on the first dose only. Further detail of the reporting and payment arrangements are expected shortly.

The additional fee recognises the urgency of the current situation and the challenges of taking the Pfizer vaccine to care homes, as well as the speed and the time period involved where practice groups may need to vaccinate care home residents and staff. This does not apply to housebound patients, as it is anticipated that the AZ/Oxford vaccine should mean that practices can revert to a delivery model more akin to flu where community nursing teams could assist. More details will be provided as soon as possible.

3. Staffing support to deliver vaccine to care home residents and staff

Last week a small number of practice groups across England piloted an approach to deliver the vaccine in care home settings using a roving model. NHSE are now expanding this rapidly across England to deliver an increased number of vaccinations in these settings as soon as possible.

Where practice groups require additional staffing support, they have been asked to liaise with their CCG and local lead employer as soon as possible detailing the types of workforce required and the time periods it is required for. NHSEI are also asking lead employers and regions to identify staff recruited to support the delivery of the vaccination programme locally to provide support. In addition, they expect community trusts to support short term deployment of staff to support vaccinations of these residents and that these staff are paid by their normal employer for the work undertaken, be this as part of their normal substantive pay arrangements or bank pay if they are an ad hoc worker. In all circumstances the local employer pay and terms and conditions should apply. Funding will be made available and distributed to providers locally for work undertaken to support this. There will be no recharging arrangements to primary care specifically for work related to care home vaccinations. The letter outlining these arrangements can be found [here](#).

4. COVID-19 vaccination programme SOP

The [COVID-19 vaccination programme SOP](#) has been updated and now includes information about the use of the 6th dose in a vial and the details practices will need to start vaccinating care home residents. Earlier this week NHSEI delivered vaccine through some wave 1-3 local vaccination sites to care home residents and their staff, starting with larger care homes. A [letter has been sent to waves 1-3 sites](#) with further details. Practices can order packs of 75 doses to take straight in to their care homes.

5. 6th dose of the COVID-19 vaccine

MHRA have produced further information on the 6th dose of the COVID vaccine and how this can be used. Consumables to support the use of the additional dose will be sent directly to designated sites, and added to second dose deliveries. Healthcare professionals must always use the correct volume of diluent, and after dilution must aim to secure five full 0.3ml doses of this Pfizer-BioNTech COVID vaccine in line with the manufacturer's instructions and as outlined in the [Information for Healthcare Professionals](#). After that has been done, there may be potential for a sixth full dose with some vials due to variances in fill volume and the syringe/needle hold up volume combinations used. This should be subject to health care professional judgement on a case by case basis.

The manufacturer has stressed care should be taken to ensure a full 0.3 ml dose will be administered to the patient from the same vial. Where a full 0.3 ml dose cannot be extracted the contents should be discarded. The vaccine does not contain a preservative so it is best practice for all doses to be used as soon as possible after dilution, although all doses from a single prepared vial must be administered within 6 hours of the time of dilution.

6. Transfer of vaccination information (EMIS practices only)

The BMA is in discussion with NHS Digital to resolve the current inability to electronically transfer information about COVID-19 vaccinations given in to EMIS patient records. EMIS and NHSD are currently deploying a mechanism for this to be done automatically and this should go live in January. Until then practices do not need to manually process this information. If you do file this you should follow the advice from EMIS on the key qualifiers that need to be manually added. Once the automatic arrangement is deployed it will duplicate this information and it is possible that the practice-entered information may be disregarded. The clinical safety processes are currently being worked through and more information will be provided as soon as possible.

7. Providing vaccinations to patients registered at practices not participating in the enhanced service

NHSEI have written to local commissioners setting out further information on the [contractual options and processes that can be deployed to support vaccination of the registered patients of non-participating practices](#); and across all care homes, even if the lead PCN grouping for the care home has not signed up via its member practices to the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme Enhanced Service or is signed up but has not yet mobilised to commence vaccination. They have also produced a template [letter](#) to be used by CCGs.

8. For Hertfordshire Practices: Covid Vaccine Vaccinators – Early Learning Webinar - Wednesday 30th December, 7.00 - 8.30pm

Herts Valleys CCG would like to invite all members across Herts Valleys, East & North Herts and West Essex CCGs that may be involved in delivering the Covid Vaccine, ranging from PCN leads, Designated site leads, Vaccinators (both medical and non-medical), Administrators, Nurses, Pharmacists, etc and we would ask that you share this meeting invitation to those who may be interested.

This event will be an opportunity to share learning from early experiences and practical tips of giving the Covid Vaccine and begin the conversations of how best our CCGs can support this programme. [Visit here for more information and to view the Agenda](#)

To join simply click on the link below on the day (Microsoft Teams meeting):

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

9. Patient videos in different languages

Colleagues in West Yorkshire have produced some short videos in alternative languages to help people understand more about the coronavirus vaccine and what it means for them. These are recorded by GPs and are based on the patient leaflets produced by Public Health England to make sure patients get consistent information. The videos, [available on YouTube](#), are aimed at helping people over the age of 80, for whom English may not be their first language, have the right information about the vaccine in a way that is meaningful and easy to understand.

It is hoped that these videos will help to reassure and encourage our BAME communities to take up the offer of the vaccine when invited. At the moment these videos are available in English, Pashto and Urdu, but they are hoping to release other languages soon. Please share them with relevant patients, and local communities, who are being invited for the vaccine.

