



17<sup>th</sup> August 2020

Dear Colleague

Please see below for your information our latest updates during the Covid-19 pandemic:

### Accelerating the recruitment of social prescribing link workers

Social prescribing link workers (SPLWs) have been an important part of the response to COVID-19, helping to support a wider group of people with mental health and social issues and contributing to reducing pressure on general practice. Therefore, NHS England and NHS Improvement **are funding a time-limited support offer to cover recruitment and induction costs for additional primary care network (PCN) directed enhanced service (DES)-funded SPLWs.** The offer includes:

**Option 1: Funding for local voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations to provide a full recruitment and induction service.** A one-off fee of £3,000 (including VAT) will be provided for the first link worker, and £2,600 for each subsequent link worker. This includes advertising the post, processing applications, shortlisting applicants, virtual interviews, taking up references, DBS checks and notifying candidates and basic induction, ensuring that the SPLW has access to appropriate equipment and supervision.

Funding will flow from NHS England and NHS Improvement to the integrated care system (ICS)/sustainability and transformation partnerships (STP) personalised care lead clinical commissioning group (CCG) for onward transfer to local CCGs. A short contract template will be made available to CCGs for use with local voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations. **Plus:** Support from NHS England and NHS Improvement social prescribing team to enable PCNs to connect with local VCSE organisations.

**Option 2:** For PCNs that prefer to undertake the SPLW recruitment process themselves, a recruitment administration service from the South, Central and West Commissioning Support Unit. This includes processing applications, setting up interviews and supporting DBS checks. This offer will be available for six months from 3 August 2020 to 31 January 2021. **All PCNs interested in expanding the number of DES-funded SPLWs are encouraged to submit an expression of interest** (see Appendix 1). This should be returned to [england.linkworkerrecruitment@nhs.net](mailto:england.linkworkerrecruitment@nhs.net) by Monday 24 August.

If you would like to discuss this support offer, please contact:  
[england.linkworkerrecruitment@nhs.net](mailto:england.linkworkerrecruitment@nhs.net)

### General practice appointment updated guidance (England)

The BMA have published [joint guidance with NHSE/I on creating more accurate general practice appointment data](#) (GPAD), so that they can more accurately reflect the workload delivered in general practice. The guidance introduces an agreed definition of an appointment and asks general practice to start applying this now and systematically, as an important first step to

improve data quality. This is to ensure all appointments are being recorded in general practice appointment systems, and to fully capture the scale of work and workload in general practice,

Further technical system specific advice and guidance will be issued to support practices with configuring appointment books and applying a set of new, standardised national categories for appointment types. Read more [here](#)

## Supporting Mentors Scheme and GP Fellowship programme (England)

Following the 2020/21 GP contract agreement, NHSE/I has now launched the [Supporting Mentors Scheme](#) and [GP Fellowship programme](#), as part of a group of GP recruitment and retention initiatives.

The [supporting mentors scheme](#) aims to support the training of at least 450 GPs as mentors, who will then form a cohort of locally based and highly experienced doctors who can each support between 4-6 mentees. GPs on the scheme will be provided with funded training, leading to a recognised mentoring qualification. Once trained, GP mentors will be reimbursed to conduct one session of mentoring every week.

GP mentors will be able to connect with newly qualified doctors on the [GP Fellowship programme](#) and to support them into become part of the local primary care team.

NHSE/I has also published a letter this week about [Expanding the primary care workforce in 2020/21](#), which highlights the [New to Partnership Payment Scheme](#), to support practices to recruit GP partners, and highlights the inclusion of nursing associates to the Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme.

## Updated Standard Operating Procedures for general practice (England)

NHSE/I has updated its [Standard Operating Procedures for general practice](#), which now includes sections on cases definition of COVID-19, patients at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19, patients advised to shield, safeguarding, symptom management and end-of-life care.

## Risk assessments

Practices are reminded of the importance of undertaking workforce risk assessments on their staff. The BMA has guidance which looks at the implications of risk assessments for practices – specifically what impact the adjustments required for high risk staff could have on practices, staff and patients. It also suggestions what mitigation practices could do, such as working from home or removal from areas that are considered hazardous. The guidance also lists risk assessment tools that are available to practices to use. Read the guidance [here](#)

## Impact of long-term Covid-19 symptoms on patients and doctors

The latest [BMA tracker survey](#), published yesterday, shows the impact of long-term COVID-19 symptoms on patients and doctors, highlighting concerns that the NHS will continue to experience pressure in the upcoming months.

