



Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire LMC Ltd: Update for Practices, Tuesday 19th December 2023

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1. A Christmas message from the LMC

Once again, the year has passed in the blink of an eye, and we find ourselves reflecting on another challenging time. While 2022 felt like a year of external change, with three Prime Ministers, three Health Secretaries, the passing of the Queen, and global unrest, many of the key events that dominated 2023 have felt far closer to home, such as the doctors strikes, the first full year of ICBs, and the struggles that our local practices have felt.

As we look to 2024, it is hard to see anything other than more change on the horizon. With the spectre of a general election looming, we will likely spend much of the next year listening to a myriad of politicians, experts and commentators selling their solution for “fixing general practice” and the wider NHS. It will therefore be easy to fall into the trap of spending much of the year in a state of perpetual frustration, feeling our blood pressure rising every time we see the news, glance at a post on X, or dare to log into Pulse. However, 99% of everything we hear will be nothing but noise, delivered by those who have only the faintest of ideas of how general practice actually works. Learning to ignore the noise and focus on what really matters (ourselves, our families and our patients) will likely be the best tactic for negotiating our way through the year ahead.

2024 will bring us to the end of the current five-year deal that governs the GMS contract and PCN DES. Due to the inevitable political changes, it is likely that we will only see minor variations to the current contract for 2024/25 and possibly 2025/26, with more significant changes coming after. However, the end of the five-year deal will offer an opportunity for our national leaders to negotiate for much needed improvements in the current deal and start a dialogue as to what GPs want the future to look like. Conversations that take place in 2024 may well shape what general practice looks like for the next decade, and so it will be more important than ever to lend your voice to the debate, both locally and nationally, to help define what GPs want for the future.

We would like to thank the staff at the LMC for all their hard work and commitment in 2023, and a special thank you to Michael Sissens, who will sadly be leaving us at the end of the year. Thank you to the LMC board and our representatives for your ongoing support and guidance during another challenging year. Finally, thank you to everyone working in general practice. Practices have delivered more to their patients in 2023 than ever before, and that has only been possible because of the commitment and sacrifice of those working on the front lines or behind the scenes, delivering care to their patients.

As always, we hope that you will be able to get some well-earned rest over the festive period, to spend time with your loved ones, and reflect on all that you have achieved during the previous 12 months.

Please remember that our pastoral support team is only a phone call away to provide confidential support for both personal and professional difficulties. Over Christmas, our offices are open from the 27th December to 29th December – 9am to 5pm – and you can access the team by calling **01438 880010**.

If you need **urgent crisis support** outside of these hours, please contact Practitioner Health Crisis Support Text Service by texting NHSPH to 85258. This service is available 24/7 across the Christmas period.



Michael Harrison



Dr Nicky Williams

2. Have your say on the future of general practice

GPCI want to hear from all fully qualified GPs in England, including GP Registrars at ST3 and above, **whether you're a BMA member or not.**

GPCI says: 'We are at a pivotal point for the profession. We are all struggling with workload pressures and have inadequate resources to run our practices and deal with our patients. Over 7 million patients are now on waiting lists which were huge even before the pandemic hit us. That has a knock-on impact for our working day as patients seek our help as they wait longer and longer for treatment. The funding we receive in general practice is wholly inadequate at around 8% of the NHS budget. We need much more investment and will continue to push for this.'

We are currently engaged in discussions with NHSE and DHSC about our contractual changes for April 2024 and have our minds set on the bigger picture of what comes after that for the profession. With a General Election getting even closer we are meeting with opposition politicians to outline what we need in general practice to make our service fit for the future.

This is why we want to give you a voice. We have put together a profession wide survey which will inform the work ahead of us and tell us what you need as GPs for the coming years. Your views are vital and will be used to inform our work going forwards. You don't need to be a BMA member to complete the survey.'

PLEASE DISTRIBUTE THE LINK & COMPLETE THE SURVEY – [General Practice: Your Career – Your Future Survey \(research.net\)](#)

Share the survey via WhatsApp with ALL your GP colleagues: [Share on WhatsApp](#)

The survey will close on **Sunday 21st January 2024** but please complete it as soon as you can.

3. GP finance survey

With the 2024/25 negotiations ongoing, GPCE are asking all practice managers in England to complete the [GPC England's finance survey](#). The survey on the future of general practice is referenced above; this is the opportunity to demonstrate the increasing impact of inflation and rising costs on English GP practices over the past 12 months. It's vital for the GPC to hear about the challenges you face with practice finances and what is needed to help support the service provided.

You will need the practice's set of GP accounts for 2021/22 and 2022/23, as well as expenditure data for the months of October 2022 and October 2023 together with information on how many staff the practice employs. The [survey](#) should take 20 – 30 minutes to complete and **closes midnight, Wednesday 03rd January 2024**. Please send any other feedback to gpsurvey@bma.org.uk

4. Inclisiran

GPCE notes that there are still widespread concerns with the manner and speed with which [NHS England have attempted to push Inclisiran](#), which is a black triangle injectable drug. There are still a number of questions, raised by both GPCE and the RCGP, on which NHS England has yet to provide a satisfactory response, and this was set out in their [joint position statement](#) with the RCGP.

GPCE would like to remind practices that the prescription or administration of Inclisiran is not part of the GMS/PMS contract (although in negotiation with the LMC it may be commissioned via a LES). The onus lies with Commissioners to commission an appropriately funded service if they wish patients to have access to this drug, either within General Practice or via Specialist services. For instance, in BLMK Inclisiran is available to patients via the community lipid clinics.

5. Online access to records - data breaches from misfiling of records

GPCE continue to work on this topic and seek to make the whole project fit for purpose, having had numerous concerns about how this was imposed on the profession (which can be found [here](#)).

If you have any examples of potential or actual harm that has arisen from the accidental misfiling of data/letters in the wrong patient's record, or when information should have been withheld from online view in order to prevent harm but wasn't, and which has only come to light now more patients have access to their records, please pass on details to info.gpc@bma.org.uk.

6. MAPs to be regulated by the GMC - write to your MP

The [Government has announced](#) that physician associates and anaesthesia associates are to be regulated by the GMC. The BMA thinks that this will add further, dangerous confusion and want every MP to be aware of this issue, oppose the legislation and force the Government to abandon its plans. Please help by [using this BMA tool to email your MP](#). Read also the [statement](#) in response to the announcement by Prof Philip Banfield, BMA chair of council.

7. Afghan relocation programme - ICB funding

In a recent [communication](#), NHS England has reminded ICBs to work with local authorities to identify and support the healthcare needs of people relocating under the Afghan Relocation programmes. ICBs should use [the recommended health screen](#) for new arrivals and can [claim funding directly from the Home Office](#) for the first year of healthcare for those in settled accommodation.

8. Cameron Fund Christmas Appeal 2023

The [Cameron Fund](#) is the GPs' own charity and it is the only medical benevolent fund that solely supports GPs and their dependents. The fund relies on donations from members and Local Medical Committees. Read more about how to donate in the [Cameron Fund Christmas Appeal letter](#).

9. Wellbeing resources

The BMA continue to encourage practices to focus on their own team's wellbeing and take time to reflect on what can be done to protect it (this will also meet the requirements of QOF [quality improvement project on staff wellbeing](#)). They have produced a [document](#) which includes some tools for improving workload and safe working. A range of wellbeing and support services are also available to doctors, from the BMA's [counselling and peer support services](#), [NHS practitioner health service](#), [Samaritans](#) and [Doctors in Distress](#). See also the BMA [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).

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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