

Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire LMC Ltd: Weekly Update for Practices, Monday 12th April 2021



1. Network Contract DES - comparison between 20/21 and 21/22

The PCN DES specification for 2021/22 was published on 31st March and practices have until the end of this month to decide if they wish to continue to provide this service. As negotiated by GPC, very few changes were made for this year given the disruption to fully implementing it last year. However, we know that there is always a concern that something may have changed that gets missed and so we in the LMC office have read through the specification for 2021/22 line by line and compared it with the one for 2020/21 to identify what changes have been made. We hope you find this [comparison document](#) useful.

2. Vaccinations and immunisations guidance (England)

The BMA have now published [guidance](#) about the recent changes to the [provision of routine vaccination and immunisation in general practice](#) which come into place from 1 April 2021. The changes include:

- The provision of V&I services becoming an essential service for all routine NHS-funded vaccinations with the exception of childhood and adult seasonal influenza and COVID-19 vaccinations.
- The introduction of five core contractual standards to underpin the delivery of immunisation services.
- A single item of service fee for all doses delivered in vaccination programmes funded through the GMS contract
- The Childhood Immunisation DES with its 70% and 90% targets was retired on 31 March 2021 and a new V&I domain in the Quality and Outcomes Framework introduced for 2021/22.

3. Free COVID-19 PPE scheme extended until the end of March 2022

The Government is extending the provision of free COVID-19 PPE to health and social care providers until the end of March 2022. Following the previous announcement of free PPE provision until the end of June 2021, the scheme will now be extended to the end of March 2022 as the expectation of clinical experts is that usage will remain high throughout the next financial year. This will ensure that general practice can continue to access rigorously tested and high-quality PPE. Providers should continue to access COVID-19 PPE via their current distribution channels.

4. Access to vaccination for parents with children

BMA/GPC were made aware of an incident where a parent was prevented from bringing their dependent children to their vaccination appointment at a hospital vaccination site. BMA/GPC took this up directly and after their intervention this matter has been addressed. They have published the following guidance:

"As we vaccinate the younger groups of patients, it may be the case that parents bring dependent children to their vaccination appointment. Colleagues are reminded that reasonable adjustments can be made for people in such circumstances, and every effort should be made to ensure that individuals can receive their vaccine at their stated appointment time.

Ultimately, the senior clinician on duty has the responsibility for patient safety and it is important that they are informed of any concerns that other colleagues may have about an individual, so that they can make a risk assessment at the time and that any necessary adjustments can be made.

Denying treatment/intervention, for any reason, is a clinical decision and it must be made by the most senior clinician on duty at the time. They will be able to assess the risks and make a clinical decision which will then be documented. All staff need to be aware of the need to escalate these situations to the senior clinician.

In the meantime, as a way of preparing for the younger cohorts, we are looking at ways of strengthening the guidance for parents at the point of booking. Patients booked in for vaccination are currently asked to attend on their own where possible to minimise the risk of COVID-19 infection. However, any individual is allowed to attend with another person, particularly if they need support, for example if they are in a wheelchair, are frail or have a learning disability. Parents with young babies or children need not be turned away, unless following a risk assessment by the senior clinician. They do need to be supported to receive the vaccine. As the cohorts move to younger populations, it is more likely that adjustments will need to be made to ensure no one is disadvantaged because they have dependents with them."

The VC operational guidance has been updated to reference the above, along with the guidance for the National Booking Service including briefing notes for call handlers.

5. Flu vaccination plans for 2021/22

On 1 April 2021, a [letter from Professor Stephen Powis](#) was published which outlined that practices should plan for the immunisation of 50-64 year olds again. GPC has informed us that they are seeking urgent clarification from NHSE and DHSC (who makes the decision) regarding whether practices can expect central supplies of vaccine again for this cohort or, as the Powis letter suggests, they order it themselves, and how this will fit in with plans for Covid vaccination boosters. As soon as more information is available, we will share it with practices.

6. Improving GP appointment data

NHSE/I has published information aimed at improving the quality of [GP appointment data](#). This is to ensure that published general practice appointment data fairly represents the appointment activity carried out across practices and general practice providers in England. This year's PCN Investment and Impact Fund provides additional funding to support this through an indicator covering the mapping of appointment slot types to the new set of national appointment categories by all practices within the PCN **by the end of June 2021**. This should only require a short one-off exercise, mapping each slot type that the practice uses to one of the national categories. Practices should note that this only relates to appointments from 1 April 2021 onwards and shouldn't require changes to wider processes or appointment books.

7. Delayed applications to New to practice partnership scheme (England)

NHSE/I have announced that they have amended the deadline for the individuals that sent through applications. Their team will be working through all the applications submitted so far and have advised that due to the pressures caused by the pandemic this year they will still accept their application. They have advised that that they will be reverting back to the six months' deadline for any further applications.

8. Salaried GPs vaccination reimbursement

There have been received reports nationally of salaried GPs being asked by practices to volunteer for vaccination on a goodwill basis with no payment or time off in lieu from their practice. While any clinician can volunteer to support vaccination clinics, funding models should not rely on this, and employees should never be coerced into doing so. GP practices are paid to administer COVID vaccinations and payment of staff is included in the costing of this funding. Salaried GPs should be fully remunerated for any vaccination shifts and should not feel pressured to take these on a goodwill basis.

