



Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire LMC Ltd: Weekly Update for Practices, Monday 28th February 2022

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1. Update on 2022/23 GP contract negotiations

We have received the following update from GPC on the 2022/23 contract negotiations.

“Given the time of year, we are aware that colleagues are wondering about the 22/23 Contract. 2022/23 will be the fourth year of the five-year framework for GP contract reform agreed in 2019.

Negotiations are ongoing and remain confidential till they have concluded.

The GPC England executive team have been meeting with NHSE/I frequently since early January 2022 to negotiate changes to the contract that reflect the current day pressures.

There is still no agreement with NHSE/I however negotiations are still ongoing, and we will leave no stone un-turned in trying to find an agreed way forward.

Whilst the details of ongoing negotiations remain confidential for now; the following matters are in the public domain:

1. [Contract uplift](#) for 22/23
2. [Primary Care Networks](#)
3. [PCN Service requirements](#)
4. [IIF](#)
5. [Access](#)

It is our intention to meet with Local Medical Committees (LMCs) and GPs over the coming months to seek your views on a model of general practice which is fit for the future, that will enable us to care of our patients safely.”

2. Lifting COVID restrictions and infection control

As of 24 February, as part of the Government's ['Living with COVID-19'](#) plan, the COVID restrictions have been lifted in England, including the requirement to isolate after testing positive.

The [BMA has voiced concerns](#) that living with COVID doesn't mean ignoring its continued harm to many, and that scrapping all restrictions and allowing the infection to spread in an unmonitored and unfettered manner would be damaging to the health of millions.

The BMA is also concerned that removing the protections in healthcare settings that currently exist, such as mask wearing, would be wrong and they have raised this with NHSE/I, who have confirmed that the [Infection Prevention Control](#) (IPC) guidance for healthcare workers will not be changing and still advises that face masks should continue to be worn by staff and patients in health care settings.

NHSE/I has published a [letter](#) to healthcare providers in light of the Living with COVID plan which confirms that there are no changes to IPC measures, and which also advises that healthcare staff who have tested positive for COVID-19, or who have symptoms of COVID-19, should not attend work until they have had two negative LFD test results taken 24 hours apart, no earlier than day 5 after their initial positive test.

BMA/GPC has requested urgent communications to the public about IPC expectations for public in healthcare settings.

3. COVID-19 vaccination programme

COVID-19 vaccination for all 5-11 year olds:

Following the latest [JCVI guidance on vaccinations for all 5-11 year olds](#), NHSE/I has published [guidance](#) on the actions to take to begin administering vaccinations to 5-11 year-olds from the beginning of April.

We also understand that the COVID-19 vaccination [enhanced service specification](#) will be extended and is being updated to align with the JCVI guidance as well as the next steps guidance (below), and will be published shortly.

Next steps for vaccination programme:

NHSE/I has sent out a [letter setting out the next steps of the vaccination programme](#) asking local systems to plan for the April to September period, advising that general practice should focus on delivery of core/routine services to patients, and that it is likely that PCN sites will 'hibernate' over that period whilst being prepared to stand back up if there is a surge. Provision of COVID vaccinations over that period will be through mass vaccination sites and pharmacies, although in limited circumstances, where appropriate and agreed with local systems, PCN sites might still be utilised. Read more in the [planning parameters document](#).

The letter also announced that a second booster programme will commence in Autumn 2022, which will be limited to over 75s, care home residents and severely immuno-compromised - it will not include health and care staff. The NHSE/I letter also requests local systems about preference for delivery of the further booster programme from September.

BMA/GPC will continue to engage with NHSE/I on this over the spring and summer.

4. GP pressures

Dr Farah Jameel, chair of GPC England, has [published a letter](#) in the Daily Mail responding to the [article](#) 'What really lies behind the national crisis in GPs?'

Dr Jameel said: "While we understand the frustration of patients who have had difficulty getting appointments, the root cause lies in chronic workforce shortages and a lack of proper investment. Without a workable plan to increase staffing, freeing up the staff we have to care for patients based on clinical need and directing investment to where it's needed most, we will see no relief from the current crisis engulfing the NHS."

Read more about NHS pressures in the BMA's [NHS under pressure hub](#), including GP workforce and pressures on the [GP analysis page](#)

5. [Check your NHS pension scheme protection](#)

If you have maintained enhanced protection under the 1995 or 2008 sections, be aware this will be lost when you transition to the 2015 scheme on 1 April 2022. Members should consider opting out of the NHS pension if they want to retain the enhanced or fixed protection and do so by 31 March 2022 – it is important that you ensure that PCSE effects this promptly. [Read more](#)

6. NHS Elective Recovery Plan

The BMA's comprehensive [summary and analysis of the new NHS Elective Recovery Plan](#) has now been published. The recovery plan sets out a range of ambitions, policies, and programmes targeted at reducing the elective care backlog in England over the next three years.

