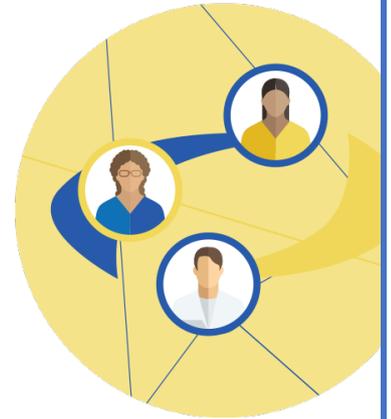


## Beds & Herts LMC Ltd: Weekly Update for Practices, Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> July 2021



### 1. Easing of COVID restrictions

The BMA expressed serious concern that the government has decided to ease all restrictions, including mandatory wearing of face coverings and social distancing, despite the Chief Medical Officer speaking about the alarming rise in cases, doubling of hospitalisations and certainty of more deaths. The BMA is also concerned that there is no update on what restrictions should be in place in healthcare settings after this date and is seeking information for members to use going forward. As a result, the BMA will be producing guidance to support those working in practices, community healthcare and hospital settings and will issue this as soon as possible.

Locally, Beds & Herts LMC is discussing with CCGs how they will support practices in determining how to keep their patients and staff safe.

You may also wish to sign [this petition](#) to continue to make face masks mandatory in all healthcare settings.

### 2. Patient survey results

The annual [GP patient survey](#) results were published last week, and with 83% of patients rating their overall experience of general practice as good, an increase on the previous year, this is testament to just how hard GPs and their teams have, and continue to, work in order to provide care to your patients and communities. To see an increase in overall patient satisfaction despite the really challenging year the entire NHS has faced - is incredibly positive. Such excellent feedback from patients about all members of the practice team will also lift morale amongst an exhausted workforce who have clearly gone the extra mile and beyond for their patients. These results also clearly show how out of touch with the real views of patients NHSE/I's damaging and demoralising letter earlier this year was. GPs and their teams have been providing this good patient care all while playing a crucial role in the delivery of the COVID-19 vaccination programme and dealing with the consequences of a massive NHS care backlog, resulting in record appointment numbers being delivered.

### 3. PCSE pay and pension system update

The BMA and the LMC are aware of the many unacceptable issues being faced by practices and GPs as a result of the new PCSE portal. BMA continues to work hard at challenging the considerable shortcomings and has stressed that it is of critical importance that users log these with [PCSE](#) to ensure that the BMA can hold PCSE accountable. It is recognised that those interactions are also causing frustration and the BMA is applying pressure for improvements and greater transparency around PCSE's customer service work. We advise practices to keep a record of the issues they are raising with PCSE and the length of time taken to get resolutions.

Regular and ongoing meetings between BMA and PCSE have led to a considerable number of 'fixes' to the system but there are many more outstanding. This will take time, but the BMA is committed to ensuring a much improved service for the profession to use. NHSE/I and PCSE have assured the BMA that the current run of global sum payments is going well but the BMA is keeping a particularly close eye on this.

The BMA's Pensions committee will soon be sending out a survey to GPs, to capture their experiences of using the new system. There will be more details on this soon, but the BMA continues to encourage GPs to log on to the system to check the accuracy of their records. A similar survey is planned to go to practices in the coming month.

#### **4. Health and Care Bill**

The Government has introduced the [Health and Care Bill](#), which will deliver significant health reforms in England. These include making ICSs (Integrated Care Systems) statutory bodies; dissolving CCGs and transferring their responsibilities, staff and powers to ICSs; formally merging NHS England and NHS Improvement; removing Section 75 of the 2012 Health and Social Care Act and mandated competitive tendering; and conferring new powers over the NHS to the Secretary of State.

[Responding](#) to the publication, the BMA raised concern over the timing of the bill given the huge pressures facing the health and care system as a result of the pandemic, as well as highlighting critical areas where they believe the bill needs to be amended and strengthened to protect the NHS from unnecessary private sector involvement and establish a healthcare system that is collaborative and fit for the future.

The BMA has committed to continue to lobby to ensure the Bill addresses their concerns and that reform is in the best interests of patients and doctors, and supports the NHS to be a publicly-funded provider to care for the health needs of our population. The BMA says that they have been working to shape the guidance that will underpin the Bill in practice, including through their [response](#) to NHSE's consultation on the new provider selection regime and feeding into the newly published ICS Design Framework. The BMA has also been clear on the critical role LMCs should play in the new arrangements.