In response to this Dr Richard Vautrey said: "It's increasingly clear that the long-term impact of Covid-19 on individuals and on health services will be profound. These statistics suggest that patients are, even once they have recovered from the worst of this virus, still suffering the after-effects for some time. With more patients presenting with conditions as the result of infection, it's essential that sufficient capacity is in place to support and treat them. With the growing backlog of non-Covid treatment, the likelihood of a season flu outbreak, and the possibility of a second wave of infections we need to see a more comprehensive long-term plan to enable doctors to care for their patients this winter and beyond." Read the full quote [here](#).

The BMJ has now published an article about the *Management of post-acute covid-19 in primary care* – you can read it [here](#).

### Indemnity for flu vaccinations

All three Medical Defence Organisations (MDOs) have confirmed that they will provide indemnity cover, at no extra charge, for practices who vaccinate their own staff against flu this year. We are in discussions with NHR about the indemnity arrangements for staff vaccinations for any coronavirus vaccine that may become available.

### Vaccine supply for the 2020 to 2021 children's flu programme

The Fluenz Tetra vaccine will be made available to order by all NHS providers of the 2020/21 children's flu programme on Friday 28 August. First deliveries will be made on your normal scheduled delivery day, beginning on Wednesday 2 September.

The inactivated vaccine (QIVe) for children in clinical risk groups for whom LAIV is unsuitable will be available to order from ImmForm by early September.

These timings remain subject to change and plans for vaccination sessions should be made with this in mind. Any changes to this schedule will be communicated on the [ImmForm](#) website and [PHE Vaccine Update](#).

### New GP practice profiles on the NHS website

NHS Digital has updated the GP practice profiles on the NHS website which feature improved support for mobile and tablet devices. Your practice's existing profile information will be automatically copied over to the new platform and the way you [update your profile](#) has not changed. Profiles editors should have received further information from the [NHS website service desk](#). Use the NHS website [GP practice finder](#) to find and view your new profile.

### Final pay controls

RSM (a provider of audit, tax and consulting services) have produced a [video on final pay controls](#) for the NHS pension scheme, which explains the charge, how it is calculated and what to do to avoid it. This would be useful for both GPs and practice managers to watch.

### Cervical Screening Administration Service – new telephone number

The transfer of the Cervical Screening Administration Service (CSAS) from PCSE back to the NHS includes the allocation of a new telephone number, which as of 19 August 2020 will be 0300 124 0248. As part of this second phase, CSAS will also be deleting all old email addresses on 31 August 2020 which link to Capita / PCSE. Practices should now use [this online form](#) to contact CSAS.

### PPE Portal

Practices are reminded that you can register and place orders for PPE via the [PPE portal](#), which can be delivered within 48 hours, to ensure regular supplies of PPE in advance of the winter and flu campaign. More information is available on the [DHSC PPE portal guidance page](#) and the portal customer service team can be reached on 0800 876 6802 for enquiries or registration support.

## Less Than Full Time (LTFT) conference

The BMA will be hosting a virtual conference for Less Than Full Time (LTFT) doctors from all branches of practice on Friday, *13 November*. The conference will be a good opportunity for LTFT doctors from across the UK to network and learn through some tailored workshops. Please mark the date in your calendar, and further information and registration details will be announced nearer the time.

## Mental health and wellbeing

The BMA continues to offer [wellbeing services](#) and confidential 24/7 counselling and peer support for all doctors and medical students, as well as their partners and dependents, on 0330 123 1245. For hard copies of our Wellbeing [poster](#), please email [wellbeingsupport@bma.org.uk](mailto:wellbeingsupport@bma.org.uk)

Access the [BMA's mental wellbeing pages here](#)

## BMA COVID-19 guidance

We continue to regularly update our [toolkit for GPs and practices](#), which includes a large range of topics relating to COVID-19. There is also guidance on the following topics:

- [Model terms of engagement for a GP providing temporary COVID-19 services](#)
- [Terms and conditions for sessional GPs](#)
- [Guidance on risk assessments](#) which includes specific information for practices.

For further information, see the BMA's [COVID-19 Webpage](#) with all the latest guidance including links to the BMA's [COVID-19 ethical guidance](#) and [priorities for easing lockdown](#).

Kind regards  
The Kent Local Medical Committee