

LMC Update Email  
12 February 2021

Dear Colleagues

### **COVID-19 vaccination programme (England)**

Earlier this week, [eligible patients \(70 or over\) who have not yet heard from their practice or received a letter and have not yet taken up a vaccine offer](#), were invited to contact the [online booking service](#), call 119 or contact their GP practice directly. This aims to catch patients who may have been missed by or not responded to previous communications.

While the focus continues to be to vaccinate JCVI groups 1-4 this week if this is complete vaccination sites are permitted to offer appointments to people in cohort 5 and 6 instead of risking wastage.

Practices have also been asked to contact their clinically extremely vulnerable patients, who are shielding, to ensure they have been offered the vaccine.

### Vaccination of frontline health and social care workers

Protecting frontline health and social care workers from COVID-19 remains a priority, something that the BMA has been lobbying on, and NHSE/I has [written to commissioners](#) this week asking for reassurance that the offer of a vaccination frontline health and social care workers, as priority cohorts, has been fulfilled.

Practices are encouraged to liaise with local system partners to ensure that any staff who have not yet been offered a vaccine are offered one, including any locum GPs they are in regular contact with, as soon as practically possible.

[Social care workers](#) are now able to, for a limited period until 28 February, to self-book a vaccination at a vaccination centre or community pharmacy led local vaccination service [online](#)

### Transport of Astra Zeneca vaccine to GP practices within the PCN Grouping

The NHSE/I has confirmed that the [SPS SOP](#) (Standard Operating Procedure) has been updated to make clear that the Astra Zeneca COVID-19 vaccine does not need to be used immediately after being transported within the PCN grouping. The SOP states:

1.1.2. The vaccine should be used as soon as it is received or immediately put in a refrigerator to be administered as soon as possible thereafter. *This has been defined as meaning within 24 hours or over the following days.*

### Freeing up practices to support COVID-19 vaccination

NHSE/I has written to practices and commissioners providing further measures [on freeing up practices to support COVID-19 vaccinations](#), following their [letter of 7 January 2021](#). The letter sets out the arrangements for additional funding for PCN clinical directors, and income protection arrangements for the Minor Surgery DES and QOF (Quality and Outcomes Framework).



### Vaccine hesitancy

Surveys have shown stark differences by ethnic group in attitudes to COVID vaccines, and a quarter of younger women fear it would affect fertility. The BMA has published [guidance and resources](#) on how to communicate with different groups about the vaccine.

The British Fertility Society and Association of Reproductive and Clinical Scientists has also published some [COVID-19 Vaccines FAQs](#) to help address some of the vaccine hesitancy relating to fertility.

Read our [guidance on the COVID-19 vaccination programme](#) which includes information about what is expected of practices and the support available to enable practices to prioritise vaccine delivery.

### **Vaccine dose data (UK and England)**

Over [13.5 million people in the UK](#) have received their first dose, and almost 525,000 have received their second dose. The latest [data report](#) show that as of 12 February a total of 12.3 million doses in total have been given in England.

In the 10 weeks since vaccinations against coronavirus began in the UK, a first dose has been given to more than 11.8 million people in England, more than 715,900 people in Wales, more than 1.1 million in Scotland and more than 373,400 in Northern Ireland. This is an incredible achievement and thank you to all those that have made this possible.

### **Thank you from the Prime Minister**

In his [daily statement on the Coronavirus](#) on 10 February, we were pleased to see the Prime Minister thanking all those involved in delivering COVID vaccines in local GP sites, such as Alwoodley Medical Centre in Leeds:

“And I want to thank all of those involved for their heroic efforts: the doctors, nurses, military medics, local authorities, transport planners, warehouse operatives, delivery drivers, countless volunteers, often working through the night or even digging out snowed-in vaccination centres, like the community effort at Alwoodley Medical Centre in Leeds last Saturday so GPs, nurses and their teams could deliver 1,200 doses that day.”

Watch the clip [here](#) (24mins 46 seconds in)

### **Government White Paper on NHS reform and Integrated Care Systems (England)**

The Government has now published [‘Integration and Innovation: working together to improve health and social care for all’](#) – its white paper on new plans to reform the NHS, including proposals to make ICSs statutory and make major changes to way services are procured.

