

Beds & Herts LMC Ltd: Update for Practices, Monday 18th September 2023



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1. COVID-19 vaccination programme

Following NHS England's recently announced [changes to the winter COVID vaccination guidance](#), we have received some clarification that practices only administering the influenza vaccination, can claim using their normal system and CQRS. FAQs on FutureNHS state:

"Following feedback from practices, the 2023/24 seasonal flu ES specification is being updated to amend the recording requirements for synergistically delivered flu vaccinations by PCN groupings (i.e., flu only clinics run by a PCN grouping). A PCN grouping's constituent practices will now be able to elect to record flu only vaccination events in either their GP IT clinical system or their PCN grouping's point of care (PoC) system.

The system to be used must be agreed and adopted by all practices in the PCN grouping to reduce the burden of post payment verification work to address any duplicate recordings and payments.

The position with regards to the following has not changed:

- PCN groupings that co-administer flu and Covid-19 vaccination must still record their flu (and Covid-19) vaccination events in a PoC system
- Individual practices must continue to use their GP IT system for practice delivered flu vaccinations or collaborations under an Influenza Collaboration Agreement."

2. Accelerated Access to Records Programme update

As practices will no doubt be aware, the contractual changes that come into force on the 01st November include the updated provision on patients access to records. While many of the concerns that caused the implementation of accelerated access to records to be delayed multiple times in the past still remain, we believe that it is unlikely that NHSE will further delay. Two weeks ago, the GPC wrote to parliamentary under-secretary of state for health and social care, Neil O'Brien MP, outlining the concerns expressed to them by GPs, and members of the GPC exec continue to meet with ministers and NHSE on this issue. GPC have committed to producing a guidance document for GPs, which we hope will be available in the coming weeks. They also plan to provide a substantive update which we will share with practices as soon as we receive it.

While we await further guidance from GPC, we would advise practices to continue to prepare for the go-live on the 01st November, rather than wait in hope of further delays. For EMIS practices, we are aware of a number of issues related to their “opt-in” process and the pressure being put on practices, which we have raised with the ICB, and have also been fed back nationally. We will continue to liaise with our ICBs on this issue so please contact the office if there are problems you want us to raise.

3. 2023/24 DDRB recommended pay rise for salaried practice staff

Although this pay rise was announced several months ago by the government, there is still no clarity on when the money will be made available to practices to be able to give this pay rise to practice staff. BMA/GPC is in discussion with the government and NHS about this pay rise and when it will be made available to practices. GPCE hopes that they will conclude negotiations this month and that the money will be available to practices in October – **but this is not yet guaranteed as the timing.**

It is relatively easy to work out what a 6% pay rise will look like for secondary care, where the NHS has access to all the relevant workforce data and salary costs. It is more difficult to work out what a 6% pay rise looks like across general practice, where the staff numbers and salary rates will vary between practices, and where there is no requirement for practices, as independent contractors, to input their staffing costs into any central NHS database. We suspect that the government had not taken account of the complexities of the calculations for general practice when they made their initial announcement and that this is why there has not yet been an announcement on when the money for the 6% pay rise will be made available to general practice.

We have been told that the 6% pay rise will be for all salaried practice staff and that it will be backdated to the 01st April.

Advice for pay rises for Salaried GPs: The model contract under which salaried GPs are employed does give salaried GPs a contractual right to an uplift “in accordance with the Government’s decision on the pay of general practitioners” and sets an annual date for this to happen. The model contract does not make reference to the practice delaying any such pay increase until it has received the funding for it. If a salaried GP wants to insist on the rights in their contract then a practice would have to consider if it could afford to make the increased payments to the salaried GP now or if it would want to ask the salaried GP to continue to wait until the funding for the pay rise has been received by the practice, in line with the position of other practice staff.

Advice for pay rises for other salaried practice staff: Non salaried GP staff do not normally have a reference to DDRB pay recommendations in their contracts, so the situation is slightly different. Our advice to practices continues to be that you should explain to practice staff that the funding has not yet been released by NHSE and reassure them that the pay rises will be forthcoming when the funding has been received.

4. Eco Flex Forms

GPs may be asked to complete an ECO4 Flex form when a local authority has referred a patient that it considers to be living in fuel poverty or on a low income and vulnerable to the effects of living in a cold home. The form asks the GP to consider the patient’s medical health conditions and then recommend one of two routes: households identified as vulnerable to the cold or an individual suffering from severe or long-term ill health.

Members are advised that this work is not covered within their core GMS contract and that completing the form will require GPs to undertake a proper review of the patient’s notes. As such

they are entitled to charge for the work, as it is not a prescribed form under Schedule 2 of the GMS regulations.

