

LMC Update Email

9 November 2018

Dear Colleagues,

Government prevention strategy

The Government in England published its [prevention strategy](#) this week and the Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said GPs should be confident in reminding patients of their responsibilities in improving their own health. He also suggested that more money would be invested in primary care in order to improve disease prevention and he went on to say that he wanted to see the proportion of spending on General Practice increase. Among the proposals were commitments to increasing specialist mental health services, halving childhood obesity by 2030, and improving the provision of social prescribing in local areas.

Responding to his comments, I said "As this strategy notes, improving people's health requires public health initiatives to encourage wiser food choices, regular exercise and a change of lifestyle, including help to quit smoking and reduce alcohol intake. However, with these services stretched, it is GPs and their staff, as the first point of contact for many patients, who bear the workload brunt when their local population's health suffers. The Government must therefore take responsibility for the part wider budget cuts have played in the nation's deteriorating health." This was reported in the [Independent](#), [Pulse](#), [Yorkshire Post](#) and I was interviewed by [BBC Radio Leeds](#).

GP fit notes

There were a number of reports in the press regarding research originating from the Press Association looking at the number of fit notes issued by GPs. In response to this I said: "At a time when admin has become increasingly burdensome in general practice, compounding existing workload issues, it makes perfect sense for the healthcare professional seeing the patient to issue fit notes where needed, removing the added layer of bureaucracy involved in getting it signed off by an individual GP." This was reported in a number of regional publications, including the [Shropshire Star](#), Peterborough Today, [East Anglia Daily Times](#), [Rugby Advertiser](#), Yorkshire Post, and Oxford Mail.

Reducing out patient appointments with Skype consultations

In a foreword of a Royal College of Physician report on outpatient care, [Professor Steve Powis, NHS England medical director](#) said that online consultations for outpatient appointments should be encouraged to reduce work absences, tackle traffic congestion and save the NHS money, and "As part of the long-term plan for the NHS, it's right we look at ways to cut unnecessary appointments, save thousands of journeys, reduce traffic and pollution and make the NHS more efficient."

In response, I highlighted the need for resources to follow if workload was moved in to the community and also observed that Skype consultations may be less popular with older patients and that in rural areas broadband capacity could be an issue. Read the RCP report [here](#). The story was covered in the [Sun](#), [i News](#), [Telegraph](#), [The Times](#), [MailOnline](#) and [Pulse](#).

GPC England Premises Survey - reminder

A reminder to please fill in our premises survey to help us feed in to the GP premises review. The online survey can be accessed [here](#) until the 21st November. It only requires one response per practice and should take no more than 10 minutes to complete. For any questions about the survey please contact info.gpc@bma.org.uk

Self Care Week

Next week - 12–18 November – is Self Care Week. Read our [self care guidance for patients](#), the [GP guidance on self care and patient empowerment](#) and check out [resources from the Self Care Forum](#). Dr Farah Jameel, GPC England Executive member, has also written a blog that you can read [here](#).

Winter indemnity scheme

The winter indemnity scheme (WIS) will run again from 1 October 2018 to 31 March 2019. Matt Mayer, GPC England's policy lead on workload, has written [a blog](#) which will guide you through the WIS, and explain how to access it.

Have you been impacted by annualisation?

We believe the current arrangements relating to annualisation within the 2015 NHS Pension Scheme are discriminatory and are prepared to take legal action to address this. In order to help strengthen our argument against this unacceptable process we need more examples we can use as test cases. Krishan Aggarwal, deputy chair of the GP Sessional subcommittee, [explains what annualisation is and what to do if you have been affected by it](#). If you have been impacted by annualisation, please fill the survey and email us with your responses at pensions@bma.org.uk.

DWP guidance on completing medical reports

The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) has [published guidance for doctors who are involved with the benefit system](#). There is also more specific [guidance](#) which has been designed to offer support to GPs when asked to provide information on behalf of their patients and help clarify the various different benefits and processes involved. We continue to liaise with the DWP and meet regularly to seek improvements where possible.

LMC Wales Conference agenda

I am attending the Welsh Conference of LMCs which will take place tomorrow, Saturday 10 November, at the Vale Hotel, Hensol, Vale of Glamorgan. There are over 100 motions set for debate and popular topics include sustainability, workload, future of primary care clusters, and the GMC. Access the agenda [here](#).

LMC Secretaries Conference

A reminder that the deadline to register to attend the LMC Secretaries Conference (on 14 December, BMA House) is 14 November. The online application form for [nominations and choosing workshops is available](#) on the BMA website.

Reducing alcohol related harm briefing

In light of the forthcoming alcohol strategy in England, the BMA has published a short document setting out the full range of policy measures we believe are needed. Read [the paper here](#).

Read the latest GPC newsletter [here](#)

Read the Sessional GPs newsletter [here](#)

Have a good weekend.

Richard