



## Beds & Herts LMC Ltd: Weekly Update for Practices, Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2021

### 1. LMC Secretariat Staff Changes

As many of you will be aware, Rachel Lea will be leaving us later this year, after 15 years of loyal service to the LMC, to start her new life in Portugal. Rachel's experience, wisdom and dedication will be greatly missed by those of us in the office, LMC reps, local commissioners and all of the GPs and practice managers she has supported over the years. Planning is underway for a Covid appropriate send off for Rachel towards the end of the summer.

Joining us this week to take on the mantle of the liaison manager role is Michael Sissens, who comes to us from The Baldock Surgery in Hertfordshire, where he is currently the practice manager. Michael brings with him a wealth of experience and will be a fantastic addition to the team. Over the coming weeks Michael will be joining as many LMC meetings as he can and shadowing Carl and Rachel, so please take the opportunity to introduce yourselves and help welcome him to the team.

### 2. New PCSE pay and pension system update – update from GPC

“We have grown increasingly concerned about the volume of issues being raised about the new online portal for pay and pensions. The issues are wide-ranging and involve both historical migrated data and current data. We are aware of some of this data being incorrect, some of it being missing and still more just being unclear to users. It is affecting GPs' pension data in many instances, locum and solo performers being particularly affected, and there have also been early issues with some payment runs to practices. PCSE assures us that all of this is being addressed urgently but we need to see more evidence that this is happening.

We, along with the Institute of General Practice Management, have [written to the Chief Commercial Officer of NHS England](#) to raise our concerns and demand urgent action to ensure that GPs and practices are able to use the system as intended as we approach a critical time for many users.

GP engagement with the new system remains low according to the data we have seen, so we would urge GPs to log in and check their records as a priority and to [inform PCSE](#) of any errors. We would also ask all system users to make use of [PCSE's guidance materials](#). We understand that a significant number of calls and emails to PCSE are being answered with information from the guidance.”

**STOP PRESS – Beds & Herts LMC has just been informed that, as well as all the above, PCSE failed to take the LMC levy payments in June and so practices will have a double payment taken in July.**

### 3. Meetings between GPC and Health Minister, Jo Churchill

GPC met with health minister, Jo Churchill, last week to push for

- An end to SOPs, and the NHSE/I approach to overly prescriptive management of general practice.

- Improved direct messaging to patients
- The PCN service specifications planned for October to be delayed until April 2022 at the earliest in order to reduce additional workload burden for practices during the autumn and winter when we are likely to be facing a rise in respiratory illness alongside the need to focus on flu/COVID-19 vaccinations and support patients impacted by the on-going NHS care backlog.

They also stressed the need to maximise ARRS recruitment this year, to maintain the options for flexible working and the issue of practice premises, including the need for more space, not least for PCN recruited staff to work from. They also discussed the need for the government to do more to inform the public about the pressures the whole NHS was under and for them to encourage people not to take out their frustration on frontline staff, particularly by abusing reception staff.

In a separate meeting, the Chair of GPC and Chair of the Dispensing Doctors Association met with Jo Churchill about a range of dispensing issues, including electronic prescribing, rurality, and arrangements for drug reimbursement.

#### **4. Covid Vaccination Exemptions for care workers**

Following a public consultation, it was recently announced by the Government that, from October, [people working in care homes will need to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19](#). This will impact those who visit care homes, including GPs and community teams. The government has said that a small number of people would be exempt and whilst they have indicated that individuals may be directed to their GP to provide evidence for their exemption, GPC does not believe this should be the approach.

A better approach would be for local authorities to receive support in commissioning a dedicated service to assess exemption requests that does not require GP involvement, as is the case in many areas for disabled parking badges and that the Government should support local authorities with this. This would lead to a consistent approach as well as reducing a further workload burden for practices. Should the government continue to suggest GP practices should do this, GPC believes this will require practices to refer to a secondary care service to do the necessary assessment as many of these patients will be receiving specialist care.

The government also plans to launch a further public consultation on whether or not to extend this to include all those employed in health and care settings. Read the [BMA's response](#) to the announcement on a consultation on mandatory COVID-19 vaccinations for healthcare workers.

#### **5. COVID-19 vaccination programme – guidance about students**

NHSE/I has published [FAQs to support general practice and higher education institutions](#), which advises that although in general, patients should return to the place they had their first dose to have their second dose, students in higher education are able to receive their second dose in a different location to their first dose if they have relocated. The National Booking Service has an option to book or re-arrange the second vaccination appointment at a different location to the first appointment.

The guidance also advises on what the options are for a student who had their first dose in Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland, but is in England at the time of their second dose. If a person has received a first dose of COVID-19 vaccine overseas with a vaccine that is also available in the UK, they should receive the same vaccine for their second dose. If the vaccine they received for their first dose is not available in the UK, the [most similar alternative](#) should be offered.

