



Beds & Herts LMC Ltd: Weekly Update for Practices, Tuesday 12th October 2021

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1. GP Contract changes - October 2021

The following amendments were made to the GP contract from 1 October 2021:

a. Disclosure of GP Earnings

The introduction of a requirement for the disclosure of information by any GP whose NHS earnings were over £150,000 in 2019-20. Further information is available in the general practice pay transparency guidance. The guidance includes what is to be included in the calculation of NHS earnings and where and how to make the submission. The submission for earnings over £150,000 in 2019-20 have to be made by 12 November 2021. The submission for earnings over £153,000 in 2020-21 will need to be made by 30 April 2022.

LMC Comment: BMA/GPC has made clear their significant concerns about the change compelling GPs to publicly declare NHS earnings above £150,000 especially in the current climate of threat, aggression and violence towards GPs. BMA/GPC believe this will be hugely damaging to morale among the profession and wholly counterproductive in terms of the ability to recruit and retain GPs. If this is fully enacted, it will have been imposed on the profession in breach of the original agreement and GPC England has not agreed to these declarations being introduced in the absence of similar requirements across all providers of various primary care services. We are awaiting further guidance from GPC on how GPs might want to respond to this new requirement.

b. Registration of Crown Servants (and their families)

Changes to the process of registering with a GP practice for Crown Servants posted overseas and their family members, i.e. civil servants and members of the armed forces posted overseas.

These changes make it a requirement on a practice to take a returning Crown Servant or family member back onto the practice list, where the individual was a patient at that practice before their overseas posting and is returning to live within the practice area. Registration can be as a 'regular' patient where the individual will be in the UK for more than 3 months, or as a temporary resident where the individual will be in the UK for 3 months or less. The 'original' practice cannot refuse to take such Crown Servants or their family members back onto its list because its list is now closed. Crown Servants or their family members can apply

to register with a practice up to one month before they come back into the UK but the registration will not take effect until the individual returns to the UK. A Crown Servant or family member may also apply to join a new practice up to one month before they come back to the UK, where they will be living outside the practice area of their 'original' practice but within the practice area of the practice they apply to join.

Patient Consent for Electronic Repeat Dispensing

The removal of the requirement for individual patient consent when moving a patient with an electronic repeatable prescription on to electronic repeat dispensing.

c. New requirements regarding the digital offer which all practices must provide to patients.

- A practice must provide a means for a patient to provide and update their personal and contact information (i.e. name, ethnicity, address, telephone (if any), email (if any)) online or by other electronic means.
- A practice must provide an online consultation tool where a patient may, in writing in electronic form, seek advice or information or make a clinical or admin request. This could include booking/amending/cancelling appointments, requesting repeat prescriptions, access to the medical record, providing/updating personal and contact information.

LMC Comment: There is, as yet, no guidance on what hours such an online consultation tool should be available to patients. As the GP contract relates to services within core hours (8am to 6.30pm Monday to Friday), until there is clear guidance to the contrary, the LMC view remains that a practice may turn off or limit the use of the online consultation tool outside core hours if it wishes to do so.

A practice must offer video consultation.

Both video consultation and online consultation can only be done with software that meets the requirements of the GPIT Operating Model.

The practice's website must include links to its online consultation tool and to the symptom checker and self-care information on the NHS website.

d. Introduction of exemption confirmation requests for patients who should not be tested for, or vaccinated against, coronavirus.

It is a contractual requirement for a practice to respond to an exemption confirmation request that is made in accordance with the government-approved process. A practice does not have to respond to an exemption confirmation request in some circumstances where another doctor (e.g. a consultant) is attending the patient for the relevant medical condition.

A practice may claim an item of service fee of £44 from the NHS for responding to an exemption confirmation request made in accordance with the government-approved process.

e. Transfer of Patient Records

A requirement for the transfer of patient records between GP practices within 28 days of receiving the request.

The [amendment to the regulations](#) is available online. The [Statement of Financial Entitlements \(SFE\)](#), [Alternative Provider Medical Services \(APMS\)](#) Directions and [Directed Enhanced Services \(DES\)](#) Directions have also been updated.

2. PCN DES

A variation to the terms of the PCN DES comes into effect from 1 October. The details of this variation have been widely circulated to practices and to PCNs. We wanted to take this opportunity to remind practices that you have 30 calendar days from the introduction of the variation to the PCN DES (i.e. 1 October) during which you can notify the commissioner if you wish to opt out of the PCN DES.

3. GP appointment data

The [GP appointment data for August](#) has been published, showing that the total number of appointments delivered by general practice in August (25.5 million) remains higher than pre-pandemic levels (23.3 million in August 2019). The percentage of appointments delivered face-to-face has also risen to 57.7%, while the percentage of appointments delivered remotely (by telephone and video consultations) has fallen.

There are 1,904 fewer fully qualified full-time GPs than there were in 2015 despite government promises for 6,000 more. We are almost 8,000 GPs short. In the face of a huge back log of care in hospitals as well as communities, these figures show that GPs are working harder than ever and dealing with even more patients than before the pandemic. You can read a full [statement](#) from BMA/GPC

4. Mitigating the effect of dispensing fees cut

GPC England and the Dispensing Doctors Association (DDA) have asked NHS England to intervene to change the [fee scale](#). As calculated (correctly under an agreed formula), it took account of a 14% increase in volume triggered by the COVID pandemic and the first lockdown. This has caused the steep reduction in fees, which will be partially abated next April.

