



Beds & Herts LMC Ltd: Weekly Update for Practices, Tuesday 31st August 2021

1. Blood bottle shortages

NHSE/I have issued further [guidance](#) about the impact of the national shortage of BD test tubes. This follows the serious concerns BMA have been raising with them, not least the impact this is already having on the ability of practices to complete QOF and other national and local contractually related blood tests and the concern that practices will be held liable for any clinical untoward incidents that occur as a result of delayed tests and investigation. BMA also called on them to step up public information to ensure patients are informed of this shortage and practices are not blamed by patients for this situation.

Their new guidance now tells practices that this situation could continue until 17 September and until then they should not do any routine blood tests. Urgent blood investigations can still be done as supplies allow. The national indemnity scheme, CNSGP, will cover this situation. National communications to patients will also be delivered.

This is clearly a serious situation that will have major implications for practices and patients. BMA are continuing to demand that practices are provided with more support, that the impact on QOF and the practice workforce, not least phlebotomists, is not just recognised but fully mitigated as it's not acceptable to add to our already heavy workload burden by creating an even bigger backlog to deal with.

2. GP survey

BMA has launched a major survey as they want to hear about your experiences working as a GP in England, Northern Ireland or Wales. Please complete the [survey](#) as soon as you can to tell them about the issues affecting you most, including your workload, recruitment and your future career plans. The survey is primarily aimed at fully qualified GPs who are currently working. BMA will be running a survey for GP trainees separately later in the year. This is an important survey and will support negotiations and lobbying and is a key part of the [#Support Your Surgery](#) campaign and the results will help to support this. Your responses will also help better understand the issues affecting GPs and ensure GPC is representing the profession effectively. The [survey](#) is open until 20 September and will take around 10-15 minutes to complete.

3. Backlog of fitness to drive assessments

When combined with the backlog of, primarily car, driving licence holders who need 'fitness to drive' assessments for their applications, the BMA estimates the total number of patients requiring medical assessments for licence applications to be over 200,000 - rising by thousands each month. At present standard driving licence holders are advised to request fitness to drive assessments from their GP, but there is also the option of going to any registered medical practitioner. However, they will not have access to the full lifelong medical history of a patient. Because of these concerns, BMA has written to the Department of Transport calling for the Government to guarantee a 'safety-first' approach for plans to manage backlog and expressing "concerns that this style of self-reporting is

neither sensible nor safe". BMA Professional Fees Committee chair, Dr Peter Holden, commented that GPs and their teams are "gravely concerned" about the potential impact on road safety that this process of bypassing individual's own GP practices may have. Read the full statement [here](#)

4. Vaccinations for NHS staff entering care homes

New government [regulations](#) come into force on 11 November 2021, requiring all CQC regulated care home staff to refuse entry to anybody who cannot prove that they have had two doses of COVID-19 vaccine, or that they are exempt. NHSE/I has issued a [letter](#) and [FAQs](#) on how this will be delivered operationally. All providers delivering NHS-funded services into a care home will need to have actively supported staff to have their first COVID-19 vaccine by 16 September 2021 and to carry out proactive workforce planning to ensure that only staff who are vaccinated, or exempt, are deployed to enter a care home from 11 November. The FAQs, which will be updated on a regular basis, should be read alongside [DHSC operational guidance](#).

The LMC is aware that there is currently no guidance regarding what would constitute a medical exemption to vaccination and the Government link above still says that guidance "will be produced". GPs may therefore feel that they are not currently in a position to be able to verify whether or not someone is exempt from vaccination.

5. Appraisal fees (England)

NHSE/I has confirmed that the appraisal fee in 2020-21 was £530 (i.e. the 2020 uplift of 2.8% applied to the 2019 fee of £515) and the 2021-22 appraisal fee is £546 (i.e. the 2021 uplift of 3% applied to the 2020 fee of £530). There is a discrepancy with the fees quoted by the DDRB, which we have drawn to their attention and asked them to correct. NHSE/I is in the process of calculating and paying arrears for appraisals in the current financial year but this process is not complete yet, so GP appraisers will not yet have seen the uplift in any fees since April.

6. Sessional GPs webinar – contracts

A webinar will be held on 21 September, 6.30-8pm, about key contract issues for sessional GPs, including what to look out for when reading a new contract, common pitfalls to avoid and what support is available from the BMA. There will also be an update on NHS 111 contracts.

Questions can be submitted in advance and there will also be an opportunity to ask questions during the event. Register your place [here](#)

7. New Community Pharmacy Contract and Hypertension Case Finding

The contract changes for Community Pharmacy for 2021/22 were announced this week. Starting in October 2021, or as soon as possible thereafter, it is expected that Hypertension Case-Finding Service as an advanced service will be introduced to support the NHS Long Term Plan ambitions for prevention of cardiovascular disease. This service will have two stages. The first is identifying people at risk of hypertension and offering them blood pressure monitoring (clinic check). The second stage, where clinically indicated, is offering ambulatory blood pressure monitoring (ABPM). The blood pressure test results will then be shared with the patient's GP to then inform a potential diagnosis of hypertension. This scheme therefore links to the PCN service specifications. The details of the contract are available [here](#)

8. Survey of GP practices' experiences of using the PCSE payments and pensions portal in August

We are very much aware of the unacceptable level of problems that practices have faced when using the new online portal since 1 June. We have challenged PCSE throughout on these and continue to work towards a system that does what is required.

