

## Beds & Herts LMC Ltd: Update for Practices, Monday 06<sup>th</sup> March 2023



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#### 1. Beds & Herts LMC Elections – deadline for Nominations, Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2023

Just a reminder the LMC will be holding its biennial elections in the spring. At this time of unprecedented challenge, phenomenal change and uncertain future, the LMC needs to be strong and resilient in order to be able to continue to help support general practice. We are only as strong as our committees of representatives, and so would encourage GPs at all stages of their careers to consider standing as an LMC rep and there are Practice Manager Representatives vacancies too.

Paperwork for the Election along with a nomination form was emailed to all GPs and Practice Managers in Beds & Herts last week and the deadline for Nominations is **12 noon on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2023**.

If you haven't received the letter or for more details, please feel free to contact the office by emailing [sueholloran@bhlmc.co.uk](mailto:sueholloran@bhlmc.co.uk)

#### 2. GP contract update

We have had the following update from Dr Kieran Sharrock, Acting Chair, GPC England, on Friday of last week:

*"As you may be aware, [GPC England recently voted to reject the initial contract offer](#) from NHS England. We met with Steven Barclay, Secretary of State for Health, yesterday in a final bid to negotiate meaningful changes that would provide security and sustainability for practices and patients in England. However, Mr Barclay refused to come forth with any improved offer.*

*We approached the meeting in a spirit of collaboration hopeful that the Secretary of State would listen to our evidence and logic and be willing to take meaningful action to support practices and their patients when they need it most. We were therefore dismayed at his refusal to offer anything more than NHS England's insulting offer last month.*

*It is particularly frustrating that the Government has insisted on sticking to the financial uplifts set out in the '5 year framework' agreed in 2019 (allowing for a 2.1% pay uplift for all GPs, practice staff and practice expenses) despite the extreme change in economic circumstances that has seen a massive inflationary spike over the last 12 months, and significant increases in workload since the pandemic.*

*Whilst we have secured some welcome changes in the contract, including a reduction in IIF indicators we are disappointed in the inability of NHS England or the Government to adequately compromise on a number of ongoing issues that were raised during negotiations, including declaration of earnings, online access to records, or to allow a relaxation of QOF and IIF in order to allow practices to focus upon core patient care.*

*The Committee is now assessing its options in terms of the impending imposition of a contract for 23/24, including potential future balloting and industrial action.*

*Read my statement about the meeting with the Secretary of State for Health [here](#).*

*Details and guidance will also be published on the BMA website shortly."*

### **3. 2023/24 GP contract update webinars**

Those wishing to attend one of the GP contract update webinars in March can now register via the [BMA website](#). The GPCE officers will deliver the same presentation at each webinar, meaning that attendees need only attend the event most convenient to them.

The planned dates and times are:

- Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> March, 19.00 – 20.30
- Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 12.30 – 14.00
- Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> March, 19.00 – 20.30
- Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> March, 12.30 – 14.00
- Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> March, 19.00 – 20.30

Register [here](#).

### **4. GP workload pressures and safe working guidance**

GP practices continue to experience significant and growing strain with declining GP numbers and rising demand, as shown yet again by the latest [GP workforce figures](#).

In January 2023, 88 GPs left the NHS and there are **2078** fewer fully qualified GPs than in 2015. At the same time, each GP now has 2283 patients to care for, which is 18% more than in 2015. It is no wonder patients are finding it difficult get appointments and years of neglect by this government has led to an NHS on its knees.

As Emma Runswick, Deputy Chair of BMA, [commented](#):

*"In General Practice, the issue isn't access. It's capacity. We have over 2000 fewer GPs than in 2015, and rising demand from people with multiple conditions and complex needs. Government needs to resource for retention as well as recruitment."*

If Government doesn't urgently get a grip on the crisis, the BMA predicts that we will see numbers fall even further. It is so important to retain the workforce and for practices to focus on their own wellbeing, whilst continuing to face these [overwhelming pressures in general practice](#).

We encourage practices to continue to review their working practices in reference to the BMA's [safe working guidance](#) to prioritise care to manage the finite workforce and resources available.

With GPs working under such great pressures the BMA is also there to [support your wellbeing](#). You can also [read about the BMA's work to improve the mental health of the profession](#), including new research and their wellbeing charter.

