



Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire LMC Ltd: Update for Practices, Monday 04th September 2023

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1. COVID vaccination programme update

NHS England has [announced new changes to the previously published winter covid vaccination guidance](#), as part of an 'accelerated programme'. Following the earlier notification of a reduction to covid fee payments, there will now be time limited 'accelerated payments' offered to bring forward the covid vaccination programme to the 11th September for completion by the end of October (this relates to the enhanced fees and vaccination can continue after the 31st October, but at the reduced IoS fee of £7.54). NHSE guidance states:

*'Vaccine providers will receive an additional payment of £10 (in addition to the Item of Service (IoS) fee) for each COVID-19 vaccination administered to care home residents between **Monday 11th September and Sunday 22nd October 2023 inclusive**; and a separate one-off additional payment of £200 for each Completed Care Home by the end of the day on Sunday 22 October.*

*For other eligible groups, vaccine providers will receive an additional £5 acceleration payment (in addition to the IoS fee) will be made available for each COVID-19 vaccination administered to eligible people between the **11th September and 31st October 2023**'.*

Please note, the £10 additional payment for housebound patients that was included in the original vaccine specification still applies, however there is no £5 acceleration uplift payment for housebound.

In line with previous [BMA guidance](#), we continue to advise practices to consider and assure themselves of the financial viability of participating in the COVID vaccination programme under these shortened time frames.

Practices will now have until 5pm on the 04th September if they do wish to sign up for the programme.

You can read a response from Dr Samira Anane, Deputy Chair of GPC England here: [statement](#)

2. Accelerated Access to Records Programme update

Following the imposition of the 2023/24 GMS contract, the Accelerated Access to Records Programme is currently scheduled to go live for all patients on the 01st November 2023. From that date, patients in England will be given prospective access to information entered into their GP record.

However, we and GPC England believe there are patient safety and information governance concerns that remain outstanding, which need to be addressed. For this programme to be successful and fulfil its potential we believe it should not be rolled out in a 'big bang' style on the 01st November. Practices need to be given the appropriate time and resources to safely plan this in each practice across England, and we continue to press for this as well as further modifications.

Rollout dates

We are aware that EMIS have shared training dates to facilitate their 'bulk upload' and they are encouraging EMIS practices to use the new functionality which has been paid for by NHS England. Earlier this year, many practices wrote to system suppliers to turn this functionality off.

GPCE have said they will publish comprehensive advice and guidance for all practices and will continue to set out concerns and solutions to Government ministers, and will also be engaging with EMIS and TPP to ascertain how they can best support GPs with respect to bulk uploads in the lead up to and after the proposed switch on date.

We would therefore reassure practices that they have time to consider matters, and contractors do not need to make any quick decisions before further guidance has been published.

3. GP Pressures

GP practices in England are experiencing significant and growing strain with declining GP numbers, rising demand, struggles to recruit and retain staff and knock-on effects for patients.

The latest [GP workforce data](#) showed that the number of fully qualified GPs has dropped since September 2015. In July 2023, the NHS in England had the equivalent of 27,177 fully qualified full-time GPs, which is 2,187 *fewer* than in September 2015.

The longer-term trend shows that the NHS is losing GPs at an alarming rate: over the past year (between July 2022 and July 2023) it lost the equivalent of 330 fully qualified full-time GPs and the equivalent of 358 full-time partners. This means that, on average, the NHS lost 28 fully qualified FTE GPs per month over the past year.

The number of GP practices in England has decreased by 102 over the past year – reflecting a long-term trend of closures as well as mergers primarily due to a lack of workforce. This coincides with a rise in patients. As of July 2023, there was another average of 9,834 patients registered per practice, and as a result, the average number of patients each full-time equivalent GP is responsible for continues to rise, and now stands at 2,305. This is an increase of 367 patients per GP, or 19%, since 2015, demonstrating the ever-mounting workload in general practice. Read more about the pressures in general practice [here](#).

4. Wes Streeting proposal to pay GPs more to allow patients to see the doctor of their choice

Responding to shadow health secretary [Wes Streeting's proposal](#) to pay GPs more to allow patients to see the doctor of their choice, Dr Katie Bramall-Stainer, chair of GPC England, [said](#):

“Mr Streeting was correct to say fewer patients were now able to see a doctor of their choice, but argued it was vital to see this in the context of 2,200 full-time GP posts being lost since 2015.

Combine this workforce exodus where GPs at breaking point are retraining, taking on other roles or leaving entirely with millions of patients on NHS waiting lists and we have the perfect storm.

Every GP strives to deliver the best care to our patients in the most appropriate way we can based on patient choice, but the reality of the chronic workforce shortage makes this an impossible ask against the backdrop of increasing demand from a growing – and ageing – population.”

Every day over a million appointments are delivered across England, way more than even before the Pandemic – with less staff. GPs regularly see more patients than the BMA’s [safe working guidance](#) recommends. And yet, we still cannot keep pace with demand.

We encourage practices to continue to use the BMA’s [safe working guidance](#) to limit contacts to 25 per day in order to prioritise safe patient care, within the present bounds of the GMS contract.

5. Junior doctor re-ballot results

The results of the junior doctor re-ballot are now in and note that their mandate for strike action has been extended for a further six months. Now with this renewed mandate, junior doctors, including GP trainees, and consultants will take joint action for the first time. The key dates are the 19th – 22nd September and the 02nd – 04th October and you can find full details on the BMA [website](#).

