



Beds & Herts LMC Ltd: Update for Practices, Monday 12th June 2023

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1. Beds & Herts LMC Evening Roadshows

Please come along and meet the team and receive some practical information on the principles of Safe Working in General Practice: what you can do, what you can't do and what others are doing. We will also have an update on the new imposed GP Contract, and in particular what it says about access, and are pleased to confirm Dr Clare Bannon, Deputy Chair of GPC England is able to attend on the 21st June.

These free events are open to all GPs and Practice Managers in Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire. We will be putting on a light buffet at each of the Roadshows, so if you are coming straight from surgery, refreshments will be available! Please see the below dates and venues:

- **Wednesday 21st June 2023, 7 – 9:30pm** – Kings House, 245 Ampthill Road, Bedford, MK42 9AZ
- **Wednesday 28th June 2023, 7 – 9:30pm** – Focolare Centre, 69 Parkway, Welwyn Garden City, AL8 6JG

To book your free place, please [click here!](#)

2. BMA secures significant reduction in NHSPS service charge claims for practices

The BMA have successfully assisted five GP practices in significantly reducing years of unsubstantiated service charge claims demanded by NHS Property Services (NHSPS) – with one practice seeing NHSPS' claim against them reduced by more than £400,000, a reduction of more than 80%.

The landmark cases, brought in 2020, were started after practices began to struggle to afford soaring service charges set by NHSPS, despite there being no prior agreement or explanation for the price hike.

BMA lawyers challenged NHSPS on two issues: the legal basis on which the charges were being imposed, and the magnitude of the fees.

During the first phase of the case, the BMA and the practices sought a legal declaration that NHSPS could not rely on its Consolidated Charging Policy as a basis for issuing the new charges, and that the imposition of the higher charges was, therefore, unlawful.

Despite the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic and the extraordinary pressure this placed GPs under, NHSPS launched a countersuit against each of the practices demanding recovery of the historical service charges, transforming the dispute into a major commercial lawsuit.

In June 2020, NHSPS admitted that its charging policy had not been incorporated into or retrospectively varied the practices' legal terms of occupation and existing service charge obligations. The BMA then assisted the five practices in settling with NHSPS the fees and service charges sums outside of court, for the period between 2013/14 and 2019/20, securing reductions on the amounts claimed by NHSPS for the five practices ranging from £25,000 to more than £400,000, a total reduction of more than £750,000.

The BMA has created [guidance](#) for practices in a similar position, to help advise them on what to do if they are also facing disproportionate service charges.

Read the full statement and comment by Gaurav Gupta, GPC premises lead at the BMA, [here](#).

3. Accelerated Access to Records guidance

Following the imposition of the GP contract, practices will be expected to provide automatic prospective record access to all patients from the 31st October 2023. BMA/GPC have prepared [guidance](#) outlining steps practices should take ahead of the planned switch on.

4. Parliamentary activity

BMA/GPC have written to the Primary Care Minister, Neil O'Brien, to highlight the motions passed at the [LMC UK conference](#) regarding increased costs of running practices, and pay restoration for practice funding, and the Minister has agreed to meet to discuss these issues. BMA/GPC have also written to the Chancellor, Jeremy Hunt, asking for him to work with DHSC to deliver a package of support to meet increased practice costs, particularly those linked to inflation.

In addition, GPCE and the sessional GPs committee have written to Sir Keir Starmer to outline their key concerns and priorities for the future of general practice following the recent [NHS plan](#), and offered a roundtable with him and his team to discuss Labour party policy in this area.

GPCE and the sessional GPs committee have also met with a special advisor to the Shadow Health Secretary to discuss the future of general practice. Following the meeting, they were encouraged to see Shadow Health Secretary Karin Smyth [raise concerns](#) regarding spiralling costs to practices during health questions in the House of Commons.

5. Junior doctors' and GP trainees strike action

The [BMA/GPC has announced](#) further industrial action to be undertaken by [junior doctors \(including GP Trainees\)](#) in England, after Government failed to make a credible pay offer. A 72-hour walkout will take place between 0700 on Wednesday 14th June and 0700 on Saturday 17th June.

