



Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire LMC Ltd: Weekly Update for Practices, Friday 8th January 2021

1. Ballot of the profession on the PCN DES

As you may be aware in November the LMC England conference passed a resolution requiring GPC England to seek a mandate on the Primary Care Network Directed Enhanced Service (PCN DES) before continuing with negotiations on the extension of the DES for 2021/22. The wording of the motion that was carried was

That conference notes that the GPC England has never secured a robust democratic mandate for the PCN DES and so again asks the GPC England to secure a firm mandate from the entire profession by means of ballot before negotiating any extension or changes to the PCN DES for the year 2021 / 2022.

To meet the requirements set out by the LMC Conference, they are now holding [a vote on the PCN DES](#), which will run until 23:59 on Tuesday 19 January and is open to all GPs in England, regardless of contractual status (partner/sessional/trainee) or BMA membership status.

The outcome of the vote will determine how GPC England proceeds with negotiations on important planned contractual changes for 2021/22 and beyond.

To help inform the vote BMA has produced a [Briefing Paper: Vote on the PCN DES](#)

The BMA has also released the results of their latest annual [survey of PCN Clinical Directors](#).

2. COVID-19 Vaccination – new and updated documents

i) The PGD for the Astra Zeneca vaccine has been published

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/publication/patient-group-direction-for-covid-19-vaccine-astrazeneca-chadox1-s-recombinant/>

This PGD is for the administration of COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca by registered healthcare practitioners identified.

ii) Following GPC lobbying, NHSEI have now released information on how the Astra Zeneca vaccine can be moved from designated sites

[Coronavirus » COVID-19 Vaccine Oxford AstraZeneca – movement of vaccine \(england.nhs.uk\)](#)

iii) The COVID Vaccination Programme Enhanced Service (CVP ES) has been updated:

[Coronavirus » Enhanced Service Specification: COVID-19 vaccination programme 2020/21 \(england.nhs.uk\)](#)

It now reflects guidance published by JCVI on 30 December 2020, which covers the approval of the AstraZeneca vaccine and, for both Pfizer and AstraZeneca vaccines, recommends a second dose at up to 12 weeks after a first dose. Payment arrangements

have also been changed so that practices are now eligible for an item of service payment for each dose.

iv. Post-vaccination observation period for Oxford/AstraZeneca:

There is not a requirement for 15 minutes observation after administering the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine unless this is indicated after clinical assessment. The MHRA guidance about the use of the Pfizer vaccine in those with a history of anaphylaxis - and the 15 minute post-vaccination observation period for all patients - remain in place. Note also that patients should not drive nor operate machinery for 15 minutes after being vaccinated with either vaccine. The Standard operating procedure: COVID-19 local vaccination services deployment in community settings has been updated to reflect the change.

3. Freeing up practices to support COVID vaccination

Yesterday NHS England published a letter headed [*Freeing up practices to support Covid vaccination*](#). This follows discussions with GPC about further measures to help practices at this critical time. This includes

- income protection for QOF QI and prescribing indicators, meaning the vast majority of QOF is now income protected
- income protection for minor surgery for this quarter
- a direction to CCGs to suspend LESs and to take a supportive pragmatic approach to contract management
- providing additional funding to support the work of PCN clinical directors and those who have worked so hard in the initial delivery of the covid vaccination programme, with an increase in payments from 0.25 WTE to 1 WTE for those PCNs where at least one practice is taking part in the vaccination programme.

We will be discussing with the CCGs what this means for any local primary care funding schemes.

4. Cancard – statement from the BMA and RCGP

We have received some queries from practices that have received a request from an organisation called Cancard which asks the GP to verify a patient's condition so they can be issued with a "medical cannabis card". We have received the following statement from the BMA and RCGP regarding this.

The Medicinal Cannabis holographic photo ID card is being offered by Cancard UK to patients who meet the following criteria:

- Have a diagnosis (confirmed by their GP) that is currently being prescribed for privately.
- Have tried two types of prescription medication or have discussed and discounted these options based on side effect profile or dependence concerns.
- Are unable to afford a private prescription.
- Are required to be in possession of a small amount of Cannabis in order to manage their symptoms.
- Are at risk of criminalisation.

The BMA and RCGP support the use of cannabis-based products for medicinal use in humans under the supervision of specialist clinicians or prescription of MHRA authorised licenced products by doctors who have the necessary clinical experience and competences. These products must have been produced in

accordance with the necessary standards for the production of medicinal products in the UK in order to ensure their safety and authenticity. The BMA and RCGP also support the call for further research into the safety and potential indications for use of these medical products.

The BMA and RCGP cannot however support the use of the Cancard, nor the suggestion that UK registered GPs sign a declaration confirming a diagnosis in order for the card to be issued. The Cancard UK website states that the Cancard has been designed in collaboration with GPs, but neither the RCGP nor BMA have been formally consulted or given endorsement. Whilst we sympathise with patients who struggle to pay a private prescription charge, we do not believe that this is a justifiable reason to encourage the purchase of unregulated unlicensed cannabis products from unregulated or illegal dealers.

If a patient is deemed to meet the criteria for an NHS prescription for an MHRA authorised prescribable product then this may be issued where appropriate. Those patients on low incomes or with medical conditions qualifying for prescription charge exemption will be exempt from prescription charge in line with current regulations. Read the BMA guidance on [Cannabis-based medicinal products here](#)
Read the RCGP clinical guidance [Cannabis-based medication: an interim desktop guide](#)

5. VWV & RSM: PCN Incorporation Webinar

You can catch up on VWV and RSM's specialist Healthcare Sector teams' discussion of PCN incorporations. As PCNs mature, take on more liabilities and increase in scale, the question of form following function remains a key issue.

This webinar provides expert legal and accountancy guidance around the possibilities of using a corporate vehicle to support your PCN. Mark Jarvis of VWV and James Gransby of RSM UK Tax and Accounting explore the topics below to guide you through the main areas to consider:

Corporate structures
NHS Pension Scheme access
Functions of the corporate vehicle
Practicalities of company formation

[View recording here](#)

6. DKJ Support Services: Learning Sets for General Practice

[DKJ Support Services](#), are holding brief Learning Sets throughout the year on key themes relevant to general practice;

A) Learning Set: CQC Inspections – Transitional Monitoring Arrangements

Mon 11 Jan, 13.30-14.00: [View here for more information and how to book.](#)

Tues 19 Jan, 13.30-14.00: [View here for more information and how to book.](#)

Thurs 21 Jan, 11.30-12.00: [View here for more information and how to book.](#)

B) Learning Set: How to write a good bid

Thursday 14 Jan, 10.00-10.30: [View here for more information and how to book.](#)

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](#).

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