



29<sup>th</sup> March 2021

Dear Colleague

Please see below our latest updates for your information:

### **Manage Your Mind workshop – 14 April 2021**

The North Kent Training Hub have teamed up with [Manage Your Mind](#) to fund an exclusive 3 day programme available to North Kent (DGS, Medway and Swale) Primary Care colleagues in May and June 2021. This will be a multi-professional programme, that will run from 4pm - 9pm (Wed-Fri), available to all staff aligned to and working within Primary Care Networks - and will focus on improving mental and emotional well being using powerful breathing exercises and mindfulness techniques.

For those interested in taking part, there will be a taster session on 14 April 2021 between 12am and 1pm. We have attached an ics file which contains the link to the webinar. Please click on this to add it to your calendar.

Manage Your Mind offers individuals an opportunity to invest in themselves, to rest, to re-centre, to re-focus and to re-energise. This two minute video gives you an overview of the benefits of this programme: <https://youtu.be/BxM0wjAnSEA>

It offers people an opportunity to learn new skills, breathing techniques, guided meditations and processes that help calm the mind. Studies have shown that when practiced regularly, they help improve sleep, reduce stress, depression and anxiety and improve the quality of life. CPD Certificates of attendance will be provided to all who complete the course. Please visit [www.manageyourmind.org.uk](http://www.manageyourmind.org.uk) for more information on course dates and venues. There are a limited number of spaces available - and encourage early sign up to secure your place.

The Well Being and Resilience Funds being paid out by the Kent and Medway CCG can be used to support practice staff to attend this programme. (See details in [CCG GP Bulletin 02/03/2021](#))

If you have any queries, please email [manage.yourmind@nhs.net](mailto:manage.yourmind@nhs.net)

### **Training available from NELCSU**

Please see the attached flyer from NELCSU which details the training and support available to all practices in Kent and Medway.

## **Survey - Get involved in shaping the future of Clinical and Care Professional Leadership in an Integrated Care System (ICS)**

You may be aware that the NHS Confederation has been commissioned by NHS England and NHS Improvement to conduct independent engagement with clinical and care professional leaders on a set of draft design principles for an ICS. These draft principles have been developed to support ICSs in defining their operating model for clinical and care professional leadership and identifying where they need to make progress.

To support this work, they have developed a short survey to gain views on whether people think the draft principles are the right ones and if so, what factors may support or hinder them being adopted. They would like to get a broad range of views so if you are able please click on the link and complete the survey before close of play on Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> March.

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/HLH79XK>

Thank you for your help with this important agenda.

## **COVID-19 one year on**

This week marks one year since the first UK lockdown was introduced in order to combat the spread of COVID-19 and the fight back, with the help of the vaccination roll-out, is gathering speed. It is though concerning that national daily case numbers have stopped falling and in some areas are rising again. There is clearly some way to go in dealing with the pandemic.

The vaccination effort started only a few short months ago, and more than half of the adult population in the UK have already received at least one dose of the vaccine. It is an incredible achievement to have reached such a significant milestone so quickly. Thank you to all involved in this vitally important task which has been achieved whilst at the same time managing many other workload pressures.

Practices across the nation have been working together in groups, often in PCNs (primary care networks) to deliver the vaccination programme locally. Ever since we started, we have been vaccinating people come rain or shine. Even when snowstorms tried to put a spoke in the wheel, armies of volunteers rallied with shovels, clearing snow in car parks and enabling people to get to their appointments.

The vaccine roll-out demonstrates the value of general practice. GPs, by the very nature of their contractual arrangements, are incredibly adaptive, flexible and responsive to new situations. They understand their patients and their communities. If you give practices the necessary resources and the flexibility to get on with it, that's what we will do. And that is exactly what has happened.

Read the full BMA article [here](#)

## **Support for CCGs in addressing vaccine inequalities (England)**

In February, £4.2 million of funding was allocated to STPs to be used across CCGs to support and enable locally led community engagement in all areas with health inequalities. NHSE/I has now pledged an [additional £3 million of funding](#) to support further local activity in addressing local vaccine inequalities. From 26 March, regions are invited to submit funding applications for their CCGs. Read more [here](#)

## COVID-19 vaccination programme (England)

As reported last week, there will be a [reduction of supply](#) of COVID-19 vaccinations from this week for about four weeks due to reductions in national inbound vaccines supply. The BMA have been told that this should not impact the delivery of second doses. Vaccination sites are encouraged to continue their efforts in maximising uptake in cohorts 1-9 which are yet to be vaccinated.

We are expecting a statement from JCVI shortly on details relating to the next phase of vaccination for groups 10-12.

### Frequently Asked Questions for second doses

NHSE/I has published some [FAQs to help answer some questions relating to second doses of the COVID-19 vaccination](#), including location of second doses, interval period and consent.

