



19th April 2021

Dear Colleague

Please see below our latest updates for your information:

Mindfulness May Events

Every Wednesday in May Kent LMC are holding events to promote the help and resources available, to all practice staff, to improve mental health and wellbeing. Each session will last an hour from 1pm-2pm and cover different topics aimed to help support you;

[5th May—An Introduction to Mindfulness, Dr Neil Pilai, GP in Tenterden & Mindfulness teacher](#)

[12th May—Help me Sleep! Sue Gray, Sleep Coach & Therapist](#)

[19th May—Takeaway Tips for Stress Management, Dr Farnaaz Sharief, Manage your Mind](#)

[26th May—CLANGERS, Health & Wellbeing \(Connect, Learn, be Active, Notice, Give back, Eat well, Relax and Sleep\), Dr Phil Hammond, NHS Doctor, Private Eye Journalist, Campaigner & Comic](#)

It's so important to look after ourselves as well as others during these challenging times, and we hope these sessions will be well received. The events are FREE to attend, open to all practice staff and will be held via Microsoft Teams. To register please click on the links above. Please note you will have to register for each event you wish to attend.

Deprivation of Liberty (DoLS) Update

When someone is deprived of their liberty anywhere other than a care home or hospital, this needs to be authorised by the Court of Protection.

The Court of Protection cannot make this determination without a declaration from a Doctor. They continue to use the archaic term, 'unsound mind', as their determination but this is not reflected by the wording of the mental capacity act.

We have agreed that a GP will certify that the patient has a stated diagnosis such as Alzheimer's Disease which leads to unsoundness or impairment of the brain or mind.

The GP is not being asked to determine if they have mental capacity or if their liberty should be deprived. It requires 2 or 3 lines on a fill in the gaps style form which could be populated from the records as an administrative action and signed by a GP

to confirm. If a GP feels they are unable to complete the form, they are required to provide the Court with an explanation why this is the case. This is not covered by GMS and should be covered by a fee. However, no agreement or budget for this exists. It may fall within the collaborative fees agreement so sending an invoice to the CCG might prove successful. This should not happen very often and should be a 2 minute task.

Further guidance is available on the BMA website: <https://www.bma.org.uk/advice-and-support/ethics/adults-who-lack-capacity/deprivation-of-liberty-safeguards>

Dr John Allingham

COVID-19 vaccination programme

This week, as lockdown restrictions are beginning to ease in varying ways across the UK, those aged 45 and over in England are now eligible to book an appointment via the [NHS national booking service](#) to receive the COVID-19 vaccination. Practice groups can now invite these patients for their first vaccination if they have sufficient supplies alongside continuing with second vaccinations to those patients who are due to receive it.

This follows a statement published by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) on [phase 2 of the COVID-19 vaccination programme](#), which recommends that the most effective way to minimise hospitalisations and deaths is to continue to prioritise people by age.

GPC England and NHSE/I have agreed an extension to the existing enhanced service specification for practice sites to administer vaccinations to patients between the age of 18 and 50. The service specification arrangements for this second phase of the programme will mirror the arrangements for the first phase, and sites will still get the £12.58 item of service fee for each vaccine administered. Read more about the next phase of the vaccination programme [here](#).

JCVI have also advised that individuals aged 18 to 49 years, in particular males in certain black, Asian or ethnic minority (BAME) communities, those with a BMI of 30 or more (obese/morbidly obese), and those experiencing socio-economic deprivation, should take up the offer of vaccination, as data has indicated that there is an increased risk of hospitalisation for this group.

In addition, the [Moderna vaccine](#) has begun to be delivered across more than 20 vaccination sites in England, following use in Scotland and Wales, for those aged 18-29 who are eligible, providing another alternative to the AstraZeneca vaccine in line with updated [MHRA guidance](#) last week.

Vaccinating during Ramadan

NHSE/I has published guidance on supporting [COVID-19 vaccine uptake during the Islamic month of Ramadan](#) which began on Monday 12 April 2021. The guidance aims to help vaccination sites build confidence, reduce barriers to access and support the uptake of the COVID-19 vaccine amongst Muslim communities during the month of Ramadan.

Read more about the latest changes, including the arrangements for the second phase of the vaccination programme and what practices need to do, in the BMA updated [guidance page about the COVID-19 vaccination programme](#).

