



Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire LMC Ltd: Weekly Update for Practices, Thursday 23rd December 2021

Our Christmas promise to you – this is our last weekly update for 2021... unless of course NHSE have other ideas!

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1) Extension of the suspension of Friends and Family Test returns

The temporary suspension of the requirement that practices report to commissioners about the Friends and Family Test (FFT) returns has been extended until 31 March 2022 under The National Health Service (Amendments Relating to the Provision of Primary Care Services During a Pandemic etc.) Regulations 2020.

2) Workload prioritisation

The BMA has worked with the RCGP to create a [workload prioritisation guide](#), intended to support practices in their planning as general practice pivots to deliver the accelerated COVID-19 booster campaign alongside prioritisation of timely patient access to general practice services this winter.

The guidance will be reviewed on a regular basis as the situation develops.

LMC Comment: Prioritisation of workload is vital to protect both essential patient services and our workforce at this time. While the guides on workload prioritisation are helpful, we understand that practices may also need to make individual decisions about how they will adapt their working models to cope with the demands of coming months.

It is important for you to know that the LMC will support you, as you adapt your services according to the pandemic.

3) Covid Death Provision Guidance

Given the current situation, it feels timely to reiterate the [guidance](#) with respect to the certification of deaths. All the changes allowed by the Coronavirus Act 2020 are still in place and will be until at least March 2022.

Of importance is that the length of period of attendance remains at 28 days and that the current relaxation as to who can sign the certificate also remains.

The MCCD can be done by a doctor who didn't know the patient in life if:

- the usual GP is unavailable
- the GP who signs the MCCD knows the cause of death 'to the best of their knowledge and belief'
- a doctor has seen the patient within the 28 days before death or after death.
- The MCCD should be signed, scanned, and emailed.
(Find out if your local registrar wants the original to be sent in the post or kept at the practice for collection at a later date. It is an important document and must not be destroyed.)

There is a useful e-learning module on the RCGP website, available both for members and non-members [Course: Changes to death certification \(rcgp.org.uk\)](https://www.rcgp.org.uk/courses/changes-to-death-certification).

4) Formal guidance on Isolation Rules

The UK Government has amended the [self-isolation rules](#), summarised as follows:

People no longer need to isolate for 10 days and can return to work after 7 days provided:

- They receive a negative LFD result on day 6 and day 7 of their self-isolation period – with tests taken 24 hours apart.
- The first test must be taken no earlier than day 6 of the self-isolation period.

However, those who leave self-isolation on or after day 7 are strongly advised to limit close contact with other people in crowded or poorly ventilated spaces, work from home and minimise contact with anyone who is at higher risk of severe illness if infected with COVID- 19.

There is no change to the guidance for unvaccinated contacts of positive COVID-19 cases, who are still required to self-isolate for 10 full days after their date of exposure to the virus.

The [guidance for health and social care workers](#) – including GPs and practice teams – is the same with some additional mitigations, including continuing to test negative with daily LFTs until day 10.

UKHSA self-isolation guidance for healthcare workers

If a staff member receives a positive SARS-CoV-2 PCR test result, they must complete a period of self-isolation. The isolation period includes the day the symptoms started or the day their PCR test was taken if they do not have symptoms, and the next 10 full days.

Staff may be able to end their self-isolation period before the end of the 10 full days by undertaking an LFD test on the sixth day and seventh day of their isolation period (24 hours apart). If both these LFD test results are negative, they may return to work on day 8 under the following conditions:

- the staff member should not have any Covid-19 symptoms
- the staff member should continue to undertake daily LFD tests on day 8, 9 and 10 of their isolation period. If any of these LFD test results are positive the staff member should isolate and should wait 24 hours before taking the next LFD test
- if the LFD test is positive on the 10th day, daily LFD testing should continue and the staff member should not return to work until a negative LFD test result is received
- on days the staff member is working, the LFD test should be taken prior to beginning their shift, as close as possible to the start time
- the staff member must continue to comply with all relevant infection control precautions and PPE must be worn properly throughout the day
- if the staff member works with patients or residents who are especially vulnerable to Covid-19 (as determined by the organisation), a risk assessment should be undertaken, and consideration given to redeployment for the remainder of the 10-day isolation period

If any of the above cannot be met, the staff member should not come to work and should follow the stay-at-home guidance for the full 10-day period.

5) Primary Care Network (PCN) Contract Directed Enhanced Service (DES) Specification

On 20 December 2021 NHSE published a revised [Network Contract Directed Enhanced Service \(DES\) Specification](#) with updated [contract guidance](#) and [Investment and Impact Fund \(IIF\) implementation guidance](#). This DES variation implements the measures taken to support the COVID-19 vaccination programme as announced in our [letter of 7 December](#). The changes are simply to include appropriate references to the PCN Support payment (recycled from the Investment and Improvement Fund (IIF)) and to show how the IIF has changed for this year, with some indicators being suspended.

DES Practices already signed up in 2021/22 will automatically participate in the updated 2021/22 DES. PCNs with changes must notify the commissioner by 19 January 2022 to seek approval of those changes, and if a practice wishes to sign up to, or opt out of, the DES, it must inform its commissioner by 19 January 2022 also. If you want to talk to someone at the LMC about the implications of any changes in your PCN or if you wish to sign up or to opt out, then please do feel free to contact us but be aware of the deadline of 19 January 2022 for formal notice of any changes/change of status to the CCG.

6) Recording overseas COVID vaccinations in the National Booking Service

We have been told that some patients are contacting practices asking about getting overseas vaccinations recorded. This is not something that practices can do themselves. Eligible people can now book a face-to-face appointment via the [National Booking system](#) at a selected vaccination centre to show evidence of MHRA-approved COVID-19 vaccinations administered abroad and have them recorded in the National Immunisation Management System (NIMS). Support is also provided through 119 to signpost the service, or to make bookings on behalf of users.

More information is provided when the user books an appointment. If patients contact your practice about this service, you should direct them to 119.

7) PCSE patient list validation requests

PCSE nationally had been contacting some practices to run a patient list validation exercise. This was brought to the attention of the GPC. GPC asked NHSE/I to pause PCSE emails to practices requesting full patient list validation exercises. NHSE/I agreed to this and have instructed PCSE to stop sending them until the beginning of February, when the decision will be reviewed.

GPC also challenged the mention in these PCSE requests of a requirement to respond to the requests within five working days. NHSE/I agreed that the contractual requirement is actually 30 days. They have said that will raise this with PCSE but, should the wording remain unchanged when these requests are resumed, GPC advice to practices is that you can actually use the full 30 days.

8) Application window for 2019/20 Pensions Annual Allowance Charge Compensation Policy

The third GP application window for 2019/20 Pensions Annual Allowance Charge Compensation Policy applications is now open on the PCSE website [2019/20 Pensions Annual Allowance Charge Compensation Policy - Primary Care Support England](#). It closes on Friday 11 February 2022.

9) And as a wise GP once wrote:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Wise GP'.

(Wise GP)

Merry Christmas from all at the LMC.

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 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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