



Beds & Herts LMC Ltd: Weekly Update for Practices, Thursday 24th June 2021

1. Beds & Herts LMC Ltd Annual General Meeting

The Beds & Herts LMC Ltd AGM will be held on Wednesday 30th June 2021 at 7.15pm via Teams.

All GPs and Practice Managers in Beds & Herts are welcome to join the meeting. As well as the usual AGM business such as a financial update (including setting the levy) there will also be a presentation from the LMC Office about our reflections on the extraordinary year we've all just been through.

If you would like to attend, please [Click here to register](#), in order that we can send you joining details in due course.

We look forward to seeing you on the 30th June 2021.

2. New Enhanced Services for Long-covid and Weight Management

NHSEI have published two new [enhanced services](#), relating to long-Covid and weight management. In addition, and following BMA/GPC lobbying, they have also confirmed a further extension to pay the full sessional payment to PCN clinical directors, recognising the significant workload they have been carrying.

The view of BMA/GPC is that, whilst the additional support for practices to help care for patients with long-Covid has some merit, it does not recognise the need for support for those in the general practice workforce who need access to occupational health services, or practices that need financial support to enable them to better help colleagues on prolonged sick leave. BMA/GPC believes that this must still be addressed if we are to reduce the loss of much needed members of the general practice workforce.

BMA/GPC believes that the weight management enhanced service will present practices with additional work at a time when practices are already stretched to the limit. BMA/GPC also have concerns that this service specification is overly bureaucratic, further micromanages clinical consultations, is clinically flawed and demonstrates a lack of trust in GPs and their teams to do what is best for patients. Furthermore, it is not clear that local weight management services have the necessary capacity to respond to increased referrals. BMA/GPC believes that this could have been an opportunity for NHSE/I to demonstrate their commitment to be less directive and for Government to take much more meaningful steps to address the underlying factors that lead to obesity, but they have failed to do that. BMA/GPC issued a [press statement](#) on this.

We would remind practices that all enhanced services are optional. Practices should make sure before signing up to new services that the resources attached to new services are commensurate with the workload involved and the impact on other services they provide.

3. Long COVID NHS plan for 2021/22

NHSE/I has this week published a [Long COVID plan for 2021/22](#) which outlines the 10 key next steps to be taken to support those suffering from long COVID. The plan is underpinned by a £100million investment, £30million of which will go towards the enhanced service, highlighted above, for general practice to support patients with long COVID. The remaining £70million will be used to expand other NHS long COVID services and establish 15 new [‘paediatric hubs’ to coordinate care for children and young people](#) who are suffering from the condition. These hubs will have specialists who can directly treat the children and young people, advise GPs or others caring for them or refer them into other specialist services and clinics. The plan, which builds on the [five-point plan](#) for long COVID support outlined by NHSE/I last year, also highlights the need for equity of access, outcomes and experience in long COVID support.

However, BMA/GPC remain concerned about the need for more help for members of the workforce with long COVID and for practices that need to support them, and continue to [call for the government to provide a compensation scheme](#) to support healthcare staff and their families who are living with long COVID.

4. GP appointment data

The [GP appointment data for April](#) in England was published last week, with revised data so that it now also includes COVID vaccinations delivered via general practices. The figures for April 2021 (23.8 million) are very similar to those in April 2019 (23.85 million), but with an additional 7.5 million appointments for COVID-19 vaccinations.

There were also more appointments being seen within the same or next day (13.1m vs 11.8m), and within a week (18.2m vs 16.2m), compared to April 2019 as well despite the additional workload from the COVID vaccination programme.

This highlights the immense pressures that GPs and your teams continue to operate under, as you battle to provide care to your communities alongside the ever-increasing workload generated by the pandemic and associated backlog of patients needing care.