## **6. Department of Health and Social Care draft data strategy**

The Department of Health and Social Care has published their [draft data strategy](#) this week, setting out their plans to harness the potential of data in health and care.

When used effectively, ethically and legally, data can play a pivotal role in improving the health of the population, whether this is for planning, research or for direct patient care. Everyone has a right to know what is happening with their healthcare data. However, we have seen in recent weeks with the pausing of the GDPR roll-out what happens when these issues are not communicated properly, and patients are not given an opportunity to take part in such important discussions. Therefore, the Government and NHSX must follow through with commitments to engage fully with both the public and the profession, addressing any concerns they may have about this strategy and specifically proposals around sharing data more widely than for direct care.

GPC will be considering the draft strategy in detail and responding formally on behalf of our members and their patients in due course. You can read their full statement in response by Farah Jameel, GPC England Executive team IT lead, [here](#)

## **7. Delay in roll-out of patient data sharing programme (GDPR)**

Following extensive lobbying by the BMA and RCGP, Government announced a delay to the rollout of GDPR, which amounts to two months, with full rollout now expected on 1 September rather than 1 July.

BMA is now engaged in discussions with NHS Digital and other stakeholders to ensure no additional burden is placed on GPs to facilitate the implementation of this programme, and have been lobbying MPs on this issue.

In view of the extension to date of the first extraction, we will keep you informed on all next steps that practices will need to take as we approach this deadline. In the interim, you may wish to consider as a practice whether to proactively contact patients to inform them of what is changing.

If patients register a Type 1 Opt-out, practices must process this in a timely fashion. Codes for opt-out can be found [here](#) and are copied below for ease

### Opt-out - Dissent code

9Nu0 (827241000000103 |Dissent from secondary use of general practitioner patient identifiable data (finding)|)

### Opt-in - Dissent withdrawal code

9Nu1 (827261000000102 |Dissent withdrawn for secondary use of general practitioner patient identifiable data (finding)|)]

## **8. Enhanced shared parental leave system for salaried GPs**

The new [enhanced shared parental leave](#) system for salaried GPs has been launched across the UK and will allow for up to 50 weeks of the 52 weeks maternity leave to be shared between the parents. Eligible parents are also able to share up to 37 weeks of statutory shared parental pay (equivalent of statutory maternity pay). The ESPL system will be offered by employers at GMS and some PMS practices. Employees may request for this new form of leave to be included in their contracts, in line with provisions for junior doctors and agenda for change staff. This change to a more flexible form of leave supports the BMA's commitment to address the gender pay gap. [Find out more about enhanced shared parental leave entitlements](#) and read the updated [Salaried GPs handbook](#)

## 9. Contact your MP about punitive pension tax

The BMA will begin its campaign addressing the taxation issues within the NHS Pension Scheme with a Parliamentary briefing event on 1 July. They are looking to gather support and attendance from MPs from all parties and nations to address this vital issue. BMA members are encouraged to support this event by [tweeting their MP](#) to highlight the event directly to them. Please join and invite your MP along to the event by using the [template form](#)

## 10. Do you hold a GP sponsorship licence?

If so, the BMA are keen to hear from you. Whether you already hold a sponsorship licence or are considering getting one to employ non-UK nationals, the BMA really want to know how you found the application process and any barriers that you faced.

The Home Office introduced a new sponsorship system last October, in preparation for the introduction of the new immigration system which came into force in January 2021. The new system is designed to alleviate many of the complexities of the old system and it is hoped the new application process will support employers to apply for a sponsorship licence with relative ease. As detailed in the updated [guidance](#), employers can now apply [online](#).

The Home Office wish to survey small businesses, including GP practices to get a sense as to any barriers in the system. If you have any insights into the sponsorship process that you wish to share, please contact Caroline Strickland, Senior Policy Advisor in BMA's International Affairs on the following email [CStrickland@bma.org.uk](mailto:CStrickland@bma.org.uk)

## 11. Webinar: GP Premises Update with VWV and Osmond Tricks Thursday 1 July 2021, 10.00 – 12.00pm

Join [VWV healthcare](#) property team as they discuss current GP premises issues and key trends and opportunities, at this free webinar in conjunction with specialist chartered surveyors, [Osmond Tricks](#).

Agenda:

- Surgery development and funding update
- Premises issues for partners. Asset or liability?
- Issues on partner changes and merger
- Surgery valuation
- Leases
- Sale and leaseback and the investment market
- Looking ahead - future opportunities and needs for GP premises
- The sustainability agenda
- Q&A session

[View here for more information and how to book your free place](#)

**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](mailto: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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