Chaand Nagpaul, Chair of BMA council, has released a [strong statement on the white paper](#), stressing the need for clinicians to be at the heart of any changes. The BMA will be producing a summary of the white paper for members shortly. In January, the [BMA submitted a comprehensive response](#) to NHS England’s legislative proposals, on which the Government’s plans have been based, highlighting the importance of ensuring proper clinical, GP, and LMC representation.

The proposals set out that GPs will be one of the few required members of the ICS leadership, and that there will be a lot of flexibility around how place level (former CCG) working is organised and works, so there is a key role for LMCs to engage in that to help shape it.

**Contract agreement 2021/22 webinar (England)**

Following the recent [contract agreement for 2021/22](#), we will be holding two contract virtual roadshows/webinars on the following dates:

24<sup>th</sup> February – 19.30-20.30

25<sup>th</sup> February – 12.30-13.30

Register [here](#)

A recording of the webinar will be available on the BMA website after the event.

**Assessments carried out for detention under the mental health to take place in person (England)**

Following a [ruling in case](#) brought by Devon Partnership NHS Trust against the Secretary of State, NHS England has issued directions to all mental health providers [not to carry out any assessments for the purposes of determining whether or not an individual should be detained under the act remotely](#) (by any medium). This applies to all members of a medical team involved in the decision and should be considered as the overriding guidance until further notice. This was reported by the [Guardian](#)

**Amendments to European Health Insurance Cards (EHICs) and S1 forms (UK) Regulations**

There have been some minor amendments to the GMS and PMS regulations relating to European Health Insurance Cards (EHICs) and S1 forms, to allow for reciprocal healthcare arrangements with EU member states.

The change has been made via the [Reciprocal and Cross-Border Healthcare \(Amendment etc.\) \(EU Exit\) Regulations 2020](#) which support the process of EU exit. The amendments are within the contract regulations that govern *information relating to overseas visitors* (GMS regulation 74F and PMS regulation 67F) – where, if patients choose to provide EHIC, S1 or PRC details on registration, then GPs must forward those details to NHS Digital or NHS BSA.

The new wording allows for the possibility that, on registration, patients may in future submit other (unnamed) documents which are equivalent to EHICs or S1s, which could be required as part of a “listed healthcare arrangement” between the UK and an EU/EEA country (or the EU). However, at present, the UK government has not agreed any listed healthcare arrangements which establish EHIC or S1 equivalent documents, so for now there is no possibility of patients submitting them.

**LMC UK Conference 2021 – submitting motions and registering**

The deadline for [submitting motions](#) to the LMC UK conference (to be held virtually on 12 and 13 May) is midday **Friday 19 February 2021**. The deadline to [register](#) for the conference is Friday 26 March 2021. More information will be provided nearer the time on how to access the virtual conference, and will be added to the [LMC page](#) on the BMA website. For further information please email [info.lmconference@bma.org.uk](mailto:info.lmconference@bma.org.uk)

**GP Retention Scheme Webinar**

A [webinar on the GP Retention Scheme](#) will be taking place on *Thursday 25 February* from 7pm – 8.15pm. We will be looking at how the GP Retention Scheme works for both employees and employers, tackling some of the common misconceptions about the scheme and hearing from GPs who are currently on the scheme. Speakers include:

Samira Anane, chair (GP and GPC policy lead for Education, training and workforce)

Naureen Bhatti (Health Education England)

Katie Bramall-Stainer (Retained GP)

Jonathan Rial (Retained GP)  
Paula Wright (Sessional GPs Committee)  
Tim Morton (GPC)

The session will be of interest to GPs who are considering applying to join the scheme or who would like to know more about it, GP employers and practice managers who would be interested in employing a retained GP and existing Retained GPs who have questions about the scheme or would like to hear some perspectives from other retained GPs and employers.

The webinar will be recorded and will be made available to view on the BMA website during the following week. There will a Q&A session at the end and you can submit any questions in advance to [cscott@bma.org.uk](mailto:cscott@bma.org.uk). Click [here](#) to sign up

### **GPC UK regional elections**

Nominations for regional seats as well as for a prison representative for GPC UK closed today (12 February) at 12pm. Voting will open at **12pm on Friday 19 February** for all seats, **until 12 March** for the by-election and prison GP seat and **19 March** for all other regional seats. To submit your vote after they have opened, please visit <https://elections.bma.org.uk/>.

