



## Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire LMC Ltd: Update for Practices, Monday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2024

### In this edition:

1. GPC England vote for GP contractors/partners ballot ahead of collective action
2. GPC England Officer Team face-to-face contract roadshows – June and July 2024
3. BMA GP Membership Refresh
4. GP contract guidance
5. Premises Costs Directions
6. Accelerated Access to GP-held patient records – update
7. Cloud based telephony
8. Changes to the benefits payment process
9. Herts & West Essex Enhanced Commissioning Framework (ECF)

### 1. GPC England vote for GP contractors/partners ballot ahead of collective action

We have received the following messages from GPC England to pass on to GPs:

#### If not now, when?

1. Take Action to Save General Practice.
2. Protect Your Practice, Protect Your Patients.
3. Vote Yes in the GP contractor / partner Ballot.

### Colleagues, it's time.

GPC England (GPCE) met last week and unanimously [voted to move to Phase ONE of Saving General Practice, with the announcement of a ballot for GP contractors / partners across England](#) next month, ahead of prospective action commencing on the **01<sup>st</sup> August**.

In March, 99.2% of nearly 20,000 GP BMA members voted 'No' to reject the 2024/25 GP Contract. Almost 75% of the votes cast were from GP contractors / partners, who have told us they are ready to take action and take it soon. The online ballot will outline a menu of actions which will not breach GP contracts. GP contractors / partners are the key decision makers: able to take small steps leading to a big impact to "Protect Practices and Protect Our Patients."

Following the vote at GPCE to proceed to a ballot ahead of action, we will be explaining what action we are asking GPs to take, why, and when, early next month to coincide with our roadshows (see below). We will also be sharing profession-facing resources and a public-facing campaign very soon.

GP contractors/partners will be asked to **vote YES** to send a message to Government.

### We are committed to fight for the future of General Practice.

We will reassure our patients that 'GPs Are On Your Side'.

Read the press statement [here](#). You will also find a video from GPCE Chair, Dr Katie Bramall-Stainer.

## The GP contractor / partner ballot

The ballot will open on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> June and close on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> July ahead of action commencing from Thursday 01<sup>st</sup> August.

Please login to [bma.org.uk](https://bma.org.uk) to make sure your personal details, job roles, place of work and best contact email are correct. If you experience any issues, please email [gpcontract@bma.org.uk](mailto:gpcontract@bma.org.uk) for support. Please look out for an email from Civica which will allow you to vote.

Your details **MUST** be up to date for your vote to count.

## 2. GPC England Officer Team face-to-face contract roadshows – June and July 2024

Across June and July, the GPC England Officer team – Dr Samira Anane, Dr David Wrigley, Dr Julius Parker and Dr Katie Bramall-Stainer will be undertaking over 20 events nationwide, hosted by regional LMCs. They will be presenting the GPC England manifesto and sharing the BMA GP Practice Survival Toolkit to Protect your Practice, Protect your Patients. These face-to-face events provide the perfect opportunity to hear about the menu of actions, understand the ballot, and give you an opportunity to ask us any questions. You can also take campaign resources and goodies back to your practice. These events are free and open to:

- All holders of a GP contract
- Every GP and GP Registrar
- Practice Managers and Practice Nurses

You do NOT need to be a BMA member to attend.

Please encourage your colleagues who are not members to register too.

Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire LMC will be hosting one of the ten events where we will be joined by Dr Katie Bramall-Stainer, Chair of GPCE and Dr Julius Parker, Deputy Chair GPCE who will talk about the recent referendum of BMA members and next steps on action.

**Date & time:** Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2024, 7pm – 8.30pm

**Venue:** Stevenage Football Club, 76 Lounge, Broadhall Way, Stevenage SG2 8RH (*teas, coffees & biscuits available on arrival from 6.45pm*)

The evening will be open and free to all GPs and Practice Managers across our region, but we may have to limit spaces per practice due to venue capacity if oversubscribed.

Please click [here](#) to register your attendance (*by Monday 03<sup>rd</sup> June*).

In order to get the most out of the evening and speakers, we would ask if you could submit any questions in advance (on the registration form), or to the office on [lmcadmin@bhlmc.co.uk](mailto:lmcadmin@bhlmc.co.uk)

***Please share with your colleagues!***

See the list of other roadshows across the country and details on how to register here: [GP contract roadshow events 2024 - Events - BMA](#)

### 3. BMA GP Membership Refresh

**It is vital that you keep your BMA membership details up to date so you can vote in the non-statutory ballot for all GP contractors / partners in England that has just been announced.**

Following the referendum BMA member services have refreshed the GP membership system.