You can find out more about the BMA's work around the Bill and key calls [here](#), and read their detailed analysis of the bill [here](#).

#### **5. COVID-19 booster vaccine and flu vaccine programmes – the BMA's position**

Following the [guidance](#) published by JCVI about the COVID-19 booster programme, and the subsequent guidance from [NHSE/I guidance on COVID-19 vaccinations](#), the BMA remains seriously concerned that this may be interpreted as a cap on general practice involvement in the flu vaccination campaign this winter or that practices will be limited in their ability to provide this to their patients as they would normally do because of overly restrictive arrangements set by NHSEI.

GP practices are already preparing for this winter's flu campaign, as they do every year, and will be keen to continue to play a pivotal role in protecting their patients against COVID-19 with booster jabs alongside this. GP practices have shown, for many years through the annual flu programme and recently through the COVID vaccination programme, that general practice through its place in the community is best placed to provide effective and efficient vaccination programmes to the population of England. Many patients and members of the public expect such a service to be widely available from their local GP practice. The BMA believes delivering

the flu vaccination and COVID-19 booster vaccination programme concomitantly through general practice is the best way forward and that most practices will want and expect to deliver them.

As Phase 3 begins, practices must be able to administer COVID booster jabs during the same appointment as flu vaccines within their own practice buildings if they wish – which has not always been possible for COVID vaccines, with many practices who wanted to continue to provide COVID-19 vaccination to their patients being prevented by NHSE/I from doing so. The BMA believes patients want to be vaccinated at their local practice as they are used to for their flu jabs each year. In addition, working at practice level can reduce the bureaucracy for staff, limiting the impact on other GP services that are also important. It is also vital that existing resources are retained for additional staff who support the programme.

If we are to 'learn to live with' COVID-19 in the long-term and vaccinations are to become routine, practices need to be trusted and empowered to build on their expertise, proven track record and knowledge of their communities to lead the way in ensuring the public is protected.

The BMA is therefore calling on the Government and NHSE/I to support practices and PCNs in delivering Phase 3, not just through appropriate funding, but also through the ongoing workforce support provided during phase 1 and 2, through managing workload (including the continued suspension of PCN service specifications), and improvements to IT systems.

## **6. CQC's monitoring approach**

The CQC has published [new guidance for health and social care providers on their monitoring approach](#).

The BMA is seriously concerned about CQC's new approach to monitoring practices and has raised this with them directly. Practices will understandably be anxious about the implications, not least when they are struggling with record demand and significant workload pressures. Whilst CQC has a legal responsibility to inspect health care providers and ensure the safety of services to patients, it has been doing this throughout the pandemic through its Emergency Support Framework. The BMA has called for a continuation of this ESF approach, which is much more proportionate, and has misgivings about a move towards greater inspection numbers linked to a risk stratification approach that is new and not widely trialled.

## **7. Review of the England Medical Performers List Regulations**

The Department of Health and Social Care has commissioned NHSE/I to review the England Medical Performers List Regulations in the context of the wider regulatory landscape in operation across England. This review has the potential to identify where regulatory requirements can be streamlined and simplified, while maintaining the high professional standards that ensure patient safety.

This [questionnaire](#) aims to gather information from stakeholders about their views of the existing regulatory landscape for GPs in England and thoughts on how this landscape might be transformed. The feedback will contribute to the content of a series of focus group discussions and inform an options appraisal that will be shared with the DHSC during autumn 2021. The survey will be open until 2<sup>nd</sup> August.

## 8. Herts and West Essex First 5 GP Webinar: Making A Career in General Practice Sustainable with Dr Peter Bailey

**Date:** Weds 14<sup>th</sup> July

**Venue:** Virtual Event

**Times:** 19:00 - 20:00

Are you a GP in the First 5 years post CCT or ST3 in the Hertfordshire or West Essex Area? Join us and your peers online with Dr Peter Bailey at our next event to learn how to make your career sustainable for the future.

"In this one-hour session I will introduce the notion of health as a skill rather than a state. Seeing health as the ability to adapt to changing circumstances invites a new way of working with patients. Clinicians in the NHS are often characterised as rescuers of passive victims of disease and can be overwhelmed as patient expectations grow. I will propose the idea of the clinician as coach rather than rescuer, seeking to unlock patients' capacity to look after themselves".

To register, email [jessica.hansell1@nhs.net](mailto:jessica.hansell1@nhs.net)

**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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