

CLMC Bulletin 490 – 30/11/2021

LMC England conference 2021

The Annual Conference of England LMCs was held today and yesterday (25-26 November). At yesterday's session there were a variety of debates, and motions were passed on the negative impact that inappropriate transfer of workload from secondary care to primary care; the use of 'advice and guidance' which cannot be mandated; GP representation in Integrated Care Systems; review of NHS 111; and sustainability and carbon neutrality in general practice.

This morning, the Conference passed motions on online consultations; PCN DES guidance, GP contract reforms; and the COVID vaccination programme. There was also a very powerful and moving themed debate on Wellbeing for those working in general practice – something that is the focus of our [Support Your Surgery campaign](#), referenced again below.

In the afternoon of Friday, there was a closed section which closed to the media and which was not broadcast, to allow business to be debated without the constraints of a media spotlight. In the closed session, representatives discussed GPC England transparency; PCN DES; NHSE/I 'access plan'; and accelerated patient access to medical records.

In her inaugural speech to conference, I was delighted to hear the newly elected chair of GPC England, Dr Farah Jameel, lay out her vision to the profession. Her appeal for the Government and GPs to work together to 'build general practice back better' was particularly apt, and I agree that we are at a crossroads for general practice in England.

I was also pleased to see highlighted the immense efforts of all GPs throughout the pandemic, including the hugely successful vaccination campaign, and the difficult truth that many family doctors have been left demoralised, broken and exhausted.

On Friday afternoon, conference also discussed the results of the indicative ballot of GP practices in England. As you know, this was launched by the BMA after the profession rejected the Government's so-called winter 'rescue package' for general practice. The indicative ballot results showed that 84% of respondents said they would welcome non-compliance with COVID-19 exemption certificate requests, 80% said they would change the way they reported appointment data, and 58 % said they would support withdrawal from the PCN DES at the next opt-out period.

Read the [press statement](#) and full [transcript of her speech](#).

I would like to say thank you to Shaba Nabi in her first year as Chair of Conference, and Elliot Singer, Deputy Chair of Conference, for their excellent chairing and handling of this virtual event. Thanks too to the agenda committee and staff teams who have made the event run as well as it has this year.

A list of resolutions and a recording of the event will be published on the [BMA website](#) next week. Read the [Agenda](#) and [Supplementary Agenda](#).

Media

There was coverage in [the Guardian](#) about the mention of Industrial Action ballot in the speech by the GPC Chair. The story also featured in the [Telegraph](#), [GP Online](#), [Pulse](#), and [Yahoo News](#). [GP online](#) reported on the speech by the GPC England Chair, Dr Farah Jameel.

Health Select Committee inquiry into the future of general practice

This week the Parliamentary Health and Social Care Committee (HSCC), chaired by former Health Secretary, Jeremy Hunt MP, has launched a timely [inquiry into the future of general practice](#). The inquiry presents a key opportunity for the BMA to push our GP campaign asks, as well as to raise wider concerns and recommendations.

The BMA will submit a formal response, and you can share your views on review with us by emailing publicaffairs@bma.org.uk by the extended deadline of **Wednesday 1 December**, to support our response. Please do send across your thoughts so that we can represent the breadth of general practice perspectives to this important consultation.

Members of the public can also [submit their comments](#) directly to the inquiry by 14 December.

Supporting general practice against abuse

We continue to campaign against abuse of GPs and their staff with a number of resources available on [Support Your Surgery campaign](#) page, which can be used to explain to patients why practices need to work in the way they are doing in order to protect patients, and to make the best use of the available but limited workforce.

The resource package includes a [support your surgery](#) poster and [GP abuse](#) poster, a [template letter](#) to write to your local MP, and a [template letter](#) to share with local patient groups.

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

Please continue to show your support by signing the [Support Your Surgery petition](#) to put pressure on the Government to support general practice.

You can also get involved in the [#SupportYourSurgery social media discussion](#)

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

Your wellbeing

The BMA offers supportive [wellbeing services](#) which include **face-to-face counselling**. You can access one-off support or, after triage, a structured course of up to six face-to-face counselling sessions. Call **0330 123 1245** or [visit the website](#) for more information.

Updated infection control guidance (UK)

New [infection prevention and control \(IPC\) guidance](#) has now been published by the UK Health Security Agency, issued jointly by the Department of Health and Social Care, NHS England and the devolved nations' public health departments. It covers seasonal respiratory viruses and supersedes the previous COVID-19 specific guidance.