GPC England has encouraged NHSE/I to develop a support package so general practices can deliver recovery and deal with the backlog in long-term conditions. The GPC briefing analyses the key details of the plan – read it [here](#)

7. Patient access to records

GPC England recognises the immense pressure that enabling [access to records](#) in such a short timeframe would put on GPs. The NHS is saying that prospective access to records will commence on 1 April 2022. GPC secured a delay to the original launch date and continues to work with other stakeholders to seek a resolution to ongoing concerns. As it stands GPC's position is that the requisite infrastructure and guidance is not yet in place to enable this to launch in an effective fashion. They have concerns that without this and without an adequate public education campaign, the launch of the programme will likely drive traffic to GPs from patients unable to access aspects of their record or confused about what they find, ultimately creating more harm than good due to increased demands on GPs' time.

8. Fuller stocktake

Professor Claire Fuller has been asked to lead a wide-ranging national stocktake of how primary care can best be supported within the emergent Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) to meet the health needs of people in their local areas. BMA/GPC encourages LMCs and GP practices to take the opportunity to input into this review. You can do this by adding comments and ideas to the [Stocktake Crowdcity page](#)

9. Ordering DWP leaflets

A new contract for Managed Print Services with HH Global Associates Ltd (HHG) started on 21 February 2022, which provides the supply of items to DWP's external customers / partners, such as the MATB1 maternity certificate, Med 3s and Med 10s for health care professionals. Read more on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)

10. Help Us To Help You - NHSE Campaign

This week NHSE are launching a new campaign – Help Us To Help You- to encourage early cancer diagnosis.

You may have seen similar campaigns for early heart attack symptoms, and for mental health support.

The campaign will suggest patients see their GP with early, non-specific symptoms which could be related to cancer, and not to delay. It will include TV, print media, and social media elements, aimed at everyone over 50, especially in BAME groups and the socially deprived. The campaign will run for a month to end of March.

BMA were informed about this campaign only in the last few days of last week. The GPC Executive met with NHSE at the end of last week to highlight the potential increased workload at a time when practices are already saturated, resource issues, and other unintended consequences.

GPC Executive have asked that in future they be informed ahead of time and that GPs be given decent notice so as to be at least aware of such campaigns that will drive patients towards their doors. GPC aims to be involved earlier in future campaigns.

11. DPIA for BLMK SMI COVID-19 Vaccination Project *(For Bedfordshire and Luton Practices only)*

BLMK recently circulated a Data Protection Impact Assessment for the above project. Please note that sign-up to this project is voluntary. Practices should sign up to this DPIA if you want to take part in this project. If you do not want to take part in this project then you do not have to sign up to this DPIA.

12. Misleading letter to practices from Broad Yorkshire Law about the Covid Vaccination programme

We have been made aware that a letter from Broad Yorkshire Law, that has been circulating for a little while elsewhere in the country, has now reached Beds and Herts. Relevant authorities have been alerted and there is an ongoing investigation into professional misconduct by the individual. Below is a response received from the NHSE Security Team when raised with them from one of the first practices (not in our patch!) who received this letter followed by a public message that has been posted by the Solicitors Regulation Authority when a fact check took place.

In simple terms, please do not panic or change any of your practices but take note of the advice below, this is inappropriate behaviour by the individual that is being investigated for legal and professional misconduct. It would be appropriate to highlight that you have also received the letter and the date you received this with the various links (including the SRA) below in order to assist their investigations by giving a sense of the scale of the misconduct but you should not feel threatened to change your vaccination programme.

NHSE Security message:

“Thank you for reporting this incident. These letters and similar emails from a Yorkshire based law firm called Broad Yorkshire Law are examples of a number that have been delivered to a large number of vaccination sites/vaccine providers and schools believed to be involved in the vaccination programme.

These letters/emails are designed to intimidate staff and adversely affect the vaccination programme. The threats of legal action directed at staff have absolutely no basis in law and the claim that the SARS CoV2 injections are under Police investigation pursuant to crime reference number: 6029679/21 is false. Staff should be assured that the vaccination programme is completely lawful and has the full backing of the British Government and the British Legal system and these threats of legal action should be ignored.

When dealing with letters and emails of this nature, please remember:

- Not to engage directly: misinformation narratives and tactics flourish when they are responded to and experience shows that any formal responses will be followed by even more anti-vaccination communication.*
- Acknowledge receipt: if a response is needed, simply acknowledge receipt of concerns. (Only if absolutely necessary in order to diffuse any potential conflict)*

This information has also been forwarded to the relevant Government organisations for their information and action. Thank you for taking the time to report this incident which we have logged and closed this incident on our records.

Thanks again and if you require further assistance or guidance in relation to security related matters please don't hesitate to contact NVOC and I will be happy to assist

For updated guidance on security and managing challenging behaviour please see the below link on the futures site:

<https://future.nhs.uk/CovidVaccinations/view?objectID=29546000>”.

Reuters' Fact Check Information:

Reported that the Met and Solicitors Regulation Authority have both commented on the company and solicitor cited (Broad Yorkshire Law and Lois Bayliss):

[Fact Check-Solicitor's letter falsely claims that London's police are investigating COVID-19 vaccines | Reuters](#)

Reuters also spoke to the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA), which confirmed that Broad Yorkshire Law is a company that it regulates ([here](#)).

“We have received reports of potential misconduct, so are aware of this situation,” a spokesperson said via email. “We are gathering all relevant information before deciding on any next steps.”

Professional conduct issues can be raised here: <https://www.sra.org.uk/consumers/problems/>

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.

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