We will be launching a survey on 2 September, aimed at capturing the experiences of practice staff's use of the portal through August. The purpose will be to measure the progress of solutions to the big issues that those staff have been facing. There will also be a section on resolution times for issues practices have raised with PCSE since the launch of the portal in June. We will include a link to the survey next week and we would encourage you to share this with your practice managers for them to respond to.

9. Standards for health and care records.

The Professional Records Standards Body (PRSB) has been commissioned by NHSE/I to develop standards that will enable key information about a person with diabetes to be shared between them, their carer and professionals to support self-management and to enable the best care to be delivered by those supporting them. There will be wide consultation between 20th-30th September 2021 to ensure views from professionals and service users across the UK are considered. If you would like to be involved please contact info@theprsb.org for joining information.

10. [#Support Your Surgery](#) – GPC England campaign

BMA have launched the campaign [Support Your Surgery](#). We are all acutely aware and feeling the pressure of the unfair criticism being levelled at general practice in the news and across social media due to the necessary restrictions that COVID-19 has brought about, and the subsequent abuse that GPs have received. To counter these perceptions and to force the Government to act to do more to support general practice, the new campaign provides GP practices with the [tools](#), such as poster and social media graphics, to manage expectations and to provide patients with the reality of issues facing general practice.

Alongside this, BMA has also launched a [new petition](#) asking GPs and the public to support their call on Government to provide the resourcing need so we can increase the number of GPs in England. 3501 people have added their name in just the three days since it was launched but we need as many as we can from both members of the profession and from the public.

Richard Vautrey, Chair of GPC, said *"It is important that we are upfront with patients, so they understand the reality that we are all facing and the underlying reasons for this, and that, despite the easing of lockdown, the pressures experienced by general practice and the rest of the NHS are unlikely to ease soon. We have therefore developed this campaign with insight from not just GPs, but also patient representatives and the wider public."*

We have [written to the profession](#) to outline the details of the campaign and have produced various resources that GPs can use in their surgeries including [posters](#), and social media graphics, available on our [Support Your Surgery campaign page](#). Physical posters have now also been dispatched to more than 5,800 practices in England. It would be a great help once they are received if you could send any photographs of the posters on display to us so we can use them as part of the campaign to encourage more people to do the same.

For those who would prefer it, there is now a downloadable version of the petition for use in practices. Signing this would also clearly demonstrate that many patients are being seen in surgeries and show how wrong those who criticise us are. Once completed, these can be emailed back to info.gpc@bma.org.uk. We have also added QR codes to email signature graphics and a Twibbon is now available for use on social media (this has to be downloaded from the third-party site; the link is on the campaign page).

I would ask that you do all you can to support this important campaign.”

11. Are you interested in being a GP Mentor in BLMK?

Applications now open

- Are you a mid-late career GP in BLMK interested in mentoring and supporting others locally?
- Would you like to gain a professional accredited ILM5 qualification in coaching & mentoring?

The BLMK GP Mentor Development Programme for mid-late career GPs is a new opportunity to expand your career portfolio through offering an additional paid session a week to mentor early career GPs. Mentors will gain a professional accredited ILM5 qualification in coaching & mentoring as well as receive additional support and development from Beds & Herts LMC Ltd.

For further information about the opportunity please review:

- [Mentor Information Pack](#)
- [Mentor Role Description](#)

Not sure whether to apply? There is an informal Q&A session via MS Teams for prospective mentors on **Thursday 9th September, 10-11am**. If you would like to receive the link to attend the event please email: ccs.blmk.traininghub@nhs.net.

If you would like to apply for a GP Mentor role, please download and complete the application form [here](#) and email to ccs.blmk.traininghub@nhs.net by **Friday 17th September**.

12. Level 3 Children and Adult Safeguarding Webinars for Primary Care in Herts & West Essex

Beds & Herts LMC and Herts & West Essex ICS invite primary care colleagues in Hertfordshire and West Essex to the following level 3 Safeguarding webinars. Please select the links for more information and how to register*

Children & Adult Safeguarding - Session A

Thurs 30th September, 2.00 – 4.30pm or Weds 3rd November, 2.00 – 4.30pm

Agenda:

1. Safeguarding children during the Covid-19 pandemic, post lockdown and the road to recovery
2. Managing and safeguarding of individuals with complex needs as a result of drug or alcohol dependency

[More information and register your free place here](#)

Children & Adult Safeguarding - Session B

Thurs 2nd December, 2.00 – 4.30pm or Tues 18th January 2022, 2.00 – 4.30pm

Agenda:

1. Contextual Safeguarding: Young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families with specific reference to understanding how situations relate to each other and inform their risk taking behaviour
2. Learning Disabilities: Best practice in primary care

[More information and register your free place here](#)

Adult Safeguarding: Mental Capacity Act

Weds 13th October or Weds 26th January 2022 or Tues 15th March 2022, 1.30 - 4.30pm

[More information and register your free place here](#)

Adult Safeguarding: Domestic Abuse involving Older Victims

Thurs 21st October, 1.30 - 4.30pm

[More information and register your free place here](#)

***Please note:** The webinars are delivered via MS Teams. BHLMC & HWE ICS event organisers will have access to registration and attendance data.

News - For the latest news, information and weekly updates for practices, please visit the [Hot Topics](#) section of our website.

BHLMC Job Board - Advertise your practice vacancies or search for jobs on our [Job Board](#). If you are interested in posting an advert please contact lmcadmin@bhlmc.co.uk for more information.

Locums - If you are a Locum and would like to receive LMC updates, please register via the [online form](#) to be added to our database and mailing list.

Workforce Wellbeing & Support [Visit our webpage](#).

Contact Us:

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