



30th November 2020

Dear Colleague

Please see below our latest updates for your information:

2020 Conference of England LMCs

As many of you will be aware, the 2020 Conference of England LMC was held today, 27 November, as a virtual event. Rachel McMahon chaired the conference, supported by deputy chair Shaba Nabi, who was also elected as chair of Conference of England LMCs for 2021.

In Richard Vautrey's opening speech he thanked and commended GPs for having stepped up at this time of national crisis and for responding to the COVID-19 pandemic with such speed and effectiveness. He praised the hard work and diligence of our colleagues across primary care over the last nine months, while criticising the Government for being "behind the curve" with delayed guidance, limited initiatives and inadequate funding.

He noted that with the daunting covid vaccination programme facing us there can be no better people to succeed in this task which the whole nation is depending on. Once a safe and effective vaccine is available, practice teams will work to the best of their considerable ability to protect patients as quickly as practically possible. And whilst GPs may have super-powers they cannot be in two places at once and so we will need the help of everyone, we'll need to be able to prioritise the workload and crucially need the understanding of patients in doing so. General Practice will need all hands to the pump.

The event was webcast via this [link](#) and a recording of the event and the resolutions will be published on the [website](#) as soon as possible after the event. They are also attached. [Read the agenda here](#). [GPonline](#) has reported on the speech

We will be providing a more detailed account of the conference shortly.

Covid vaccination programme guidance

This update should be read in conjunction with the [update sent on 27 November 2020](#).

NHSE/I has published a [letter](#) about the outcome of general practice site designation process to provide commissioners and practices with more information to help with planning. This follows on

from a [letter that NHSE/I sent to NHS Trusts](#) last week, outlining the wider COVID-19 vaccination deployment strategy and operational readiness for mass immunisation sites.

The letter sets out that NHSE/I aims to give all designated sites at least 10 days' notice of the first vaccines becoming available to ensure sites can be prepared and clinics arranged. It also suggests practices may wish to use this opportunity to invite the extended flu vaccination programme cohort of 50-64 year olds to their single designated site, to test arrangements.

In addition, NHSE/I has published [FAQs on their FutureNHS platform](#) (sign in required) based on the information known at present about eligible cohorts, appointment booking, administration of the vaccine, workforce and funding, to help answer any question that practices may have. We also expect that the COVID-19 vaccination programme specifications will be published imminently.

Practices have stepped up to the challenge of putting in place arrangements at an unprecedented speed and should be commended for doing so. It's been vital to be prepared for all possible options and once the regulatory process is complete practices will have greater clarity and be able to finalise plans. The difficulties with storing and moving the Pfizer vaccine make the delivery of this particularly challenging. As a result it may be that initial vaccination plans of priority groups including care homes residents and healthcare staff will depend on the specific vaccinations available.

Please see the BMA's recent [guidance](#) about the COVID-19 vaccination programme which has FAQs throughout to answer some of the questions that practices must have, and it will be regularly update when new information is available.

Public Health England have produced two videos in which Wei Shen, chair of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation, explaining the vaccine prioritisation and the rationale for the age-based approach. The videos can be found on the [Public Health England twitter page](#).

Guidance for clinically extremely vulnerable people

From Wednesday 2 December, once the current national restrictions in England are replaced with a regionally differentiated approach of the country, the government is planning to communicate updated guidance with all c.2.3m people on the Shielded Patient List (SPL) via letter. The government has provided [specific guidance for clinically extremely vulnerable people at each local tier](#). This letter should be published on Saturday 28 November on the GOV.UK website. Letters may start arriving with patients from Saturday 28 November, and throughout all of next week (w/c 30 November).

COVID-19 select committee: digitalisation of physical health services and impact on wellbeing

Farah Jameel, GPC England executive team member, gave oral evidence to the [Lords' COVID-19 select committee](#) this week, regarding the digitalisation of physical health services and the impact on our future wellbeing. Alongside other panellists from the King's Fund, HealthWatch and Staffordshire's STP, Dr Jameel talked about the increasing role digital technology has had in healthcare delivery – catalysed by the COVID-19 pandemic – and some of the risks and opportunities that should be considered in order to ensure patients receive the right care, at the right time, via the right medium. Watch Dr Jameel giving evidence to the committee [here](#) .

