



26th October 2020

Dear Colleague

Please see below our latest updates for your information:

Dental Services Local Update for GPs

Please see the attached update from Huw Winstone, Senior Clinical Dental Adviser, NHS England and NHS Improvement - South East Region. For information, the contact number for the Local Dental Helpline for patients seeking dental care is **0300 1234 412**

COVID alert levels and advice for practices and patients at risk

Following the [announcement of a three-tier lockdown approach for England](#) last week, Greater Manchester and South Yorkshire have now joined Liverpool City and Lancashire in the Tier 3 (very high) alert level. Warrington will be added next week. Read the full list of COVID alert levels in England by area [here](#). A 17-day [national "firebreak"](#) will begin in Wales at 6pm today and a [5 tier system](#) will be introduced in Scotland from 2 November.

The BMA recognise that few will welcome these restrictions, but unless rising rates of transmission are curbed urgently, we will soon see an increase in patients needing care, and sadly a rise in deaths. Some hospitals have already announced that they will have to once again reduce some elective procedures, with all the implications that then brings both for patients and practices. More stringent lockdown measures are therefore necessary, and the BMA urges everyone to take the new rules seriously. People need to have confidence that the sacrifices they are now required to make are understood by those in power and these new restrictions must be backed with more support for GP practices in those areas who will be impacted significantly.

As the BMA reported previously, [NHSE/I has confirmed](#) that local flexibilities should be made available, to support practices to clinically prioritise capacity in these challenging times. The BMA are in discussion with NHSEI about how they can provide clearer support to practices struggling with workload pressures as the prevalence of patients with COVID-19 increases. They are also making it clear in their public messaging that despite some media reports, whatever the current local COVID alert levels are, GP practices continue to remain open as they have done throughout the pandemic. Whilst remote consultations should be the main way in which patient care is delivered, when it is clinically necessary to see high risk patients face to face, they should be able to attend the practice.

Ordering additional adult flu vaccine stock (England)

As we reported last week, [DHSC has written to practices](#) to confirm the process by which they will be able to access the additional adult flu vaccine stock secured to support the expanded vaccination programme this season.

GP practices are now invited to begin ordering or pre-ordering the following vaccines:

- Flucelvax® Tetra (Seqirus) for 18-64 years
- Adjuvanted Trivalent Influenza Vaccine (Seqirus) for over 65s
- Quadrivalent Influvac® sub-unit Tetra (Mylan) for 18-64 year olds

If a GP practice has a provisional order with Sanofi for QIVe, please contact them to confirm this, before placing another order for QIVe for this cohort.

On placing an order, practices will be asked by manufacturers to verify that stock is being ordered for NHS eligible patients or frontline social care workers, where there is a genuine shortage for this cohort. Orders should only be placed where you have a shortfall in supply for existing eligible patients at this stage.

Further instruction on timing of extension of eligibility to all 50 to 64 year olds will follow and stock should not be ordered for this cohort at this stage.

Influenza immunisation FAQs (England)

NHSE/I have now produced a set of FAQs relating to the influenza immunisation programme and can be found [here](#). They have also issued guidance, which is attached, on how practices and CCGs can make use of the additional £15.4m made available to local systems and primary care providers to cover reasonable additional costs (over and above the usual fee structures) associated with this year's extended flu programme.

DDRB pay award and template letter

The Sessional GPs Committee has received reports that some salaried GPs are struggling to get their 2.8% paylift, as recommended by DDRB and approved by the government, despite being entitled to it. The BMA believe it is only fair that this uplift is awarded to all doctors, and this includes all practice-based salaried GPs. Practices are encouraged to apply this uplift across all of their employed GPs, regardless of individual contractual requirements. However, it is worth noting that there is a contractual requirement to implement this pay increase for salaried GPs employed on the model contract.

If you are a salaried GP struggling to obtain the pay increase, even after having a conversation about the matter with your practice manager, you may wish to send a formal letter. The [BMA DDRB template letter](#) can be adapted to reflect your individual circumstances. Please [get in touch with the BMA](#) if you need further assistance in this area. Read more in the [Sessional GPs newsletter](#).

CQRS system supplier change (England)

NHSE/I is overseeing a programme to ensure the CQRS system supports efficient GP incentive-based payments. As part of this work NHSE/I is working with NHS CSUs to bring the running and development of the CQRS system in-house from 1 November 2020 and to introduce a new centrally funded system (CQRS Local) to support locally commissioned schemes by April 2021. These changes aim to streamline processes and reduce the administrative errors in GP payments as called for in GPCE's [Saving General Practice](#). A structured transition from the existing supplier is in place to ensure the continued provision of the CQRS system from November with minimal interruption for end users. How users access and use the CQRS system is not changing and no action is required from practices or commissioners.

From 1 November the new number for the CQRS service desk will be **0330 124 4039**, although the email address remains support@cqrs.co.uk

While the system itself will look and feel the same a new [CQRS welcome page](#) is now live providing direct links to the CQRS system and online training modules, guidance and news updates.

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. Access the [BMA's COVID-19 wellbeing pages here](#).

The BMA has welcomed the NHSE/I [announcement](#) of further funding for the expanded and rapid access provision of mental health services for NHS staff in England over the winter. This is urgently required and something the BMA has been calling for to support the major challenges NHS staff are facing. At the ARM, a motion was passed expressing concern at the potential long-term impact of the pandemic and called for resources to support the profession. As we head into a second wave of the virus it is vital that staff are protected. [Find out more here](#)

BMA COVID-19 guidance

Read our [COVID-19 toolkit for GPs and practices](#), to help answer questions on 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](#)
- [Risk assessments](#)

Kind regards
Kent Local Medical Committee