A range of wellbeing and support services are available to doctors, from the BMA's 24/7 confidential [counselling and peer support services](#) to networking groups and wellbeing hubs with peers, as well as the [NHS practitioner health service](#) and non-medical support services such as [Samaritans](#).

The organisation [Doctors in Distress](#) also provides mental health support for health workers in the UK, providing confidential peer support group sessions.

See the BMA [poster with 10 tips to help maintain and support the wellbeing](#) of you and your colleagues.

Please visit the BMA's dedicated [wellbeing support services page](#) for further information and resources.

NHS England is running a series of facilitated peer wellbeing sessions for the primary care workforce. Each peer wellbeing group will be made up of six-eight people that will meet fortnightly for four weeks. [Register your interest here by Friday 10<sup>th</sup> March](#).

*The BMA will also be producing some further resources on practice workload and wellbeing in time for Stress Awareness month in April.*

## **5. Junior doctors' strike action - guidance for GP trainees and GP practices**

[Junior doctors \(including GP trainees\)](#) will be taking *industrial action* from the 13<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> March. With this in mind, the BMA has published comprehensive guidance for GP practices across England which you can now read [here](#). The guidance covers everything from managing the impact of strike action on practice work to GP trainee rotas and information on how GP practices can support GP trainees financially. The BMA encourages practices to familiarise yourself with all guidance before the strike days.

98% of junior doctors voted in favour of strike action and more junior doctors voted than ever before. The BMA believes that this gives them a huge mandate, and puts the government under intense pressure, and that this is a step in the right direction for full pay restoration not just for junior doctors, but the whole profession.

The LMC England Conference also passed a motion in November 2022, offering public support to all junior doctors, including GP trainees, in their pursuit for pay restoration to 2008 levels. This support was further demonstrated by GPC England, where a motion was passed with no votes against, offering support to all junior doctors, particularly GP trainees, in their pursuit for full pay restoration.

The BMA has also produced a poster you may want to display in your practice, a patient information leaflet, and an infographic that can be used on your website, which can be [ordered online](#).

You can download further guidance for practices, such as impact on GP trainees rotas, running of GP practices and how to support GP trainees during the strike on the [BMA website](#).

## 6. GP trainee visas

The BMA has written to the immigration minister regarding their ongoing concerns over barriers facing GP trainees to staying and working in the UK on completing their training. The letter followed the Minister's [commitment](#) to ensuring officials in the Home Office are working with the DHSC and the BMA to consider umbrella sponsorship as a solution to the problem – something the BMA has repeatedly called for to help create a welcoming environment that ensures the UK attracts and retains talented doctors to help address the shrinking medical workforce in general practice. Stressing the importance of measures being in place to facilitate smooth transition into full time employment ahead of the next cohort of GP trainees completing their training, the letter calls on the Minister to consider a six-month grace period as a temporary measure whilst conversations on an umbrella route continue. A grace period would help alleviate some of the stress and anxiety felt by GP trainees coming to the end of their training by providing them with a six-month window to find a GP practice to employ them.

## 7. Cameron Fund – vacancy on the Council of Management

The Cameron Fund's AGM is being held on the 4<sup>th</sup> May 2023 and there will be a vacancy for a member of the Council of Management who jointly represents Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex, as Dr Oliver Starr will be retiring and is not seeking re-election.

To stand for Council GPs must be registered members of the Cameron Fund. However membership is a simple process and if you know of a suitable candidate then the Cameron Fund can send them the membership forms.

If you are interested or know of anyone, please ask them to contact the Cameron Fund Chief Executive, Jill Rowlinson at [jill.rowlinson@cameronfund.org.uk](mailto:jill.rowlinson@cameronfund.org.uk) or Dr Sarah Rann at [sarah.rann@cameronfund.org.uk](mailto:sarah.rann@cameronfund.org.uk) or Gary Calver at [gary.calver@cameronfund.org.uk](mailto:gary.calver@cameronfund.org.uk), for further details on what is involved and how to apply.

For more information of the Cameron Fund visit their [website](#).

**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](mailto:lmcadmin@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](#).

### Contact Us:

Beds & Herts LMC Ltd,  
Tel: 01438 880010  
Email: [lmcadmin@bhlmc.co.uk](mailto:lmcadmin@bhlmc.co.uk)  
Website: [www.bedshertslmcs.org.uk/contact\\_us](http://www.bedshertslmcs.org.uk/contact_us)

