

CLMC Bulletin 492 – 14/12/21

Covid Boosters and Omicron

[This link takes you to the NHSE page that holds the most up to date information.](#) For your ease you can view the vaccine deployment and the wider preparing the system letter below. All other updates relating to Omicron and the booster campaign are included in the email that accompanied this bulletin. Due to the speed at which things are developing and changing we will continue to provide emails rather than waiting for the bulletin and adding to the website. As always, the CLMC focus is upon trying to provide practical, clear and timely advice for practices to protect both practices and patients.

[Next steps for NHS Covid19 vaccine deployment NHSE letter](#)

[Preparing the NHS for potential impact of Omicron and winter pressures NHSE letter](#)

Proof of vaccination for those age 12 and upwards

Following concerns from practices inundated with Covid Pass requests (particularly for parents wishing to add children), CLMC raised this issue with the national team at GPC. Following our discussions with GPC and the national digital team we are pleased there has been some movement and the Pass is now available for children without having to contact the practice.

Fully vaccinated patients age 12 and upwards can request proof of vaccination via 119 or the internet and a paper copy will be posted which conforms to the EU standards for the EU covid pass. There will be a QR code printed for each vaccine and it will have a validity period of 30 days. The document may need to be ordered again if a foreign trip is planned after the date of expiry.

If 16 or over patients can get a digital pass via the NHS app as well. This route isn't open to 12-15 year olds yet but a digital solution should be available in the new year.

To get the pass look here:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/covid-pass/>

and the direct link to get the paper copy is here:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/covid-pass/get-your-covid-pass-letter/>

Temporary GP contract changes to support Winter pressures and the COVID-19 Vaccination program

As shared last week, following discussion with GPC, NHSE/I published a [letter](#) announcing changes to QOF and IIF and changes to the COVID vaccination DES. NHSE has now provided [further guidance](#) on these changes. We recognise the sands have shifted again with booster prioritisation letters above but these QOF and IIF relaxations extend beyond the 3 weeks of rapid vaccination and will be particularly relevant when considering recovery in early 2022.

We recognise the significant unprecedented challenges you are all facing at present and know that you will do your best in the days and weeks to come, as you have been doing these past 20 months. Thank you for all that you are doing for your patients, for your communities. [Read the GPC press statement >](#)

Secretary of state for health and social care Sajid Javid wrote a [letter](#) to primary care ahead of the most recent announcement, thanking staff for their efforts on the COVID vaccination programme.

Pandemic response – Plan B

It is important to reiterate that the current [guidance on isolation and infection prevention and control](#) remains in place. The main amendments include face masks becoming compulsory in most public indoor venues, other than hospitality, NHS Covid passes to be mandatory in specific setting, using a negative test or full vaccination via the NHS Covid Pass, vaccines and testing to remain the best line of defence and people are being asked to work from home if they can.

A reminder to colleagues of the recently updated [infection prevention and control \(IPC\) guidance](#) 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 recommended 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 recommended 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.

It is recommended that screening, triaging, and testing for SARS-CoV-2 continues over the winter period. Testing for other respiratory pathogens will depend on the health and care setting according to local / country-specific testing strategies / frameworks and data

This followed the specific recommendations for changes to [IPC guidance in primary care](#) published on October. 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.

GPC are working with RCGP on updating the joint workload prioritisation document. <https://www.bma.org.uk/media/4386/bma-rcgp-covid-workload-prioritisation-aug-2021.pdf>

The BMA responded to the prime minister's announcement on Wednesday 8 December that the Government will be implementing Plan B for dealing with COVID and the Omicron variant. [Read more >](#)

Moving vaccines within a PCN grouping

Considering the need to rapidly expand capacity, the MHRA has expanded the circumstances in which the COVID-19 vaccine may be moved from a PCN Grouping's designated site(s) to another location.

GP practices within a PCN Grouping may move COVID-19 vaccine from their Designated Site to collaborating individual GP practices within the PCN Grouping to increase the possibility of opportunistic administration of the vaccination to increase take up of the vaccine. Movement continues to be subject to:

- all requirements and guidance on the movement, storage and handling of COVID-19 vaccines being adhered to;
- there being no onward movement of the vaccine. For example, it is not permitted for a PCN to transport the COVID-19 vaccine from the PCN Grouping's designated site(s) to a collaborating individual GP practice and then onto a pop-up site or care home etc; and
- the arrangements being reflected in the PCN Grouping's Collaboration Agreement

The NHSE template [Collaboration Agreement](#) has now been updated to reflect these changes.