9. COVID-19 vaccination programme – updates from GPC

MHRA/JCVI and EMA statements on AZ vaccine

[MHRA](#), [JCVI](#) and [EMA](#) have all made announcements on serious thromboembolic events with concurrent thrombocytopenia associated with the use of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine. This includes a small number of life-threatening and fatal cases presenting as venous thrombosis, including unusual sites such as cerebral venous sinus thrombosis, splanchnic vein thrombosis, as well as arterial thrombosis, combined with thrombocytopenia that can rapidly progress. Multifocal venous and arterial thromboses have been reported in serious cases. The majority of the events occurred within the first 14 days following vaccination but have also been reported after this period. Risk factors have not been identified.

These serious, but rare, adverse events need to be seen in the context of over 4m COVID-19 infections since the start of the pandemic causing more than 120,000 deaths. Over 30m people have received their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine since the start of the programme, which Public Health England (PHE) analysis indicates that [the COVID-19 vaccination programme prevented 10,400 deaths](#) in those aged 60 and older in England up to the end of March, an additional 4,300 since the previous update. Analysis of infection data since the introduction of the COVID-19 vaccines in the UK demonstrates that vaccination is highly effective and substantially reduces the risk of infection and severe COVID-19 disease.

JCVI is now recommending that 18- to 29-year-olds who do not have underlying health conditions putting them at increased risk of COVID-19 should be offered an alternative to the AZ vaccine where available. MHRA/JCVI confirmed that the [risk/benefit of getting the vaccine is favourable for the vast majority of people](#), but more 'finely balanced' in younger people. The under-30s in the UK will be offered an alternative to the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine, where available (but stated that they were not advising a 'stop' for any age group). The deputy CMO has suggested that there will be minimal impact on the timing of the vaccination programme as a whole.

NHSE/I has issued [advice to practices](#). The MHRA has produced [guidance for patients and healthcare professionals](#). PHE has also published a [leaflet](#) that may be useful when communicating with patients. The [BMA statement](#) provides further information.

Vaccine certificates

The Government confirmed that a COVID-19 status certification system will be developed over the coming months which could allow higher-risk settings to be opened up more safely and with more participants. Over the coming months, a system will be developed which will consider three factors: vaccination, a recent negative test, or natural immunity (determined on the basis of a positive test taken in the previous six months). Events pilots will take place from mid-April to trial the system. All pilots are checking COVID status, which will initially be through testing alone but in later pilots, vaccination and acquired immunity are expected to be alternative ways to demonstrate status.

GPC England has been discussing these proposals with the Government and NHS bodies to ensure there would be a minimal impact on GP practices, and this has been accepted. We need to avoid the expectation that people can secure evidence of vaccination or testing by obtaining a letter from their GP practice.

Weekly COVID-19 data update

The BMA's Health Policy team has started producing a weekly summary of key data on various aspects of the pandemic. The data is from external published sources (with links to the relevant data/study) and can be shared. The latest summary is [attached](#)

10. Inspiring the female GP leaders of tomorrow

On March 25, the BMA held a hugely successful female GP leaders of tomorrow webinar chaired by Samira Anane (GPC education, training and workforce policy lead). More than 250 guests logged on to hear Nikki Kanani (medical director for primary care, NHS England), Margaret Ikpoh (RCGP council, associate director of primary care Hull Medical School), Farah Jameel (GPC England executive team and Camden LMC chair), Helena McKeown (BMA representative body chair) and Katie Bramall-Stainer (CEO Cambridgeshire LMCs, deputy chair UK LMC conference) discuss their personal leadership journeys, and share tips and advice. Please use [this link](#) to watch a recording of the event.

11. Free Webinar: PCN Structures – Is now the time to create a PCN Company? Wednesday 5th May 2021, 2.00 – 3.00pm

Join [VWV](#) and [RSM UK Tax and Accounting's](#) specialist Healthcare Sector teams for a free webinar to discuss 'PCN Structures - Is Now the Time to Create a PCN Company?' This webinar is specifically for healthcare professionals and GP Practice / PCN employees/Clinical Directors.

Date: Wednesday 5 May 2021, **Time:** 2.00pm - 3.00pm

Topics:

- Why are many PCNs forming a Company now?
- What are the considerations?
- What is the process for incorporating?
- How a PCN company can fix the tax on surplus and VAT issue

[Register here](#)

If you would like to email your questions beforehand, please contact the [Events team](#).

12. ** SAVE THE DATES **

Herts Only: FREE Adult Safeguarding Webinars

In collaboration with Beds & Herts LMC, East & North Herts CCG and Herts Valleys CCG

- 1. Mental Capacity Act, Tuesday 15th June, 1.30 - 4.30pm**
- 2. Domestic Abuse & the IDVA Service, Wednesday 30th June, 1.30 - 4.30pm**

More information and how to register to follow in due course (these are just save the dates at the moment. Further dates planned for later in the year).

13. National e-Referral Service Advice & Guidance (A&G) webinar (England) – Tuesday 20th April 2021, 4.00pm-5.30pm

To support mobilisation of [Advice & Guidance services](#) as per the [2021/22 operational planning guidance](#), the NHSE/I Elective Care Recovery & Transformation Programme is hosting a webinar for clinicians and system leaders.

The session will include an overview from NHS Digital on recent improvements that have been made to the NHS e-Referral Service (e-RS) A&G function, and will also share experience and learnings from clinicians working in primary and secondary care who have successfully implemented an A&G service, focusing on Cardiology, Gastroenterology and Urology.

If you would like to attend, you can register [here](#).

If you have any feedback with regard to the e-RS, generally speaking or regarding the A&G function specifically, please let the **BMA Workforce and Innovation Team** know via info.wi@bma.org.uk. Elected BMA representatives from both primary and secondary sit on the monthly e-RS Optimisation & Improvement Clinical Council. They can therefore feed examples of both good and bad practice into this group and seek resolutions to both local and national issues and concerns.

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

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.

Locums - 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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