To participate in this election you must have a BMA web account, if you do not have one please click [here](#) to create one.

For any questions relating to the role or GPC please contact [info.gpc@bma.org.uk](mailto:info.gpc@bma.org.uk). If you have any queries regarding the election process, please contact [elections@bma.org.uk](mailto:elections@bma.org.uk).

Read more, including link to the BMA committee profile, on the [BMA website](#)

### **COVID-19 media**

#### Vaccine passports

The [Daily Mail](#) reported on the suggestion that the vaccine minister Nadhim Zahawi said that GPs should provide COVID-19 vaccine certificates to travellers, to which I commented: "Practices are working flat out successfully delivering the Covid vaccination programme while continuing to provide non-Covid care to many other patients. To prioritise this vital work, we need a reduction in bureaucracy and admin tasks – including writing letters, which practices can charge for as this work is not funded by the NHS. It would far better if all patients had easy access to their vaccination history electronically, so that they are able to provide evidence of this without needing to request a letter from their surgery."

I told the [Telegraph](#) that the UK should set up an internationally-recognised system enabling people to have access to their own vaccination records, and told BBC Radio 4's World at One that it was untenable for GPs to administer vaccine passports. "We need to enable people who have been vaccinated to have access to the information about that. What we don't want is millions of people contacting their GPs for a letter outlining that. It's so much easier if we can empower patients to do this themselves. It's possible through apps – the NHS app can be configured to enable patients to see elements of their record including their vaccination status and that should be sufficient. What we need is a national or an international recognised system. But we need to avoid the need for large numbers of requests from letters from GPs because that simply isn't tenable."

#### Vaccine rollout (England)

I spoke to BBC News about the government's vaccine rollout targets, to get all adults over the age of 50 vaccinated against coronavirus by May, where I said: "We are on track to hit the government's

previous target by the middle of February, and if the supply keeps coming, GP practice teams, mass vaccination centres pharmacists and others will continue to vaccinate patients so we should hit the target again if we get the supply."

I also appeared on BBC News and BBC Breakfast on Sunday and spoke about the evolving logistics for the vaccine rollout. I welcomed the funding to cover the costs for GPs vaccinating housebound patients and said: "It recognises the additional cost in enabling people to do this type of work." Explaining how the evolving logistics of vaccine delivery are having a positive impact on the rollout, I commended the "GPs, practice nurses, pharmacists, paramedics, and a whole range of people supporting the work, delivering vaccines to people in households."

I spoke to [BBC Radio 5 Live](#) (from 2.07) to discuss the progress of the vaccination roll out following over-70s being told to contact their GPs for vaccination if they haven't yet been contacted. I said: "GP practice teams, mass vaccination centres, pharmacists, hospital centres, have all done remarkably well, delivering over 30 million vaccinations in a very short time. We want to get to as many patients as we possibly can and to as many healthcare workers as we possibly can. If anybody feels they have not had the opportunity because they've not received the invitation, despite people trying to contact them, now is the time to contact us, because we want to ensure everybody gets vaccinated and protected from this deadly infection."

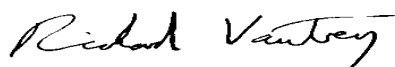
#### Vaccine rollout (Wales)

BMA Wales chair, Dr David Bailey, appeared on [BBC Radio Wales](#) (from 1.13.00) to discuss the vaccine roll out in Wales because the Welsh Government announced that Wales is expecting to be the first country in the UK to have vaccinated the four most vulnerable groups, hitting the target they set out and vaccinating approximately 21% of the population. Dr Bailey said: "We have vaccinated the most vulnerable groups, the over 70s and the clinically vulnerable are the people who are most likely to get very sick with Covid or die and we've covered almost all of them and this will make a huge difference in terms of admissions to hospitals and to deaths."

Read the latest GP bulletin [here](#)

Have a good weekend

Richard



**Richard Vautrey**  
Chair, BMA GPs committee