Cause for Celebration and GP Santa Wishlist

We wanted to share with you a small celebration and acknowledgement to the great contribution that primary care has made to the Covid vaccination programme. With all the recent publicity chastising general practice for insufficient face to face care we thought it important to pause, digest and celebrate some figures which we believe are worthy of celebration.

8 December saw the anniversary of the first Covid vaccination being delivered in England. On this date, there have been just over 100 million doses given. 90+% of those via services managed and run by GPs. That's equivalent to just under 1/3rd of the normal annual workload in general practice. This feels like something worthy of celebration and that should be shared via as many channels as possible.

It is easy to lose sight of the wonderful achievements and, all too often, the positive is drowned in the mass of negativity. The lion's share of this vaccination program being delivered by General Practice, has been a massive undertaking at significant personal costs for many of you, a huge team effort delivered in partnership with your communities. In coming days and weeks many of you will continue to step up to the national priority of boosting this country through a surge of Omicron. Thank you for all that you have achieved and all that you will continue to do for your communities and for this nation.

CLMC have shared this message, together with the santa wishlist, with all our commissioning, HealthWatch and LA colleagues, requesting they bear this in mind when considering comments from and towards general practice. We have also requested they share this in their systems though it may well get lost with the more recent announcements and the current pressures we are all experiencing.

Also, we wanted to share [this pictorial](#) with you. This has been created by a GP in Solihull, Dr Sabby Kant and originated on the resilient GP forum. It is very striking in expressing so many practice views in one place! Most of the details on there can be lifted and fit exactly with the picture in Tees (the only variation we can see is around the LIS contracts which is a small element on the page and though the title is different our LIS fits neatly in there too!) so rather than reinvent the wheel, we thought it helpful to share this one page, pictorial snapshot of thoughts from the very people who carried out the millions of vaccinations.

Apologies if you have seen this already; let us call this festive pictorial a Christmas card, wish list and plea for understanding from primary care. Of course, this does not even begin to pick up the recent developments with CQC unannounced inspections and winter access requirements let alone the stepped up vaccination programme but it gives just a little insight into how it feels in primary care land and what is on the general practice wish list to end the year.

[New to Partnership Payment Scheme \(N2PP\)](#)

This will be extended into the 2022/23 financial year and NHSE/I have now removed the requirement to apply within six months of commencing a partnership role. Following a review of the timeframe to apply for the scheme, and in acknowledgement of the challenges the deadline presented to busy new partners as well as the additional pressures created by the COVID-19 pandemic, NHSE/I has removed the six-month deadline, including for submitted applications that meet all other eligibility criteria. When the scheme comes to an end, there will be a cut-off deadline after the scheme closure date by which applications from eligible individuals must be submitted, and NHSE/I will give advance notice of this.

NHSE/I continues to encourage all individuals who have commenced in an equity share partnership on or after 1 April 2020 to submit their application as soon as they can after they become eligible. They are now reviewing all applicants this affects and updating their guidance to reflect the changes > Read [NHSE/I's primary care bulletin](#)

[Tees Valley Primary Care Training Hub](#)

Please view the latest Training Hub Newsletter [here](#)

[UK's most vulnerable people to receive life-saving COVID-19 treatments in the community](#)

Thousands of the UK's most vulnerable people will be among the first in the world to access life-saving, cutting-edge antiviral and antibody treatments from today, the government has announced.

A national study called [PANORAMIC](#), run by the University of Oxford in close collaboration with GP hubs, has now launched and is recruiting around 10,000 UK patients at risk of serious illness from COVID-19 to have the opportunity to take the treatment molnupiravir at home after receiving a positive PCR test.

Those at highest risk who test positive for the virus – for example, people who are immunocompromised, cancer patients or those with Down's syndrome – will also be able to access either molnupiravir or the novel monoclonal antibody Ronapreve outside of the study from 16 December 2021.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uks-most-vulnerable-people-to-receive-life-saving-covid-19-treatments-in-the-community>

[LMC Buying Group](#)

Please see attached the December e-update: [Quarterly E-Update for LMCs.](#)

[Supporting general practice](#)

Read about how GPC are campaigning against abuse of GPs and their staff on the [Support Your Surgery campaign](#) page, which includes a number of resources that practices can use.