GPC England supports all junior doctors, including GP trainees, in their pursuit for pay restoration to 2008 levels, and urge practices in standing with GP trainees in their fight for fair pay.

They have published [comprehensive guidance for GP practices](#), trainers and LMCs which 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](#).

BMA posters which can be displayed in practices, a patient information leaflet, and an infographic that can be used on your website can be [ordered or downloaded here](#). The BMA has also published [guidance on the strike action for GP trainees](#).

6. COVID therapeutics

As you may be aware, CMDUs (Covid Medicines Delivery Units) are ceasing from the 27th June. NHS England has written to ICBs to ensure provision of Covid therapeutics is commissioned. BMA/GPC have produced guidance for GPs about this and a letter for LMCs to send to ICBs. Practices should have a clear pathway to refer/signpost patients to continue access to COVID therapeutics for vulnerable patients.

This cohort of patients will have been contacted and may call practices about how to access their locally commissioned service (other services can also refer/signpost directly such as 111). BMA/GPC guidance will be available shortly [here](#).

7. BMA member briefing on the GP delivery plan

Following the [member briefing](#) on the NHS England and DHSC [Delivery plan for recovering access to primary care](#) from the BMA/GPC, as featured in our last newsletter, they have now published [template letters](#) to support practices and LMCs to engage with their local Integrated Care Boards (ICBs).

Last week we wrote a joint letter from Beds & Herts LMC and Essex LMCs to H&WE ICB, asking them to clarify how they are going to implement the primary secondary care interface elements of the plan. We are planning to send a similar letter to BLMK ICB this week, in conjunction with BBO LMC.

8. LMC UK Conference 2023

The [2023 UK LMC Conference](#) took place on the 18th & 19th May, chaired by Katie Bramall-Stainer and opened by Andrew Buist and Alan Stout, GPC UK co-chairs. The motions, debates and speeches throughout conference highlighted the UK wide crisis in general practice, and the need for further changes.

The [resolutions and election results](#) have now been published, and a recorded webcast of the event can be found [here](#).

9. Sessional GP Week 2023

[‘Sessional GP Week’](#) is taking place from the 12th – 16th June. This will be a week-long celebration highlighting the value of sessional GPs and promoting sessional GP work as a positive, diverse and enriching career choice. The focus for the week is ‘respect, reward, retain’.

Resources will be shared by BMA/GPC throughout the week, with a different theme each day. Visit the [sessional GPs Committee page](#) to find out more about what the sessional GP committee is doing and how they are supporting and promoting sessional GP work.

10. Sessional GPs Conference – save the date

The Sessional GP Committee will be hosting a conference for members and non-members across the UK on Friday 22nd September, at BMA House, 10am – 5pm. It will consist of plenary sessions, CPD type breakout groups and a platform to hear from grassroots members.

A final programme will be circulated with the registration link in due course. A poster for practices is [available here](#). Email confunit@bma.org.uk to register interest.

11. NHS.net email for locums

BMA/GPC have had confirmation that the licences for Microsoft Apps for Enterprise for those in the locum container of NHSmail will continue to be provisioned for the next financial year following work by NHS England. These licences are required to use desktop versions of Office 365 (e.g. Microsoft Word) which can link into clinical systems for the creation of referral forms. The Sessional GPs Committee repeatedly raised the necessity of such access when issues first came to light in January 2021 after parts of the country moved to Office 365 and continues to make the case for ongoing access.

For more tips on the use of the locum container, see the blog by Mark Coley, GPC England IT lead, [here](#).

12. Our Future Health research programme

[Our Future Health](#) is a new research programme designed to help people live healthier lives for longer, through the discovery and testing of more effective approaches to prevention, earlier detection and treatment of diseases. The aim is to collect and link multiple sources of health and health-relevant information, including genetic data, across a cohort of up to 5 million people that truly reflects the UK population.

Volunteers will give consent to join the research programme and provide secure access to their health records, complete a questionnaire, have a blood sample taken, and physical measurements. They will also be offered information about their own health, including BP and cholesterol levels. The programme aims to minimise workload for GPs advising patients not to contact practices except in limited circumstances.

Our Future Health has held some webinars for GP practices and the webinar slides, recording and other documents are available [here](#).

Email engage@ourfuturehealth.org.uk for further information.

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.

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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