



Beds & Herts LMC Ltd: Weekly Update for Practices, Monday 13th December 2021

IMPORTANT NOTE: The information that follows in this update is based on the published information that has been released from the Government, NHSE, GPC, JVICI and UKHSA. We are aware that following the Prime Minister's speech on Sunday night there is likely to be further guidance released imminently. Informal conversations suggest that new guidance may address issues such as vaccine delivery, GP workload prioritisation, the National Booking System, post vaccine waiting times, vaccine distribution to individual practices, and the winter access fund, but until documents are released this is merely speculation. As soon as we receive anything official, we will review the documentation and circulate an additional update to practices.

1. Practices as Limited Companies

Over the past 12 months we have been approached by several practices who are considering moving their partnership to a limited company. To provide some background and help practices understand the key topics that they need to consider, we have produced a guidance document for our members. Please note, this is a complex issue and anyone considering it should seek specialist accounting, legal and personal financial advice before making a decision.

View here: [A Brief Guide to the Use of Limited Companies in General Practice.](#)

2. Patients refusing to wear face masks in practices

Practices still have some patients who refuse to wear masks in practices. You can tell patients that you are following IPC guidance on this.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control/covid-19-guidance-for-maintaining-services-within-health-and-care-settings-infection-prevention-and-control-recommendations>

This guidance includes the recommendation for universal use of face masks for staff and face masks/ coverings for all patients/visitors to remain as an IPC measure within health and care settings over the winter period. This is likely to be until at least March/April 2022.

If a patient still refuses to wear a mask. It is reasonable to consider removal of that patient on the grounds of irrevocable breakdown in the patient/practice relationship. Carl Raybold or Michael Sissens can talk you through what you would need to do contractually for such a removal.

3. Vaccination as a Condition of Deployment guidance

Last week NHSE released the first part of their [Vaccination as a Condition of Deployment \(VCOD\) for healthcare workers guidance and corresponding materials](#), to support providers in preparing and planning for when the regulations (which are subject to parliamentary passage) are introduced.

The guidance provides further clarity and confirmation of which individuals fall under the scope of the regulations and those who are exempt, in addition to information on methods to increase vaccination uptake, including amongst groups where uptake is lower. The guidance will be reviewed and updated in accordance with government advice and NHSE say that they will continue to work with and support service providers to ensure that patient care continues to be our main priority. The guidance currently is quite secondary care focused but it possible to draw some conclusions from it for general practice. It is possible that future guidance will have more explicit examples for general practice.

4. Congratulations on 1 year of COVID vaccination and 1 million vaccinations given.

It was the one-year anniversary on 8 December for the NHS COVID-19 Vaccination program. Since its inception, GPs, and their teams all over the country have played a pivotal role in rolling out at pace the most successful vaccination campaign to date. The NHS has delivered now over 100m doses in just 12 months, including 18m booster jabs. The lion's share of this vaccination programme has been delivered by General Practice. It has been a massive undertaking at significant personal costs for many of you, a huge team effort delivered in partnership with your communities. Thank you for all that you have achieved and all that you will continue to do for your communities and for this nation.

To mark the first anniversary of the COVID-19 vaccine roll-out, colleagues in Herts Valleys have created a celebration video to say thank you to all involved. This is being shared across NHS and local partners' social media channels and with staff. Please feel free to share this.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FLhNI0xdGCE>

5. Temporary GP contract changes to support Winter pressures and the COVID-19 Vaccination program

On 3 December, following discussion with GPC, NHSE/I published a [letter](#) announcing changes to QOF and IIF and changes to the COVID vaccination DES. It has now provided [further guidance](#) on these changes. The BMA are working with RCGP on updating a joint workload prioritisation document.

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care Sajid Javid has written a [letter](#) to primary care, thanking staff for their efforts on the COVID vaccination programme.

6. Moving vaccines within a PCN grouping

(LMC Comment - Please note this may be superseded with new guidance.)

Considering the need to rapidly expand capacity, the MHRA has expanded the circumstances in which the COVID-19 vaccine may be moved from a PCN Grouping's designated site(s) to another location.

GP practices within a PCN Grouping may move COVID-19 vaccine from their Designated Site to collaborating individual GP practices within the PCN Grouping to increase the possibility of opportunistic administration of the vaccination to increase take up of the vaccine. Movement continues to be subject to:

- all requirements and guidance on the movement, storage and handling of COVID-19 vaccines being adhered to;
- there being no onward movement of the vaccine. For example, it is not permitted for a PCN to transport the COVID-19 vaccine from the PCN Grouping's designated site(s) to a collaborating individual GP practice and then onto a pop-up site or care home etc; and
- the arrangements being reflected in the PCN Grouping's Collaboration Agreement

The NHSE template [Collaboration Agreement](#) has now been updated to reflect these changes.

7. UK's most vulnerable people to receive lifesaving COVID-19 treatments in the community

Thousands of the UK's most vulnerable people will be among the first in the world to access lifesaving, cutting-edge antiviral and antibody treatments, the government has announced.

A national study called [PANORAMIC](#), run by the University of Oxford in close collaboration with GP hubs, has now launched and is recruiting around 10,000 UK patients at risk of serious illness from COVID-19 to have the opportunity to take the treatment molnupiravir at home after receiving a positive PCR test.

Those at highest risk who test positive for the virus – for example, people who are immunocompromised, cancer patients or those with Down's syndrome – will also be able to access either molnupiravir or the novel monoclonal antibody Ronapreve outside of the study from 16 December 2021.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uks-most-vulnerable-people-to-receive-life-saving-covid-19-treatments-in-the-community>

8. NHSE/I workforce staff survey development

The NHSE/I workforce team has commissioner Picker, an independent health and social care research charity, to develop a new [questionnaire for the Primary Care Staff Survey Pilot](#). They are looking for volunteers (both clinical and non-clinical staff) to make sure the questionnaire is clear, easily understood, and relevant to staff working in General Practice and Primary Care Networks. If you volunteer, you will need to:

- Attend a one-to-one 60-minute interview with research from Picker, over MS Teams.
- During the interview you will be required to complete the questionnaire, voicing your thoughts throughout completion.

An interview will be arranged at time convenient to you, during one of the rounds detailed below.

- Round 1 – 16th December to 20th December
- Round 2 – 4th January to 6th January
- Round 3 – 12th January to 14th January

Find out more [here](#) or contact volunteer@surveycoordination.com to register your interest.

9. New to Partnership Payment Scheme (N2PP)

This will be extended into the 2022/23 financial year, and NHSE/I have now removed the requirement to apply within six months of commencing a partnership role. Following a review of the timeframe to apply for the scheme, and in acknowledgement of the challenges the deadline presented to busy new GP partners as well as the additional pressures created by the COVID-19 pandemic, NHSE/I has removed the six-month deadline, including for submitted applications that meet all other eligibility criteria. When the scheme comes to an end, there will be a cut-off deadline after the scheme closure date by which applications from eligible individuals must be submitted, and NHSE/I will give advance notice of this.

NHSE/I continues to encourage all individuals who have commenced in an equity share partnership on or after 1 April 2020 to submit their application as soon as they can after they become eligible. They are now reviewing all applicants this affects and updating their guidance to reflect the changes

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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 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.

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