It recommends that face masks for staff and face masks/coverings for all patients and visitors should remain as an IPC measure within health and care settings over the winter period.

It also recommends that physical distancing should be at least 1 metre, increasing whenever feasible to 2 metres across all health and care setting, and that it should remain at 2 metres where patients with suspected or confirmed respiratory infection are being cared for or managed.

This follows the specific recommendations for changes to [IPC guidance in primary care](#) published last month. The BMA have already stressed that 1 metre social distancing will be difficult for some smaller surgeries and as such there will still have to be a reduced capacity in some practices. The guidance strongly emphasises that local decisions and risk assessments will ultimately decide whether a face-to-face consultation is appropriate and where physical distancing can be safely reduced. It is therefore for practices to determine what arrangements they have in the surgery.

TPP Patient access to records

Following the announcement that patients registered with TPP practices would be granted access to their records from December 2021, BMA GPC England wrote to NHSX calling for a delay, citing clinical safety and workload issues. This week we received a response confirming that initial rollout will now be delayed until April 2022 with time given to work with NHSX to ensure that it happens safely and with minimal disruption. We will provide more information on any further changes as and when it is received.

GP appointment data

The [GP appointment data for October have now been published, showing](#) an increase in the number of GP appointments, including the number of those being seen face-to-face.

Last month practices in England delivered more than 4 million more appointments than they did in September, a total of 33.9 million in October, and more than 3 million more than they did in the same month pre-pandemic in 2019. Meanwhile the number of people being seen face-to-face continues to rise, which underlines how wrong suggestions are that practices are closed and not seeing patients in person.

What's not picked up in these statistics though are the reams of other work that GPs and their colleagues do outside of consultations and at the same time we are continuing to lose GPs. Staff are exhausted and demoralised, and there are simply not enough hours in the day to provide safe, quality care to patients. Read the full statement [here](#)

Media

The BMA was featured in the [Times](#) and the [Telegraph](#) about the latest GP appointment data.

Updated PGD and national Protocols for COVID vaccination programme

Updates to the following PGDs and national protocols, for the COVID-19 vaccination programme in England, have been published:

[National protocol for COVID-19 mRNA vaccine BNT162b2 \(Pfizer/BioNTech\)](#)

[National protocol for Comirnaty® COVID-19 mRNA vaccine](#)

[Patient group direction for Comirnaty® \(Pfizer BioNTech\)](#)

[Patient Group Direction for COVID-19 mRNA vaccine BNT162b2 \(Pfizer/BioNTech\)](#)

New interactive ESA 113

The new interactive ESA 113 form, which healthcare professionals fill in if the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) asks for information in connection with Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit, is now live on the [gov.uk website](#)

Application process for the GPC England Executive Team

Following the election of a new GPC England Chair last week, the call for applications for the three GPCE Executive Team posts from interested candidates is now open. Read the [role profile](#).

We are inviting applications from all GPCE members and LMCs (local medical committees).

The deadline for applications is **2pm on Friday 3 December 2021** – submit your application to: info.gpc@bma.org.uk. Applications received after this time will not be accepted.

The current whole-time time commitment for GPCE Exec Team member is 2.5 days per week. This time commitment will depend on your personal circumstances / working preferences. A competitive remuneration package will be agreed commensurate with working hours. The arrangements will be covered by a contractor agreement between the contractor (Exec member) and the BMA.

Should you have any questions/queries about the application process or the Executive Team role, please contact the GPCE Secretariat via info.gpc@bma.org.uk.
Get the full details on the [GPC England webpage](#)

Media

New GPC England Chair

The [Daily Telegraph](#) reported on the appointment of Dr Farah Jameel, as the new GPC England Chair.

Backlog

The [Guardian](#) featured an article warning that a new Government plan to scrap tens of millions of hospital outpatient appointments could put patients at risk and add to the practice overload. In response to this, BMA council deputy chair Dr David Wrigley, said: "While it is important that immediate action is taken to tackle the largest ever backlog of care these short-term proposals by the health secretary have the potential to present significant challenges for patients and seek to worsen health disparities across the country." The story was also covered in [Yahoo News](#) and [MSN News](#).

Read the GP bulletin [here](#).

Read the latest Sessional GPs newsletter [here](#)