We await to hear from our local ICBs or NHSE as to what, if any, support is going to be put in place over this period to stop general practice becoming overwhelmed, especially given that last week NHSE brought forward the covid vaccination campaign, potentially shifting resources away from core general practice.

6. Preparing for balloting on industrial action

In April, GPC England voted to prepare to ballot GPs on industrial action if the Government does not agree to improve the contract drastically in forthcoming negotiations.

If you are a BMA member, make sure the details they hold for you are up to date to ensure your vote counts. Update your member details on www.bma.org.uk/my-bma or [join as a member](#) today.

7. Wellbeing resources

As we continue to face overwhelming pressures in general practice, we encourage practices to continue to focus on their own team’s wellbeing and take time to meet to reflect on their wellbeing and what they can do to protect it. This will meet the requirements of the QOF targets in the GP contract to do your [quality improvement project on staff wellbeing](#). The BMA has produced a [document](#) which includes some tangible recommendations and tools for improving workload and safe working.

A range of wellbeing and support services are available to doctors, from the BMA’s 24/7 [counselling and peer support services](#), [NHS practitioner health service](#) and [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 wellbeing](#).

Please visit the BMA’s [wellbeing support services page](#) for more information and resources.

Please also remember that our pastoral support team is only a phone call away to provide confidential support for both personal and professional difficulties. To access the team please ring **01438 880010** and if you believe a colleague may be suffering, please remind them of the service too (click [here](#) for more information on the service).

8. Beds & Herts LMC Ltd Annual General Meeting – Wednesday 20th September 2023

We are pleased to announce that the Beds & Herts LMC Limited AGM will be held on Wednesday 20th September 2023 at Putteridge Bury Conference Centre, Hitchin Road, Beds, LU2 8LE at **2pm**.

Alongside taking care of the constitutional elements of the business, such as agreeing the accounts, auditors, budget and any amendments to levies, there will then be an opportunity hear about the key priority areas of work the LMC has been doing over the last year, such as:-

- The Future of the Partnership Model – work we have *done to identify the strengths of the Partnership Model and how it can continue in the future*;
- Goldilocks & the Three Partnerships Paper & the Partnership Change Project – *Primary Research analysis to identify key characteristics and considerations for joining, changing or leaving Partnerships*;
- Business Fundamentals Programme – *The LMC’s modular training course for aspiring/new partners including the 8 key competencies for partners*;
- The LMC’s Partner Competency Based Self-Assessment Tool – *The LMC’s newly developed tool for existing partners (and partnerships) to be able to assess themselves against the 8 key competencies for partners*;
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) review – *The LMC’s programme to monitor if our Committees are properly reflective of our membership, and then to help us centre EDI considerations in everything we do*;
- Statistical analysis of data to support General Practice – *There is now a lot of national data published about what is happening in practices. Here are some insights into what the national data actually says and how it doesn’t necessarily support the line that ICBs and the NHS want to tell you.*

All GPs and Practice Managers in Beds & Herts are welcome to attend the meeting as observers, and we would be grateful if you could indicate whether you are able to join by [clicking here to register](#), no later than the 08th September, so that we can send the agenda and papers in due course and are aware of numbers.

We look forward to seeing you on the 20th September at 2pm!

9. Primary Care Level 3 Safeguarding Children Webinar – Genital Injuries and Lesions in children

Herts Only

Please join this MS Teams webinar where Dr Olive Hayes will provide Primary Care professionals with an overview of the management of Genital injuries and lesions in children.

The aim of the course is:

- For practitioners to know where to access the appropriate pathway;
- For practitioners to feel confident using the Hertfordshire pathway;
- To encourage discussion in team meetings and peer reviews.

When: Tuesday 26th September 2023

Time: 1 – 2pm

How to join: via MS Teams (link included in the attached flyer)

For more information and joining instructions, please see the [attached flyer](#).

10. Succession/retirement planning webinar: What to do with your premises?

For practices in Beds & Herts, organised and hosted by BW Healthcare Surveyors.

Date: Thursday 28th September 2023

Time: 12:30 – 1:30pm

Format: FREE webinar via MS Teams - to register for the event please [click here](#) (registration data will be held by BW Healthcare Surveyors):

[BW Healthcare Surveyors](#) help and support to GP Practices and Primary Care organisations in the UK with all premises related matters including: notional rent assessments and challenges | market valuations for partnership changes and acquisitions | lease rent reviews, renewals and re-gears | general lease advisory | pharmacy rent reviews and implants | sale and lease back transactions | developments and improvements.

Have you ever considered whether a sale and leaseback transaction would resolve your succession planning issues? Or if putting a lease in place between the retired GPs and the existing partnership would be a better option?

This webinar will explore the main premises options to consider when beginning GP practice succession and retirement planning; how to avoid common costly pitfalls and how a robust succession plan can even help alleviate partnership recruitment problems. When you consider a significant proportion of GP Partners are within five years of the average retirement age of 58, putting a succession plan in place has never been so important. There will also be an opportunity for Q&A.

For all other webinar enquiries, please email will.ellis@bwhsurveyors.co.uk.

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:

Beds & Herts LMC Ltd,

Tel: 01438 880010

Email: lmadmin@bhlmc.co.uk

Website: www.bedshertslmcs.org.uk/contact_us