It is not just dispensing doctors who are affected by this fee cut. The scale also includes non-dispensing GPs who claim for Personally Administered items, including vaccines. There is on average a 35 pence per item decrease in dispensing fees.

The DDA have asked all of their members to write to their MPs as per their [template letter](#) and LMCs have been asked to share this with practices locally.

5. Media

Abuse

There's a supportive article in the [Observer](#) around the abuse of GPs and practice staff.

[Pulse](#) reported on attacks in the media against GPs and their survey of GPs found that 50% think a return to pre-pandemic levels of face-to-face appointments is not possible, citing problems around infection control and increased demand throughout the pandemic. Dr Richard Vautrey, GPC chair, was quoted saying the recent meeting with the Secretary of State, Sajid Javid, was used to call for 'clear public backing for GPs' acknowledging 'the huge pressure they are under', urgent investment in primary care to 'remove unnecessary bureaucracy' and a Government commitment to work with the BMA on 'a national campaign to stop the abuse of NHS staff'.

[The Mail](#) reported that [MP Tim Farron](#) has written to the health secretary Sajid Javid challenging him to publicly support GPs and their staff in the wake of a 'worrying rise' in abuse from members of the public.

There have been a few more positive media coverage - an [article in Pulse](#) covered the negative articles recently directed at GPs, and [another](#) discussed the results of the media regulator ruling about the Telegraph columns from Alison Pearson. A [third Pulse article](#) covered the news that Deputy Prime Minister Dominic Raab admitted that GP appointments 'have returned to pre-pandemic levels'.

The [Daily Mail](#) also reported that Sajid Javid said at a fringe event at the Conservative party conference that remote consultations had a 'role' in healthcare and that 'it continues because - I don't think this is surprising at all - that you find a lot of people that actually prefer it.'

6. East of England Digital Primary Care Award 2021

The East of England (EoE) region has launched its Digital Champions Primary Care awards. Celebrating the work of health and social care individuals, teams and organisations that have gone above and beyond the call of duty, to provide the best possible experience to patients using digital and online tools.

It was launched on the 4th October 2021, and nominations will be open for four weeks and close on Sunday the 31st October 2021.

You can click on the links to access the [nomination](#) and [application pack](#) for the EoE Digital Primary Care Award 2021.

7. West Herts Hospitals Trust are recruiting for Medical Examiners.

Following implementation into the Acute Hospital over the past 18 months, the Trust is now planning the extension of the Medical Examiner Service into Community and Primary Care settings in line with the statutory requirements coming into effect in Spring 2022.

Medical Examiners carry out independent scrutiny of deceased patients' medical records to review the patients care and ascertain a cause of death and will also link in with the patient safety processes where applicable. Medical Examiners are appropriately trained senior doctors who will verify clinical information on Medical Certificates of Cause of Death (MCCDs), to ensure appropriate referrals to the Coroner and accuracy and consistency of MCCD content. Additionally, the MEs raise any issues concerning the care of the dying patient within the trust

or community. This will require a combination of skills and knowledge, compassion, sensitivity and a commitment to engage with bereaved families when necessary.

Please see the link to a YouTube video below made by GPs working as Medical Examiners, detailing the scope of work: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CIkmdLP7ZB0>

The advert and application for the recruitment of 10 new Medical Examiners for the Community roll out (scrutiny of community deaths from the Watford ME base) is on NHS jobs with the link for this as follows <https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9360-21-8937> (reference 360-E-1460).

The closing date for application is 24th October 2021 and interviews on November 12th and 19th

Applications now open

8. Beds & Herts LMC Business Fundamentals Programme for Managers in Hertfordshire & West Essex, January to June 2022

Applications are now OPEN for the Beds & Herts LMC Business Fundamentals Programme for Managers in Hertfordshire and West Essex. Seven half day modules are delivered online from January to June 2022.

The Programme is designed for new and early career managers who wish to develop their understanding of the 'business basics' to develop their role within general practice. This is NOT a course in Practice Management but broadly covers key subject areas such as managing the business, legal obligations, digital healthcare, finance and strategic planning. The programme may also benefit those considering leadership/partnership roles in the future.

The programme is kindly funded by Herts & West Essex ICS Training Hub. You must therefore be working in general practice in Hertfordshire or West Essex and be able to commit to all modules.

[For more information and how to apply please view here](#)

Application deadline: **Friday 22nd October 2021, 12pm (midday)**

9. GP Pensions Update Webinar, Thursday 4th November, 7pm

Free webinar hosted by Beds & Herts LMC Ltd, presented by [MacArthur Gordon](#), medical financial specialists.

Date: Thursday 4th November 2021

Time: 7.00 - 8.00pm (arrival from 6.45pm)

Agenda: The NHS pension schemes, pension tax and the "McCloud" age discrimination case:

- 1995/2008/2015 Schemes and the impact of the McCloud Age Discrimination Case
- Annual Allowance / Tapered Annual Allowance – impact of the changes, options available, deadlines for Scheme Pays and the 19/20 Compensation Scheme
- Lifetime Allowance – implications of exceeding, protection, options available
- 24 Hour Retirement – the requirements outlining the current suspension of 16-hour limits, why, when and how
- Planning – debts and liabilities, leaving the practice, changing role
- Q&A

For more information and how to register your FREE place, please [view here](#).

se contact lmadmin@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.](#)

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