Integrated Care Systems consultation (England)

The NHSE/I has published a [consultation](#) inviting comments on the next steps for ICSs (Integrated Care Systems). The consultation raises some fundamental issues about how the NHS will be structured and work in the future and invites a discussion about how ICSs could be embedded in legislation or guidance. It signals an intent to make significant changes to CCGs and move the focus from competition to provider collaboration. The BMA will be carefully considering this and its implications. Read more about the proposals [here](#)

GP trainees mileage payment

NHS Employers and the BMA have published joint [guidance](#) for the reimbursement of home to principle place of work mileage for trainees in a GP practice. The guidance will provide the necessary information for employing organisations on operationalising the current provisions in the absence of an updated version of the terms and conditions. This is applicable to both back dated and future claims.

QOF system suppliers update (England)

As practices will be aware QOF 2020/21 has been [revised to reflect the impact of COVID-19 on general practice](#) . We recognise that practices need to reprioritise aspects of care not related to COVID-19 and the QOF requirements have been modified for 2020/21 to support this and to help release capacity in general practice. Practices and commissioners have been asked to work together to confirm that any population stratification is clinically appropriate for their local population.

Clinical system suppliers have recently updated QOF indicators and prompts. In some instances, this may have impacted on practices' records of progress to date. Practices should be reassured that the indicators affected by this update are those that are subject to income protection as outlined in 2020/21 QOF guidance. Practices are not expected to re-code or re-review patients for indicators affected by this system update, unless there is a clinical need to do so.

Government Spending Review

This week, the Chancellor announced funding plans for the NHS during his spending review speech. The announcements fall short of what is needed to improve GP practices/ estates and expand the GP workforce. Read the BMA's briefing on the [announcements](#) .

RCGP call for suspension of GP appraisal during the Covid-19 pandemic

The Royal College of GPs' Council has passed a motion to call for suspension of GP appraisal for the duration of the Covid-19 pandemic. Although the College was pleased to see the introduction of a 'lighter touch' approach to appraisal, they remain concerned that many GPs simply do not have the capacity to engage even with a simpler process. Read the full statement [here](#)

Parental leave webinar and workshop

The BMA will be hosting a webinar and a workshop for [GPs on parental leave](#) on:

2 December from 12.30pm – 2.00pm – Webinar - 'GP Maternity and Parental leave Guide: launch and introduction to the guide'. Register [here](#)

9 December from 12.30pm – 2.30pm – Workshop - 'GP maternity'. Register [here](#)

If you would like to submit questions in advance to be covered at either session, please contact Christopher Scott via cscott@bma.org.uk

Kent LMC In the News

Gaurav Gupta, Chairman for Kent LMC and GPC policy lead for premises and finance, spoke to BBC Kent on Monday about burnout in doctors, covid vaccination and NHS spending. Starts 1 hour in at 7 AM. Listen to the interview [here](#)

Reshma Syed, LMC Executive member and representative for Medway and Swale, spoke to Victoria Macdonald of Channel 4 news about the pressures in general practice on an item regarding the new tier system being introduced on 2nd December. [Click here](#) to see the video

Wearing Face Masks in General Practice

With the COVID-19 infection rate in the community remaining high it is important that all members of the general practice team wear face masks while at work. The wearing of face masks by staff plays an important role in preventing the spread of infection so that patients can visit practices without the risk of contamination. It will also reduce the risk of a whole team within a practice being required to self-isolate should one member of the team contract COVID-19.

For more information about the appropriate use of PPE please visit the Public Health England website [here](#) .

COVID-19 guidance

Read the BMA's [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](#)

We have also updated our website to include a range of information that will support your practice during the pandemic:

- [Covid 19 Resources](#)
- [GP and GP staff wellbeing](#)

Kind regards
Kent Local Medical Committee