5. Completing DVLA medical forms

Colleagues should note that completing DVLA medical forms is not within the scope of the CNSGP medical negligence scheme in relation to any complaints or concerns that may arise from this work. This is private work, for which a fee is chargeable, and colleagues should check with their indemnity organisation that they are covered separately for this work under their own or a practice-based policy.

6. NHS England GP Access campaign

NHS England is launching a public-facing GP access awareness campaign in response to rising appointment numbers, falling GP numbers and falling satisfaction with GP access in the context of initial contact with a GP to book an appointment.

The programme is part of the wider NHSE campaign ‘Help us to help you’ which focuses on raising public awareness of how the NHS system operates. This covers issues such as prevention, spotting cancer symptoms, access to GPs and links to the GP recovery plan emphasising helping patients to understand how the system works to support them. The main aims of this aspect of the campaign are effective care navigation and awareness of GP multidisciplinary teams. This will be communicated through paid-for media editorials and wider social media activity.

7. Re-build General Practice Campaign

After a collaborative and insightful planning phase, Rebuild General Practice is ready to re-activate and take action to defend the profession.

On the week of the 25th September, the campaign will re-engage its key stakeholders by launching a data-driven story in the media amplifying our core message: the only way to keep patients safe and protect the NHS is to rebuild general practice.

GPs are too often pitted against their patients and wider NHS colleagues. Rebuild GP seeks to counter this narrative by gathering perspectives from GPs, patients and other healthcare professionals showing that we all want the same thing – a fully functioning NHS supported by a thriving general practice system.

The campaign is gathering data that truly reflects the situation in general practice today, from workforce issues to the GP mental health crisis. To gain a robust dataset that will garner media interest, we need as many GPs as possible to [complete a short survey](#) – please share it widely with your constituent GPs.

8. Wellbeing resources

We continue to encourage practices 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 QOF [quality improvement project on staff wellbeing](#)). The BMA has produced a [document](#) which includes some tools for improving workload and safe working.

A range of wellbeing and support services are available to doctors, from the BMA's [counselling and peer support services](#), [NHS practitioner health service](#), [Samaritans](#) and [Doctors in Distress](#). See also BMA's [poster with 10 tips to help maintain and support wellbeing](#).

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).

9. BHLMC Business Fundamentals New to Practice Programme, Sept - Dec 2023

Starting this month – limited spaces available

Beds & Herts LMC Business Fundamentals is a modular introductory programme aimed at New to Practice and early career professionals who wish to gain some knowledge and understanding of the business essentials of general practice at operational and strategic levels. Six 'bite-size' modules are delivered online from September to December 2023.

Please see attached or visit [here](#) for more information.

The programme is kindly funded by the BLMK and Herts & West Essex ICB Training Hubs. You must therefore be new to general practice and working in Bedfordshire, Luton, Milton Keynes, Hertfordshire or West Essex. We encourage you to attend all modules.

Please register your interest via your local Training Hub:

- If you are working in Beds, Luton & Milton Keynes (BLMK), please complete the online form: [BLMK BiteSize Business Fundamentals September 2023 Booking Form \(office.com\)](#)
- If you are working in Herts & West Essex (HWE), please email: hwetraininghub@nhs.net

For enquiries about the programme, please contact events@bhlmc.co.uk

10. GP Pensions Update Webinar

GP Pensions Update Webinar hosted by Beds & Herts LMC Ltd, presented by Paul Gordon from Atomos. **The session is aimed at GPs** and is an update, not an introductory session on pensions.

Date: Tuesday 17th October 2023

Time: 7.00 - 8.15pm (**registration from 6.45pm**)

Format: Webinar via MS Teams

Agenda:

- 1995/2008/2015 Sections of the Scheme and their peripheral benefits
- McCloud Judgement, the implications, and timeframes applicable
- Annual Allowance, recent changes, the Tapered Allowance and issues caused, options available and the latest information as a result of the Age Discrimination Case
- Lifetime Allowance, the Budget 2023 will see the allowance abolished although there are still implications around the maximum lump sum
- 24-Hour Retirement / Partial Retirement – how, when and why including the updates for those with membership in the 1995 Section

Please register your FREE place [here](#).

11. RCGP Beds and Herts Faculty Annual General Practice Awards

Dr Peter Graves, Provost of the Beds & Herts Faculty of the RCGP, would like to invite all local GPs (RCGP members or not) as well as partners, friends and practice members to celebrate all that is exciting about working in General Practice and Primary Care.

Date: Wednesday 04th October 2023

Time: 7pm

Venue: Putteridge Bury Conference Centre, Hitchin Road, Luton, LU2 8LE

Please see the [attached invitation](#) for more information and how to book your place.

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](#).

Contact Us:

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