

Beds & Herts LMC Ltd: Weekly Update for Practices, Friday 5th February 2021



1. Letter to MPs

Following the ongoing difficulties caused by the unreliable supply of vaccine, establishment of mass vaccine and pharmacy vaccination centres, and confusing communications sent to patients from NHSE, we have this week written to the 17 MPs across our geography. The aim of our letter is to ensure that the MPs have a true understanding of the inefficiencies that result from the way decisions are currently being made and communicated (or not communicated) by NHS England, and the confusion and distress this causes both patients and practices. In the letters we have highlighted where appropriate specific local examples relevant to each MP that illustrate our concerns.

2. Additional payment for vaccinating housebound patients

We have been informed today by GPC that an additional supplement of £10 per visit to a housebound patient in order to administer the COVID-19 vaccinations will be paid. This supplement is on top of the £12.58 Item of Service fee. If a PCN grouping or community pharmacy contractor administers vaccinations to a housebound patient at the same time as vaccinating other members of the household who are currently eligible for vaccination, only one £10 supplement per visit can be claimed. The £10 supplement applies retrospectively to any first dose vaccinations that have taken place since 14 December 2020 in line with the above criteria, and will also apply to second dose vaccinations that take place in line with these arrangements.

3. UK Conference of LMCs – have your say at national level

The UK Conference of LMCs, which will be on 12 & 13 May, is an opportunity for all GPs, via their LMC, to express their views and ideas for national debate. The Conference allows LMCs to propose and debate motions which, if passed, form GPC policy for negotiation with commissioners and Government.

We are calling for your ideas for motions for conference. Whether you feel irritated, exhausted, and angry and would like to vent, or have an idea on how things could be better for GPs and practices, please write it in an email to the LMC office and we may be able to turn it into a motion to be submitted for national debate.

In order for us to be able to meet the deadline for submission of motions, we need motions from you by 15 February at the latest.

Please note, this is the UK Conference, and so only issues of relevance to the whole of UK will be considered. A list of topics which are suitable for the UK-wide Conference, as opposed to those which are suitable for the England-only conference is available [here](#). If you have an issue for the England conference, this will be in November.

4. NHS Pension Scheme Access for ARRS staff

There were potential issues with access to NHS pension scheme access for ARRS staff employed by GP Federations who might lose their APMS contract as a result of the Extended Access changes (and which cease, therefore, to be an Employing Authority under the NHS pension scheme).

The delay to the formal handover of the Extended Access arrangements to Primary Care Networks until April 2022 means this issue is probably less pressing for many GP Federations than it was a few weeks ago. Nevertheless, the provisions for GP Federations without a GMS/PMS/APMS contract to apply for temporary access to the NHS pensions scheme for its staff has now been extended until March 2023. That position has now been confirmed in the updated NHS BSA guidance on access to the NHS pension scheme for PCNs – see scenario 3 in [this document](#)

GPC is continuing their work on a more permanent provisions for this group of staff and will keep you updated.

5. GP Retention Scheme Webinar

The BMA is holding a [webinar on the GP Retention Scheme](#) on Thursday 25 February from 7pm – 8.15pm. The webinar will be looking at how the GP Retention Scheme works for both employees and employers, tackling some of the common misconceptions about the scheme and hearing from GPs who are currently on the scheme. There will a Q&A session at the end and you can submit any questions in advance to cscott@bma.org.uk. A full list of speakers will be confirmed shortly. Click [here](#) to sign up

6. COVID-19 vaccination programme – UPDATE FROM GPC

The following updates were received from GPC on Friday 29th January

The roll out of the COVID-19 vaccination programme continues at pace, with the inclusion of two new [cohorts](#) (people over 70 and those clinically extremely vulnerable to COVID-19) last week. Vaccinating the first two groups (care home residents and staff, and those aged 80 and over and frontline health and care staff) will remain the priority, but vaccination sites with enough supply and capacity for vaccinating further people are allowed to offer vaccinations to the next 2 cohorts.

