



Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire LMC Ltd: Update for Practices, Monday 20th March 2023

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1. **Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire LMC levy payments for 2023 – 2024**

Further to our AGM article in our update back on the 19th July 2022, this is just to remind practices that the Statutory levy will increase to 46p per registered patient from the 1st April 2023 to the 31st March 2024; an increase of 1p.

GPDPF has not increased the Voluntary levy, so it remains at 3p per registered patient for 2023-2024.

This is just for information - you do not have to do anything, PCSE/ICB will make the appropriate deductions.

2. **2023/2024 Contract Negotiations**

Contract negotiations between GPCE and the Government have ceased. As such the GPC and BMA have concluded that they cannot support the contract as it is and are now considering exploring options for alternative actions to push the Government back to the negotiating table for meaningful talks. LMCs across the country will have a vital role if this is to succeed. Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire LMC have already commenced several streams of work to this end.

Last week we held a combined meeting and workshop of both Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire LMCs, where we discussed the potential changes in the new contract (the full details of the contract have still not been released) and discussed the potential for alternative or industrial action. The meeting also helped to identify and provide clarity in areas of safe working, based on the BMA's safe working guidance and our local experiences.

We shall continue to work with our LMC committees over the next few weeks to use the outputs from the workshop to help inform a series of LMC roadshows, to which all GPs/Practices will be invited, which will be facilitated across both counties over the next few months. The topics of discussion will include contract negotiations; future actions; and safer working for Practices. We'll keep you informed on dates and venues.

In the meantime, GPC England are also providing a series of [GPCE contract webinars](#) which we would encourage you to attend. The GPC have also produced a short [contract-response video](#) on social media. You can read more about the 2023/24 GP contract changes on the [BMA website](#) and the about the options being considered in the [Doctor magazine](#).

At the time of writing, we would also confirm that GPCE and indeed our own ICBs have confirmed that they have not seen the detail other than the letter published on the 6th March which is attached [here](#).

3. Lifetime allowance scrapped

At the budget announcement earlier this week, the Government has finally taken meaningful steps to address the impact of punitive pensions taxes by scrapping the lifetime allowance that means doctors will no longer be forced to retire early because of pension tax.

The additional rise in the annual allowance to £60,000 will mean that far fewer doctors will face large, unexpected tax bills and will significantly reduce the perverse incentive to reduce hours.

This is a significant win for the BMA and the BMA's pension committee has campaigned extensively for the Government to provide a fix to the pension crisis that has left a significant number of doctors with no option but to retire early or reduce their hours. This will help us to retain our most senior doctors who have a pivotal role to play not only in providing care for patients but in teaching and mentoring our junior colleagues.

However, it doesn't address all the issues and the BMA say they will be continuing to support those doctors who continue to be impacted by big pension tax bills, including those affected by the tapered annual allowance, and will aim to work with the Government to find appropriate solutions to address this.

Read the press statement [here](#).

4. General Practice Pay Transparency Guidance

NHSE has recently published updated guidance in respect of pay transparency for practices and GPs to follow, which can be found [here](#).

The BMA have already published [an update and statement](#) last week that provides a very good summary.

GPC have commented as follows: *This is the latest guidance, updated yesterday. The most pertinent parts are in the final paragraph.*

GPCE and LMCs obviously cannot direct practices and GP to not comply with these regulations as that would constitute Industrial Action.

5. Junior doctors' and GP trainees strike action

[Junior doctors \(including GP trainees\) took industrial action](#) this week and we'd like to thank practices for their solidarity with GP trainees and junior doctors. 98% of junior doctors voted in favour of strike action which gave us a huge mandate and puts the government under intense pressure. This is a step in the right direction for full pay restoration not just for junior doctors, but the whole profession. GP trainees have the full support of general practice and the wider profession during the strike action.

Watch David Wrigley, GPC England Deputy Chair, and Dave Smith, Chair of the GP Trainees Committee, explain more in this [video](#). See more on the strike action [on GP trainees twitter](#).

Ahead of the strikes the BMA published [guidance](#) for practices on how to manage the impact of strikes.

6. Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Bill – Protect the right to strike

The Government is pushing through anti-strike legislation that could undermine workers' ability to take strike action. The proposals would mean government could set "minimum service" levels for health workers during strike periods. Employers would then be able to issue work notices naming workers required to work to make up these minimum service level on strike days. The BMA is calling on the Lords to block Government's attempts to curtail legitimate strike action and to ensure there is safe staffing across the NHS every day of the year. [Take action and write to a peer today](#).

7. Workforce returns – please report all hours that GPs work

Following some exploratory work within GPC England it has become evident that the workforce returns that each practice submits may no longer be accurate given the increased work GPs have been doing since the pandemic. We would like to remind practices to ensure their submitted workforce returns accurately match the work being done by partners and salaried doctors. It helps GPCE in negotiations to be able to evidence that GPs are working longer hours to provide the care their patients need.

Returns for each GP are filed in hours per week and should reflect the work being done each week, during a normal week when not on leave. It is important that returns reflect the actual hours worked, not an estimate based on nominal sessions planned.

Returns will usually be completed by practice managers and can be filed [here](#). There are two boxes where hours worked per week can be entered. One shows contracted hours and one shows actual hours. For salaried GPs, only the contracted hours box is used in the returns. For contractors and zero-hours GPs, only the actual hours box is used in the returns. If the same numbers are put in both boxes, it will ensure the hours are correctly captured.

You should factor in all work done over the course of a week in providing NHS services, including time spent doing CPD (including any done at home).

It is worth remembering that the salaried model contract references four hours per week of CPD on an annualised basis and that this therefore is to be considered working time. If a salaried GP has an annualised CPD allowance included in their contract, the equivalent hours per week should be added to the reported hours for the return.

If salaried GP's contracted hours happen to be fewer than the hours actually worked, then aside from a conversation about how the contract might be updated to reflect this work, recording the actual hours worked will be beneficial to the profession in showing to government exactly how much work we are doing.

Once processed, the returns are published monthly on [NHS Digital website](#). One full time equivalent doctor is associated with 37.5 hours of work per week. The next collection is at the end of the March, and it would be helpful if returns could be checked prior to next month's publication.

8. New to Partnership Scheme (N2PP)

The N2PP scheme was introduced in July 2020 for an anticipated two years. In December 2021, NHS England extended the scheme into 2023. GPs and other clinical staff intending to apply for the

scheme need to have entered into an equity partnership by the 31st March 2023 to be able to submit an application by the 30th June 2023. Find out more about the application process [online](#) or email england.newtopartnershipenquiries@nhs.net

9. Wellbeing

As we continue to face overwhelming pressures in general practice, we encourage practices to focus on their own team's wellbeing.

A range of wellbeing and support services are available to doctors, from our 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 our [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.

We would also like to remind all GPs of the LMCs pastoral service. Please do call the office if you feel you would benefit from a confidential one-to-one conversation with our team on 01438 880010.

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](#).

Contact Us:

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