



11th October 2021

Dear Colleague

Please see below our latest updates for your information:

GP Pressures

We are working with the CCG to have a joint campaign and communications plan to help tackle abuse from the media and patients. It would be extremely helpful if you could complete the attached survey for your practice. The results will only be shared between the LMC and the CCG communications team to develop public messages and design a toolkit to support your practice. A media statement was issued on Friday (<https://www.kentandmedwayccg.nhs.uk/news-and-events/news/general-practice-appointments-august>) which details the August general practice data showing how much work you are achieving in such difficult circumstances at a Kent level but cannot be broken down further. There were over 32,000 missed appointments, hence the questions about cancelling appointments. We want to ensure press releases and interviews do not encourage more pressure on phone lines.

It will be so helpful to have this data and we really do not want to add to your workload but the intention is this information will help.

Please find the survey here – https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/KentLMC_GPpressure/

Society for Assistance of Medical Families (SMF)

SAMF is one of the oldest membership societies assisting medical practitioners and/or their families who find themselves in severe financial hardship.

There are a number of ways they can help:

- Help with unexpected expenses during times of financial hardship.
- Financial assistance for the expenses of further education, particularly medical degrees.
- Retraining expenses for those who need to take a new career path, or who have had an enforced break through illness etc.
- Help towards home improvements and adaptations for disabled, where these are not covered by State Benefits.
- Referral to our money advisor for help with budgeting and rearranging expenditure and debts.
- Vouchers for household expenses where there is a temporary reduction in income and there is difficulty in covering costs.
- Help with the expenses of courses and examinations to enable those in financial difficulty to progress in their career.
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For further details, including membership eligibility, subscriptions and an application form please click [HERE](#)

Workforce Resilience - tell us what you need!

The CCG, LMC and Training hubs are working together to understand what resilience support to roll out to practices in the future and we would value your input on the way forward.

There have been several options on offer (see: <https://www.kentandmedwayccg.nhs.uk/staff-wellbeing-support>) and we would like to understand more about what has worked for you and what you'd like to see benefit your colleagues and teams.

We would like to invite you to join a virtual meeting with CCG colleagues, chaired by Dr Farnaaz Sharief, at 1.00pm on Wednesday 3rd November to gather feedback to enable us to roll out resilience programmes that meet your needs.

To register a place to attend please click [HERE](#). A Microsoft Teams link will be sent to all those registered a couple of days prior to the meeting.

Before you join us, please share your thoughts with us by clicking on the following link and answering four simple questions <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/CJT3NY5>

We look forward to seeing you on November 3rd at 1pm for this very important discussion.

Medical Director-Professional Development and Quality

The RCGP is currently advertising for the [MD Professional Development and Quality](#) role, with a closing date of Sunday 31 October 2021.

We'd be grateful if you could circulate the advert to your GP networks or share with anyone you think might be interested. All enquiries should be directed to recruitment@rcgp.org.uk.

Hospital Contacts for secondary care/waiting list issues

The LMC have been asking for a defined access point to direct patients with secondary care appointment queries, and here they are!

Dartford and Gravesham Trust (DGT), the DGT appointments office 01322 428350
Medway Foundation Trust, Monday to Friday 9-5 PALS 01634 825004, [Patient Advice & Liaison Service \(PALS\) for Compliments, Comments and Concerns \(medway.nhs.uk\)](#)
East Kent Hospital Foundation Trust, telephone is available Monday to Friday 9-5 on 01227 783145, and more information is here [EKH123_TalkToUs:A4 \(mcusercontent.com\)](#)
Maidstone Tunbridge Wells, 01892 632953 or 01622 224960, email mtw-tr.palsoffice@nhs.net

Infection control update

As we move into Winter many practices are looking at their infection control guidance and wondering if anything has changed. The current guidance is here:

[COVID-19: guidance for maintaining services within health and care settings – infection prevention and control recommendations - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Takeaway messages at a glance are:

- The use of face masks or coverings remains as an IPC measure in addition to social distancing and hand hygiene in clinical and non clinical areas to reduce transmission
- Physical distancing of 2m remains in place in all health care settings, unless providing clinical or personal care wearing appropriate PPE
- Where possible and clinically appropriate remote consultations should be offered rather than face to face

- Where face to face clinical assessment is necessary the patients COVID-19 PCR status should not delay assessment. There should be infection control pathways in place to facilitate separation of symptomatic patients.