### Quality Assurance Framework and SOP for lateral flow devices for COVID-19 vaccination sites

NHSE/I has published a [Quality Assurance Framework for COVID-19 vaccination sites](#), to use as a tool aligned to the operating frameworks and standard operating procedures underpinning the delivery models for these settings.

NHSE/I has also published a [Standard Operating Procedure \(SOP\) for usage of lateral flow devices for asymptomatic NHS staff testing](#) at vaccination sites.

### COVID-19 vaccines and pregnancy

There has been some confusion around the eligibility of pregnant women for the COVID-19 vaccine. While it is not currently available to all pregnant women, those who are at high risk of exposure to the virus, including health and care workers, or with high risk medical conditions *are* eligible. This includes women diagnosed with gestational diabetes in pregnancy or those with a BMI of more than 40 at their antenatal booking appointment.

The benefits and risks of COVID-19 vaccination in pregnancy should be discussed on an individual basis. The discussion should include acknowledgement that, while there is no known risk associated with giving other non-live vaccines to pregnant women, there are no specific data as yet about the safety of COVID-19 vaccination in pregnancy. More information including FAQs and a decision aid are available from the [RCOG website](#).

In addition, the National Clinical Director for Maternity and Women's Health, and the Chief Midwifery Officer, have published a [letter setting out actions for maternity services to identify and invite pregnant women for vaccination](#), and enabling them to make an informed choice about receiving it.

Read more about the latest changes, including the delivery of second doses, added funding, and what practices need to do and the support available in the BMA updated [guidance page about the COVID-19 vaccination programme](#).

## Vaccine dose data

Nearly [29 million people in the UK](#) have now received their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, and the latest [data report](#) shows that as of 25 March nearly 27 million doses of the COVID-19 vaccine have been given in England.

## **Medical assessments for prospective foster carer and adopters**

This week, the BMA have published a [joint statement](#) with the Royal College of GPs, to support GPs in considering requests for medicals for prospective adopters and foster carers. These assessments play an important role in safeguarding vulnerable children and are the final requirement for many families across the country.

## **NHS Operational Planning and Contracting Guidance 2021/22 (England)**

NHSE/I has published the [NHS Operational Planning and Contracting Guidance for 2021/22](#), setting out the priorities for the year ahead, to restore services, meet new care demands and reduce the care back logs caused by the pandemic, whilst supporting staff recovery.

One of the priorities is expanding primary care capacity, which will largely be done through the increased ARRS allocation, and a renewed focus on recruiting and retaining an additional 6000 GPs.

## **Investment in General Practice report and data quality statement 2015/16-2019/20 (England)**

NHSE/I has published the annual [Investment in General Practice Report 2015/16-2019/20](#), [Data quality statement](#) and [GP investment](#). This shows the level of investment in 2019/20 compared with previous years. The increased funding received by general practice in England is in a greater proportion compared to other sectors in the NHS and is as a direct result of the 5 year contract agreement.

## **Annual allowance voluntary scheme pays 2018/19 deadline extension**

In a previous newsletter we provided information on the annual allowance repayment scheme, which was introduced in England and Wales. The scheme guarantees any annual allowance tax charge in 2019/20, for eligible clinicians will be compensated for at the time of retirement. The deadline for submitting an application form for the scheme for GPs who have or who are planning to retire by 31 March 2021, has been extended to 31 March 2021. For detailed advice on the scheme, please click [here](#).

## **BMA report on impact of COVID-19 on health inequalities**

The BMA has launched a report, '[Mitigating the impact of Covid-19 on health inequalities](#)', outlining a range of measures for Governments across the UK to ensure that those who have been most impacted by COVID-19 are protected in the immediate and longer term.

The report highlights concerns that the unacceptable inequalities that existed before the pandemic will only worsen for families who have been pushed into poverty, and disadvantaged communities that face further hardship due to job losses and COVID-19's socio-economic impact.

The BMA wants to work towards addressing the underlying inequalities which lead to unacceptable and avoidable differences in life expectancy, as well as quality of life across all communities. Read more and read the report [here](#)

### **BMA moral distress survey (UK)**

The BMA has launched a [survey on moral distress](#), open to all UK doctors, including retired doctors, although it is not aimed at medical students. The survey will remain open until Sunday 11 April.

The survey asks about your understanding of moral distress and moral injury, whether you have come across these terms before or have experienced them. The impact of COVID-19 and potential solutions are also considered. The findings will be used to make recommendations and allow the BMA to help mitigate this problem throughout the UK's medical workforce.

Take the survey, and read more about moral distress and how it impacts doctors, [here](#).

Kind regards  
Kent Local Medical Committee