To vote in the ballot, you will need to login to [www.bma.org.uk](http://www.bma.org.uk) to check your details are correct. *BMA must have the right information for your vote to count, so please double check. If you have any issues updating your details, email [gpcontract@bma.org.uk](mailto:gpcontract@bma.org.uk) for further assistance.* BMA will need:

- ✓ Your personal details, including a valid email address
- ✓ Place of work details for all your roles

BMA will need the right information for your vote to count. Please double check!

**In this first ballot, GP contractors / partner need to vote YES to send a message to Government that you are ready to stand up for a better service for your patients, and to protect your practices.**

Please check and update your details at: [BMA - Sign In](#)

If you are not a BMA GP member, you can join here: [www.bma.org.uk/join](http://www.bma.org.uk/join)

### 4. GP contract guidance

GPC England is currently preparing contractual guidance following the imposition on the 01<sup>st</sup> April and this should be available on the BMA website shortly. There is also a planned update of the [safe working guidance](#), which it is hoped will be completed by early June.

### 5. Premises Costs Directions

After almost a decade of pressure from the BMA, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) have published the long-anticipated update to the [Premises Costs Directions \(PCDs\)](#), which will bring changes to assist premises costs, including permission for commissioners to award improvement grants of up to 100% of the project value, (up from 66%), and new powers for commissioners to better support contractors.

These changes were initially agreed five years ago, as part of the multi-year GP contract in 2019. The full guidance will be published at a later date.

Responding to the announcement, Dr Gaurav Gupta, GPC England premises lead, said: "We're pleased to see positive steps to help GP premises owners, and any partners aspiring to buy into property-owning partnership in advancing their services to provide the best possible care for patients.

But we still have a very long way to go, with no additional funds going into ICB budget lines. The past decade has seen us caring for an additional eight million patients, with over a thousand practices lost, and record numbers of appointments. It's clear to patients and GPs alike that we must push Government and NHS England for significantly greater investment into General Practice premises."

Read the full statement [here](#).

## **6. Accelerated Access to GP-held patient records – update**

Following engagement with the ICO and NHSE, BMA maintains the position outlined by the Information Commissioner. While the direction to provide prospective record access to patients is legal, mitigations outlined by practices in DPIAs submitted to the ICO should also be implemented to ensure that processing is compliant with the requirement of the Data Protection Act.

Where practices are facing pressure from ICBs to move ahead with prospective access and have produced a DPIA, they should cite the ICOs response and continue in line with their DPIA.

If your practice is facing pressure from the ICB about prospective access, please do let the LMC know.

Read more [here](#).

## **7. Cloud based telephony**

Following changes that have mandated adoption of Cloud Based Telephony on NHSE's approved procurement framework GPC England has received extensive complaints from GPs being charged excessive costs for adopting new systems.

While GPCE remains in discussion with NHSE to seek a resolution, they have been advised that GPs can raise concerns directly with NHSE about additional costs they are experiencing using the following email [commercial.procurementhub@nhs.net](mailto:commercial.procurementhub@nhs.net).

Please do get in touch with the LMC with any concerns.

## **8. Changes to the benefits payment process**

The DWP and DHSC has published a [call for evidence](#) that will inform a programme of work announced at the autumn statement in 2023, to explore reforming the fit note process to support those with long term health conditions in accessing work and health support. The evidence will help to assess the impact of the current fit note process in aiding work and health conversations, and the exploration of enhancements that GPs and other health care professionals would require for the fit note to better support people to start and stay in work. GPCE will be submitting evidence.

## **9. Herts & West Essex Enhanced Commissioning Framework (ECF)**

### **\*For Herts Practices\***

Following the publication of the amended final version of the ECF Specification last week, we have noted some areas which we are seeking some clarification on from the ICB. These relate to the deadline dates for submissions, the application of the 2% uplift and the implementation of prevalence in final achievement calculations. Once we have had a response from the ICB we aim to produce some guidance to help practices in decision making around service provision.

**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](mailto: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:**

Beds & Herts LMC Ltd,

Tel: 01438 880010

Email: [lmcadmin@bhlmc.co.uk](mailto:lmcadmin@bhlmc.co.uk)

Website: [www.bedshertslmcs.org.uk/contact\\_us](http://www.bedshertslmcs.org.uk/contact_us)