Extension of block payment until 31.12.21

As you will have seen the CCG have agreed to extend the block payment for a further quarter on the basis that practice information is submitted. Please do provide the relevant information which will help further negotiations for quarter 4.

Survey on General Practice response to the current crisis

The BMA highlighted last week the current pressures in general practice, the media and government pressure to increase face-to-face consultations (despite current government guidance), and the increase in abuse and aggression toward GPs and practice staff. They also outlined their call on the government for support and protection for practices, and that they had held discussions with DHSC and NHSE/I.

Whilst awaiting their firm proposals for a package of support, the BMA want to know what you might be prepared to do if the package is not adequate.

The BMA therefore sent an [email](#) on Wednesday asking for views on what GPs may do next and what they are prepared to do if there is no satisfactory response.

The survey includes a range of possible actions, and asks for any further actions you might consider that are not specifically asked. But this is not a ballot – it is important that the BMA understand what action you would like to see and what action you would personally be willing to take.

If you haven't already filled the [survey](#) out - please do complete it and encourage your colleagues to do so as well.

The survey will close at 9am on Wednesday 13th October 2021.

Support your surgery campaign

In light of the current reports of a rise in GP abuse, both by some patients and media, the BMA continue to campaign in defence of GPs and their staff with their [Support Your Surgery campaign](#) to get the changes that are so urgently needed to support general practice teams.

They have now added a [zero-tolerance poster](#) to show that assault on practice staff, threatening or abusive behaviour or damage to property will not be tolerated.

Please also continue to show your support by signing the [Support Your Surgery petition](#) and sharing it with colleagues, friends, and families to put pressure on the Government to support general practice.

You can also get involved in the [#SupportYourSurgery social media discussion](#) by sharing your support across social media.

Please do all you can to help us defend and support general practice at this critical time.

The BMA are asking members to use their [template letter](#) to write to your local MP to outline the current pressures being faced by GPs across the country.

They have also produced a [GP campaign factsheet](#) that can be used to rebut the misinformation in the media and to proactively include in social media posts, letters to the local press or MPs.

GP Pay Transparency – NHSE/I Guidance

The statutory instrument to amend the [GMS and PMS Regulations](#) affecting pay transparency has been laid before Parliament and will come into force on 1 October 2021. NHSE/I has now published guidance on how the regulation will work in practice, which is available [here](#).

The BMA have made clear their significant concerns about the change compelling GPs to publicly declare NHS earnings above £150,000 especially in the current climate of threat, aggression and violence towards GPs. We believe this will be hugely damaging to morale among the profession and wholly counterproductive in terms of the ability to recruit and retain GPs. If this comes into force, it will have been imposed on the profession in breach of the original agreement and GPC England has not agreed to them being introduced in the absence of similar requirements across all providers of various primary care services.

This was reported by [GPonline](#), where GPC chair, Dr Richard Vautrey, said that pay transparency was agreed as part of the five-year contract deal 'on the clear understanding that GPs were not being singled out but that the government would also require other professions such as pharmacists and dentists to publish NHS earnings above a certain figure too'.

GP Appointment data

The [GP appointment data for August](#) has been published, showing that the total number of appointments delivered by general practice in August (25.5 million) remains higher than pre-pandemic levels (23.3 million in August 2019). The percentage of appointments delivered face-to-face has also risen to 57.7%, while the percentage of appointments delivered remotely (by telephone and video consultations) has fallen.

There are 1,904 fewer fully qualified full-time GPs than there were in 2015 despite government promises for 6,000 more. We are almost 8,000 GPs short. In the face of a huge backlog of care in hospitals as well as communities, these figures show that GPs are working harder than ever and dealing with even more patients than before the pandemic. Read the full BMA [statement](#)

COVID-19 Vaccination PGD and national protocol (England)

A revised Spikevax (formerly COVID-19 vaccine Moderna) PGD and national protocol for England have now been published – access [here](#)

Mitigating the effect of dispensing fees cut

GPC England and the DDA asked NHS England to intervene to change the [fee scale](#). As calculated (correctly under an agreed formula) it took account of a 14% increase in volume triggered by the Covid pandemic and the first lockdown. This has caused the steep reduction in fees, which will be partially abated next April.

It is not just dispensing doctors who are affected by this fee cut. The scale also includes non-dispensing GPs who claim for Personally Administered items, including vaccines. There is on average a 35 pence per item decrease in dispensing fees.

The DDA have asked all of their members to write to their MPs as per their [template letter](#).

Kind regards
Kent Local Medical Committee