Following earlier issues with vaccine supply, we are being reassured that they are becoming more stable each week although some batches can still vary.

Vaccination of healthcare workers

The BMA has been campaigning to ensure all healthcare workers are given the opportunity to be vaccinated as soon as possible. We are therefore pleased that NHSE/I has reiterated that vaccinating all healthcare staff against COVID-19 is an absolute and immediate priority. NHS staff do not require an NHS number or GP registration to receive a vaccination and should never be denied one on this basis, either in person when presenting for a vaccine, or through design of booking systems. If a member of staff does not have an NHS number, then employers should vaccinate now, record locally via a paper system and ensure that that the vaccination event is more formally documented later. NHSE/I is working towards a longer-term solution, but employers should not wait for this before vaccinating. NHSE/I has also written a [letter](#) encouraging frontline health and social care workers to get the COVID-19 vaccine as soon as possible.

Vaccine wastage

We continue to have reports of some CCGs demanding that vaccines are thrown away rather than giving second doses or vaccinating other cohorts. We would like to reiterate that NHSE/I has made it clear that the top priority is that all vaccines be used and therefore must not be deliberately wasted. All sites should have reserve lists that they can use to make every effort to invite patients or healthcare professionals to ensure that they can make full use of any unused vaccines rather than have any go to waste. Read more about vaccine supply in the [BMA's advice webpage on healthcare worker vaccination](#) and report any concerns about this via the [feedback portal](#).

Second doses

We have raised with NHSE/I the need for practice sites to be able to start planning for giving second doses by booking appointments. This requires confirmation of delivery schedules in March and April, particularly of the Pfizer vaccine. We hope NHSE/I will be able to confirm arrangements for this shortly. Practices should plan for 6 doses per vial for second dose, but where there is not enough for a 6th dose, NHSE/I will look to make an emergency delivery of smaller amounts of more vaccine to make up the difference.

IT issues

As a result of IT problems some vaccination sites have had to record patient information on paper rather than inputting it directly in to the Pinnacle system. We would therefore encourage practice sites to upload this information as soon as possible, which also needs to be done for payment purposes. This will also help NHSE/I to plan properly for the timing of the second dose delivery. Extra funding has been made available to PCN groupings to bring in additional workforce until the end of January to ensure that all records for vaccination of priority cohorts are up to date and recorded properly in Pinnacle. PCN groupings will be eligible to claim up to £950 per week of funding support.

Transfer of vaccines

This week, NHSE/I has published guidance on [Mutual aid and the transfer of COVID-19 vaccines between Hospital Hubs, Vaccination Centres and Local Vaccination Services](#). Annex B of the document sets out that as long as the relevant guidance is followed, local commissioner should be offering a supportive role in facilitating the movement of the AstraZeneca vaccine within a PCN grouping and do not need to seek formal approval for moving the vaccine in line with the arrangements set out in the letter. It also advises that once moved, the vaccine should either be administered or immediately put in a refrigerator at a practice site within the PCN grouping, and ideally administered within 24 hours or as soon as practical over the following days.

Care homes

NHSE/I have written a [letter thanking colleagues in adult care homes for the progress in delivering vaccinations and information about the next steps by 31 January](#). In order to be included in the February payment to the lead practice within your PCN Grouping, all activity relating to vaccinations administered between 14 December 2020 and 31 January 2021 should be recorded within the Outcomes for Health (Pinnacle) system no later than 23:59 on 31 January 2021.

NHSE/I has also published guidance on [Access to National Workforce Supply Routes for Primary Care Network \(PCN\) Groupings](#). All NHSE/I guidance for primary care about the COVID-19 vaccination programme is available [here](#)

The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) and the Royal College of Medicine have published a [statement](#) responding to misinformation around COVID-19 vaccine and fertility. RCOG has also published [information and advice for pregnant women about the COVID-19 vaccine](#), including an updated Q&A section.

Read our [guidance on the COVID-19 vaccination programme](#) which includes information about avoiding vaccine wastage, and other information about what is expected of practices support available to enable practices to prioritise vaccine delivery.

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