It is testament to general practice that in April, the majority of appointments were done the same day as booking. The number of consultations taking place after a two-to-seven day wait is going up, which is a sign that practices are responding appropriately to the needs of their patients who want to wait for a specific timed appointment, often face-to-face. However, it could also be an indicator that practices are struggling to meet same day requests, and illustrates the serious toll that increased patient demand is having on surgeries across the country, and how much harder it is for GPs to give patients the timely care they need. You can read a BMA statement on GP appointment data [here](#)

5. New PCSE pay and pension system update

PCSE’s new pay and pension system was launched on 1 June and there have been reports from concerned practices and GPs about the disparities in information and the difficulty in finding the relevant information on the system. We would urge all GPs to log on and check their details and data. Any errors or issues identified should be [raised with PCSE](#) at the earliest opportunity. Problems must be raised directly with PCSE initially so that you receive a CAS number. BMA/GPC have been informed of the following which is very concerning:

- PCSE don’t have contact details for approximately 6,000 GPs. PCSE assures BMA/GPC that they are working on solutions for this but the advice to any GP who

hasn't received any email from PCSE since 30 May giving access to the system, is to contact pcse.user-registration@nhs.net.

- Past statements migrated to the new system are not showing the same level of detail as previously. PCSE have informed BMA/GPC that they are working on this but advise that users can still access those statements in full on Open Exeter in the meantime. This is not a satisfactory situation and BMA/GPC say that they will be pursuing it until it is resolved.
- Around 1,000 practices have not yet received their QOF achievement payments for this month. PCSE are adamant that they have a solution for this and are working to ensure these payments are made this month, within contractual timeframes. They have written to affected practices.

BMA/GPC continue to meet regularly with PCSE to raise issues relating to missing and incorrect data along with poor usability. BMA/GPC are extremely concerned about the volume of these issues and have raised these with PCSE to resolve them urgently. BMA/GPC will continue to monitor and pursue the progress of this and other remedial work over the coming weeks.

PCSE have posted user guidance for [practices](#) and [GPs](#) on their website. We would encourage users to make use of them.

6. Update following GPC vote of no confidence and withdrawal from negotiations

Following the letter from NHSE to practices in May about face to face meetings, we reported that the GPC had voted to cease all formal meetings with NHSE until sufficient steps have been taken to give the GPC confidence to justify a resumption in such meetings. We have received the following update from GPC on this issues:

"We are starting to be heard. We have now received a [reply](#) from the Secretary of State, in which he 'thanked all general practice staff for the incredible work we have been doing since the start of the pandemic to deliver essential care and support to all patients', acknowledged the pressures the profession is facing and also confirmed the intention to 'move away' from the use of SOPs as 'we transition further out of the pandemic.' This was further reiterated by NHSE/I in their [bulletin issued on 15.6.21](#) which says their current approach is a temporary one not a permanent fixture and that when the government is finally able to move to Step 4 of its easing of lockdown plan, now potentially in July, the need for SOPs could end. They were also clear that SOPs are only guidance, not contractual documents, something we have made clear to practices.

In addition, in a recent interview in [Pulse](#), Nadhim Zahawi MP, the vaccines minister in England, talked about the 'tireless dedication' of everyone in Primary Care involved in the vaccination programme, recognising how much pressure it had placed the profession under.

These are all small but positive steps in the right direction but there is clearly much more that they need to do."

7. PCN handbook

The new PCN handbook for 2021/22 has now been published and is available on the [BMA website](#). The handbook has been updated to include the changes agreed as part of the [2021/22 GP contract](#), including additional ARRS workforce and new PCN service

specifications, as well as other operational aspects. The full service specification setting out the requirements of the PCN DES for 2021/22, as well as further guidance, is also available from [NHS England](#).

8. Deadline for THE EU SETTLEMENT Scheme – 30 June

The deadline for applications to be made to the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) is 30 June 2021.

If you are a doctor currently in the UK and arrived before the 31 December 2020, you must apply by 30 June. It is free of charge, and in applying and being granted pre-settled or settled status, you will have secured your rights to continue living and working in the UK.

In addition, an application must be made for every eligible child within your family. If you and your family members have lived in the UK for many years or have a permanent residence document or EEA Biometric Residence Card (BRC), you still need to apply to the EUSS (or apply for British citizenship) to secure your existing rights in the UK. [Apply on GOV.UK](#) and check your immigration status [here](#).

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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