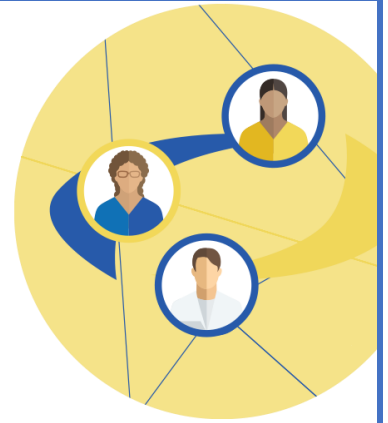


Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire LMC Ltd: Weekly Update for Practices, Monday 09th May 2022



In this edition:

1. Network contract DES (PCN DES)
2. GP workforce and appointment data
3. What is your diagnosis for General Practice?
4. GP abuse
5. General Practice Pay Transparency
6. Health and Care Bill becoming an Act
7. GPFR pilot
8. LMC UK conference 2022
9. NHS Covid passes now available for those aged 5-11
10. Beds & Herts LMC meeting with Mohammad Yasin MP
11. BLMK ICB Primary Medical Services Partner Member – recruitment now open
12. Herts & West Essex Training Hub: Wise 5 Webinar – Leadership

1. Network contract DES (PCN DES)

We have had the following update from GPC to add some greater context to the position of GPCE exec around the [Network Contract DES \(PCN DES\)](#). GPC entered negotiations with NHSE in January 2022 with the intention of securing extra support and resource for practices to recognise the increasing workload and expenses. These requests were ignored by NHSE, and they subsequently published their [changes to the contract](#) without GPC agreement in late March 2022.

When NHSE published details of the contract changes and PCN DES, there were ambiguities that LMCs asked GPC to clarify after their contract webinars, and GPC wrote to NHSE outlining the GPC position on these areas. Subsequently, NHSE gave verbal and written advice that LMCs will now be familiar with, removing local flexibilities, and clarifying the indivisibility of all parts of the PCN DES. GPC communicated these points to practices and LMCs, through the GPC newsletter and further webinars, and has produced several [documents for practices](#) to review, outlining the benefits and disadvantages of staying in the PCN DES, and those of leaving the DES.

The opt out window has now closed but GPC lobbying of NHSEI for greater flexibility and support continues unabated. GPC also plans for and asks that LMCs lobby local and regional commissioners for local flexibility to ensure safe patient care within the workforce compliment practices have available to them. GPC will develop further guidance for practices on how to work within the constraints of the PCN DES in a way that is effective for practices and safe for patients, as further details emerge.

PCNs have until July to agree plans for extended access with their CCG, and GPC has requested from NHSE/I that another opt-out window be opened so that practices who cannot agree a delivery model with their local commissioner, which is safe for both patients and the limited number of primary care staff we have, can withdraw from the DES.

Read more in the GPC [guidance about the contract changes](#) to support practices in their decision making. Practices should take into account safe working levels from both a workload/staffing and patient perspective, bearing in mind the [BMA's safe working guidance](#).

2. GP workforce and appointment data

The latest [GP data](#) releases on workforce and appointment bookings (both for March 2022) show that while appointments in England were up by 4 million, GP numbers continued to spiral downwards. Compared with this time a year ago, England has the equivalent of 369 fewer full-time, fully qualified GPs – having lost 30 in the most recent month alone. This means each day there is one less doctor for patients to see. On top of that, we have lost almost 1,600, fully-qualified, full-time equivalent GPs since 2015 (when the current collection method began). Read the GPC *analysis about pressures in general practice on their analysis webpage* [here](#) and the full BMA statement [here](#).

This trend, of demand rocketing while we haemorrhage doctors, is pushing the remaining staff to breaking point as they take on more and more each day, to a point which is not safe for them and certainly not safe for patients.

In addition, the March release of the appointments dataset includes for the first time statistics on: the duration of appointments, SDS role and the recorded national category, service setting and context type of the appointment. Further information can be found [here](#).

As the appointment length metric refers to 'work planned' rather than 'work done', it will likely under-record the length of an appointment as the way in which appointment length is logged will vary by software system and from practice-to-practice, which means those appointments logged as only a few minutes may not accurately reflect the time taken to see a patient – let alone any follow up done by the GP. NHSD is aware of this issue and GPC is working with them to improve this metric.

3. What is your diagnosis for General Practice? #RebuildGP

The [Rebuild general practice campaign](#) continues to tackle the crisis facing general practice. Two weeks ago, GPs from across Great Britain called for government support to recruit and retain doctors in general practice. Watch the film [here](#).

The film was released alongside new data highlighting how workforce and workload pressures are impacting the mental health of GPs. This includes 84% of GPs have felt symptoms of anxiety, stress or depression because of their job in the last year.

There has been considerable interest from both national and regional media outlets, but your help is needed to amplify the message and make the campaign a success. Show your support by sharing the video on [social media](#) and using the **#RebuildGP**. You can also follow and share content, news, and updates on the campaign [Twitter page](#).

4. GP abuse

A UK-wide [survey](#) by the Medical and Dental Defence Union of Scotland found that three out of four GPs reported facing increased patient abuse during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Although the pandemic has placed almost incomprehensible stress on the NHS, its staff and the general public and has caused pain and distress beyond anything we could have imagine - for doctors to be the brunt of violence and abuse in this way is wholly unacceptable. It is no surprise that GPs

feel as undervalued as they do and are considering leaving the profession, as this report and multiple BMA surveys have shown. This deeply disturbing trend must be addressed.

The Government must not only be honest with the public about what general practice can achieve right now - given the chronic workforce shortages, backlog, and lack of resource - but also actually support the profession so that you can provide the kind of care you want to. Read the full [BMA statement here](#).