Vaccine dose data

Nearly [41 million COVID-19 vaccinations have now been delivered in the UK](#), and the latest [data report](#) shows that as of 15 April over 34 million doses have been given in England.

PRINCIPLE trial on COVID treatment

Following the publication of findings from the Oxford-led [PRINCIPLE trial](#) on inhaled budesonide as a potential COVID treatment, NHSE/I has issued the following [advice](#) which states:

Inhaled budesonide is **not** currently being recommended as standard of care but can be considered (off-label) on a case-by-case basis for symptomatic COVID-19 positive patients, aged 65 and over OR those aged 50 or over with co-morbidities, in line with the published [Interim Position Statement](#). This Interim Position Statement clarifies that this includes co-morbidities that are 'consistent with a long-term health condition from the flu list'.

What is the background to this new Therapeutic Alert?

The PRINCIPLE trial [reported](#) a 3-day median benefit in self-reported recovery for patients with COVID-19 in the community setting who received inhaled budesonide. The impact on hospitalisation rates or mortality has not been established, but the evaluation is ongoing, so recommendations may change as more data become available. The current Therapeutic Alert is based on a decision by the Chief Medical Officer after consideration of the evidence.

What does this mean in practical terms?

*There is no expectation that inhaled budesonide will be routinely prescribed for patients in the eligible cohorts with COVID-19. Advice to patients on the management of COVID-19 has not changed. However, as stated in the Therapeutic alert, prescribers may *consider* prescribing it to reduce symptoms in eligible cohorts who are being managed in the community. This would be on a case-by-case basis using a shared decision making approach.*

Where a decision is made to prescribe, prescribers are asked to ensure that the patient understands how to use the inhaler properly. As patients will be self isolating, this may be via video link (see below).

Patients will need to ask a friend or relative to collect the inhaler. If this is not possible, they can access the [NHS Volunteer Responders](#) service. They will also be eligible for free delivery if other routes are not possible.

For pharmacists and dispensing doctors

Additional supplies of the Pulmicort 400 Turbohaler (AstraZeneca UK Ltd) are now available to be ordered as needed through business as usual routes from wholesalers.

Information for patients

Information for patients can be found [here](#), including a link to videos explaining correct inhaler technique from Asthma UK.

Flu vaccination programme 21/22

The BMA have now received confirmation from NHSEI that there will not be central procurement of flu vaccine for the coming year's scheme, but the at-risk group will be extended as it was this year. Practices should therefore, where this is possible due to the late notice, take this into account when placing orders. The annual flu reimbursement letter was updated on 1 April. A copy of the latest version can be found [here](#). The letter confirmed that those aged 50-64 year old will be included in the 21/22 flu programme and also confirmed the inclusion of a QIVr vaccine (Supemtek).

GP Career Support Hub

A new [GP Career Support Hub](#) has been launched this week on the [Future NHS platform](#), containing all of the information GPs need to support them throughout their career.

The GP Career Support Hub is a central information point with resources to support GPs at all stages of their career - from newly qualified doctors to those approaching the end of their career. It provides information, guidance and support on career development, learning, mentoring, appraisals, career options/flexibility, wellbeing, pay and pensions to enable GPs to realise fulfilling, rewarding and exciting careers in general practice.

National e-Referral Service (e-RS) advice and guidance webinar (England)

To support mobilisation of [advice and guidance \(A&G\) services](#) as per the [2021/22 operational planning guidance](#), the NHSE/I is hosting a webinar for clinicians and system leaders about the National e-Referral Service on *Tuesday 20th April 2021, 4.00pm-5.30pm*.

The session will include an overview from NHS Digital on recent improvements that have been made to the NHS e-Referral Service A&G function, and will also share experience and learnings from clinicians working in primary and secondary care who have successfully implemented an A&G service, focusing on Cardiology, Gastroenterology and Urology.

If you would like to attend, please register [here](#).

If you have any feedback with regard to the e-RS, generally speaking or regarding the A&G function specifically, please let the BMA Workforce and Innovation Team know via info.wi@bma.org.uk.

Elected BMA representatives from both primary and secondary sit on the monthly e-RS Optimisation & Improvement Clinical Council. They can therefore feed examples of both good and bad practice into this group and seek resolutions to both local and national issues and concerns.

Kind regards
Kent Local Medical Committee