10. COVID vaccination delivery for CEV patients in Tier 4

When they become eligible, patients who are Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) should be encouraged to attend practice vaccination sites. It may be necessary to enable family and/or carers of those who are CEV to be allowed to come along to sites but they may be asked to wait outside (if possible). If patients are unable to attend the site their COVID-19 vaccination will need to be organised later in the programme.

B) OTHER COVID-19 RELATED UPDATES

11. Lateral flow antigen testing in primary care

Practices are receiving/will have received notification of the availability of lateral flow antigen testing kits which will be rolled out to regularly test asymptomatic patient-facing staff delivering NHS primary care services in England. Patient-facing staff will be asked to test twice a week using self-administered nasal swabbing and report their results through an online platform, and any positive lateral flow antigen tests will need to be followed up by a confirmatory PCR test. **It is voluntary for practices and individuals to take part in this, and is not a contractual requirement, however, if you do start testing, it is a statutory requirement to report all of your results.**

Primary care contractors will receive an invitation to order lateral flow testing devices directly from PCSE, who will be managing the ordering and delivery process. Following receipt of an invitation, practices should log on and complete their order by Wednesday 30 December.

This [letter](#) from NHSE/I has further information on how to order and receive deliveries of lateral flow antigen testing kits for staff. [Standard Operating Procedures](#) and [guidance for staff self-testing](#) have also been published. The BMA is producing guidance on this, which will be published shortly. In the meantime, you can find out more in this [blog](#) by Mark Coley, member of the BMA's Sessional GPs committee.

12. Guidance for claiming reimbursement for PPE

The [guidance for claiming reimbursement for PPE for non-hospital providers](#), including general practice, has now been published. Claims may be made for COVID-19 PPE purchased from 27 February to 31 December 2020 for use in delivery of NHS clinical services. There will be no further entitlement to reimbursement for PPE purchased after 31 December 2020, as this can be obtained free of charge from the DHSC portal.

13. COVID-19 Standard Operating Procedure

The [GP Standard Operating Procedure](#) has been updated and republished to reflect some of the changes. The new or amended sections are highlighted throughout the document.

14. Communications to shielding patients in Tier 4

Shielding has been reintroduced in Tier 4 areas in England, and as a result DHSC will be sending texts to patients on the Shielded Patient List in these Tier 4 areas. This is to ensure affected patients receive the right guidance quickly. This text will be sent from GOV.UK and texts are expected to start being sent today.

C) NON-COVID RELATED UPDATES

15. Upcoming vote on future negotiations on the PCN DES

Following a resolution of LMC England conference in November the BMA will shortly be seeking a mandate from the GP profession on whether GPC England should continue negotiations on the PCN DES. This will be open to all GPs in England and will take place *in January*. The BMA recognises that this is currently an extremely busy period for all in general practice, however it would encourage as many GPs as possible to participate, as this will have a direct influence upon negotiations and funding available for the 2020/21 contract and beyond. Further information on the vote is due to be available early in the new year.

16. AISMA and ICAEW joint statement about account issues for PCNs

In order to assist PCNs to have a better understanding of the obligations to prepare statements of account to ensure tax and pension liabilities are dealt with correctly in their member practices, [AISMA and the ICAEW have jointly prepared an information sheet](#).

17. Extended Hours and Extended Access arrangements

As part of the 5 year GMS contract agreement in England, there were plans to merge the two access schemes from April 2021, the extended hours scheme and the extended access service that provides services in all areas on evenings and weekends. This would transfer the responsibility and funding from existing providers to PCNs. Some PCNs already deliver both services, either individually or working together with others across their area, and have found this a way to help manage daytime workload pressures by making better use of the extended access appointments.

In view of the current focus on the COVID pandemic and vaccination programme, GPC England have encouraged NHSEI to delay this change, unless a PCN wanted to progress with it. NHSEI have agreed, and will be writing to commissioners this week to say that the national transfer of responsibility won't happen until April 2022 and local arrangements should remain in place until then. They will also underline that existing local capacity can be used for COVID vaccination delivery.

18. Herts Safeguarding Webinar: Safeguarding in Virtual Consultations within Primary Care, Thursday 28th January, 1.00 – 2.00pm

Dr Simonee Allen – Named GP for Safeguarding Children HVCCG will provide Primary Care professionals with a Safeguarding Update on Covid Pandemic Remote Consultations.

To join, simply click on the link below on the day (Microsoft Teams)

[Click here to join the meeting](#).

19. LMC Wellbeing support

One of the most important roles of the LMC is to advise and support our local GPs on a personal basis. Christmas can be a really difficult time of the year, and it is also one of the busiest times for practices, even more so this year with the covid pandemic and now the vaccination programme beginning in earnest.

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. This is a gentle reminder that the LMC Pastoral Care team is only a phone call away to provide confidential support for both personal and professional difficulties.

To access the pastoral care team over the Christmas period, please call Dr Rodney Brittan on 07725 138103, and if you believe a colleague may be suffering, please remind them of the service too.

LMC OFFICE CHRISTMAS/NEW YEAR OPENING TIMES 2020

As you will be aware the LMC team continues to work remotely.

We will close on Thursday 24th December at 3pm,
but will be open normal hours Tuesday 29th & Wednesday 30th December
and close at 3pm on Thursday 31st December.

Opening for normal hours again on Monday 4th January 2021

Over this period if you need to contact the team urgently, please call on 01438 880010 during working hours or call Dr Rodney Brittan on 07725 138103 outside normal working hours

We hope you have a well-deserved rest and wishing you all the best for year ahead.

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 register via the [online form](#) and we can add you to our database.

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

Contact Us:
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