5. General Practice Pay Transparency

GPC has continued to raise concerns about earnings declarations for GPs with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and following confirmation that the implementation of general practice pay transparency would be delayed, amendments to the GP Contract Regulations have now come in to force to remove the requirement to make a self-declaration of 2020/21 NHS earnings by 30 April 2022. Individuals within scope of the pay transparency provisions therefore do not need to take any action, and commissioners should not seek to enforce this contractual requirement.

With GPs continuing to face such intense pressures, GPC has been clear that this policy was likely to be counter-productive. Although we are pleased that these plans are being delayed, we are disappointed that these amendments were *'made with the expectation that this policy will resume at a later date'*, and GPC will lobby for this requirement to declare earnings to continue to remain suspended for 2022/23 as well. Read the GPC [guidance on GP earnings](#).

6. Health and Care Bill becoming an Act

The [Health and Care Bill for England](#) has now [received Royal Assent](#), meaning it is now an Act of Parliament. The BMA has said consistently that this is the [wrong bill at the wrong time](#), which completely fails to address the main problems the NHS and BMA members are facing: too few resources, a crisis in social care and crucially, a huge shortfall of staff.

While there have been some concessions from the Government – responding to GPC calls for greater protection from private providers influencing commissioning decisions via membership of NHS decision-making bodies, and safeguards to help prevent undue political interference in the running of local health and care services - GPC is [dismayed](#) that ministers have ultimately failed to listen to frontline workers and demonstrate commitment to safely staff the NHS and care services.

As the Bill now becomes an Act the BMA will continue to campaign for a publicly funded, publicly provided and publicly accountable NHS that gets the investment it needs, is properly staffed and protects the health and wellbeing of its workers so they are able to provide the high quality and timely care that patients deserve.

You can find out more about the changes, what they mean for you and the BMA work on the Bill [here](#).

7. GPFR pilot

A new pilot is starting in May to trial a replacement to the existing [GPFR](#) (General Practice Factual Reports – also known as DS1500 or the PIP form), which GPs are asked to complete to support patients' claims for Personal Independence Payment. The new form is designed to be quicker and easier for GPs to complete, whilst still capturing the information needed. The trial will run for six months and DWP hope that GPs will engage with it and provide any helpful feedback and comments

they may have on the new form. During the pilot GPs may sometimes receive the existing GPFR and may sometimes receive the version being trialled.

8. LMC UK conference 2022

The Agenda for the [2022 UK LMC Conference](#), which takes place on *10 and 11 May* in York, has now been published: [uk-lmc-conference-agenda-22-april-2022-final.pdf \(bma.org.uk\)](#)

The Conference will be webcast live - for more information see here: [Local Medical Committees](#)

9. NHS Covid passes now available for those aged 5-11

NHS X has turned on access to COVID passes for those in the 5-11 age groups. Passes were already available for those 12+.

Passes will be available by post when families call 119. They can also submit a web request. The passes will be sent to the registered address as listed on the GP record. They will only be produced if a complete vaccination course has occurred. Recovery passes are not provided for this age group and instant online access is not provided either.

In summary, our understanding is:

Age 5-11

Passes (to be posted) can be requested via 119 or via the web if a complete vaccination course has occurred.

Age 12

As above AND

Using the NHS login passes can be obtained/downloaded immediately via the web. Recovery passes are shown if there has been a positive NHS PCR in the previous 180 days.

Age 13+

As above AND

Access is also available via the NHS app.

Each pass is valid for 30 days from production so may need to be requested shortly before any trip abroad.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/nhs-covid-pass/>

10. Beds & Herts LMC meeting with Mohammad Yasin MP

Following the most recent letter the LMC sent to all MPs in Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire about the pressures on General Practice, we have received several requests for meetings with local MPs. Last week the team had a really productive meeting with Mohammad Yasin, MP for Bedford, and you can view his full tweet following the meeting [here](#).

11. BLMK ICB Primary Medical Services Partner Member – recruitment now open

Beds GPs

The application process to apply for the ICB Partner Member role is now open. Further details about this role and how to submit an application can be found in the text below, from Dr Rima Makarem, Chair Designate, Bedfordshire Luton Milton Keynes Integrated Care Board.

"I am delighted to contact you with the [details of an exciting role](#) on the Integrated Care Board (ICB), the statutory board of the Integrated Care System for Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes. This is an exciting time for us – as we establish the new Integrated Care Board in our area and continue to evolve our partnership to become more integrated than ever before.

We are looking to appoint three partner members from Primary Medical Services to the ICB. As a partner member, you will have the opportunity to work with NHS Trusts, Local Authorities and residents on the issues that are most important to all of us, such as improving outcomes in population health and healthcare; tackling inequalities in outcomes, experience and access; enhancing productivity and value for money; helping the NHS support broader social and economic development.

Whether you're a GP, a senior member of the primary care practice team, community pharmacist, dentist or optometrist – if you want to make a difference, we want to hear from you.

Please review the paperwork attached and apply today. Please feel free to contact me if you would like to discuss the roles in greater detail via a.malciw@nhs.net or contact Rebecca.green@nhs.net if you have any general questions about the recruitment process."

12. Herts & West Essex Training Hub: Wise 5 Webinar – Leadership

Herts & West Essex Wise 5 Colleagues

Date: Wednesday 11th May 2022

Time: 19:30pm

Venue: Online via MS Teams

How to book: Please click [here](#) to express your interest to receive a link to join.

"Leadership – an active contribution to an effective practice" – Steve Andrews, Associate Director Leadership E&N Herts Trust

E&N Herts Trust Associate Director, Steve Andrews, will be giving an overview of how GPs can use their experience to provide leadership for the healthcare community.

For further information about this webinar please see the [attached flyer](#).

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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