NHSE/I workforce staff survey development

The NHSE/I workforce team has commissioner Picker, an independent health and social care research charity, to develop a new [questionnaire for the Primary Care Staff Survey Pilot](#). They are looking for volunteers (both clinical and non-clinical staff) to make sure the questionnaire is clear, easily understood and relevant to staff working in General Practice and Primary Care Networks. If you volunteer you will need to:

- Attend a one-to-one 60 minute interview with research from Picker, over MS Teams.
- During the interview you will be required to complete the questionnaire, voicing your thoughts throughout completion.

An interview will be arranged at time convenient to you, during one of the rounds detailed below.

- Round 1 – 16th December to 20th December
- Round 2 – 4th January to 6th January
- Round 3 – 12th January to 14th January

Find out more [here](#) or contact volunteer@surveycoordination.com to register your interest.

GPC GP Bulletin & Informal Messaging

Read the BMA's GP bulletin [here](#).

Read GPC Chair twitter page: [Dr Farah Jameel \(@DrFJameel\) / Twitter](#)

Read BMA twitter page: [General Practice \(@BMA_GP\) / Twitter](#)

BMA COVID-19 guidance

Read the BMA [COVID-19 toolkit for GPs and practices](#), which provides comprehensive guidance for practices to manage contractual issues and service provision during the coronavirus pandemic. You can access all the BMA guidance on COVID-19, including ethical guidance, [here](#). There is also guidance on the following topics:

- [Model terms of engagement for a GP providing temporary COVID-19 services](#)
- [Terms and conditions for sessional GPs](#)
- [Risk assessments](#)

Mental health and wellbeing – looking after you and your practice team

Primary care coaching - communications toolkit

In these pressured times it is absolutely critical you look after yourself and your teams. NHSE/I have launched their new communications toolkit, supporting promotion of the NHS England and NHS Improvement Looking After You national coaching service: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1aS8-sTH1W9gv49d9Tq3hhwg9jJZZ5MFs>

Within the toolkit you will find social media images, banners, bulletin copy, website copy and quotes from those who have used the free services. There has been some excellent feedback from those who have accessed coaching, but we are aware there are still many colleagues who are not aware of this available support. It remains a difficult time for the workforce, so we would appreciate any help you are able to give to share these offers.

A member of their team would also be happy to come to meetings or events within regions and systems to talk about the offers: england.lookingafteryou@nhs.net

A coaching landing page hosts all three offers: www.england.nhs.uk/lookingafteryou. Recognising that frontline primary care colleagues involved in the delivery of primary care services, both clinical and non-clinical, continue to face many challenges, NHSE have developed three coaching offers for the workforce:

- 1) Looking After You Too – coaching about you and your wellbeing
- 2) Looking After Your Team – coaching about you and your team
- 3) Looking After Your Career - coaching about you and your career

The coaches are highly skilled and experienced, and all coaching is free and confidential. The sessions are delivered virtually, preferably via a video platform, but telephone appointments are also available. Thousands of people have booked sessions and given positive feedback on their experience.

GP appraisal leads and GP tutors offer of telephone support conversations remain for any GP who feels they would like to talk through any aspect of their professional/personal life that has been affected by Covid. To organise a telephone support conversation, either with the appraisal lead or with a GP tutor, please contact the appraisal team, or email di.jelley@nhs.net

Crisis Coaching & Mentoring: [Coaching and mentoring sessions are available now](#) for all NHS and Health and Social Care leaders. Delivered by The Centre for Army Leadership and Meyler Campbell Coaching, these sessions are designed to support with the huge pressure on the ability of the NHS to deliver safe, high-quality care, sharpen focus on meeting the core needs of staff, ensuring wellbeing and sustained motivation to deal with this rapidly changing situation. The intervention will give leaders an understanding of crisis leadership that goes beyond what is necessary and focused on engagement and motivation through Covid19. Further information and how to register [see link here](#)

CLMC continue to offer [wellbeing services via Validium](#) for **ALL working in general practice within Tees** (including locums). We understand that a number of staff have accessed this confidential service and it has been well received.

The BMA's [report on the mental health and wellbeing of the medical workforce](#) which sets out ten recommendations to be addressed to protect staff during the pandemic and in the future. The BMA is here for you and 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 today or [visit the website](#) for more information.

For all other support, speak to a BMA adviser on [0300 123 1233](tel:03001231233) or email support@bma.org.uk

[Read more about doctors' wellbeing during the pandemic](#) and on Twitter [@TheBMA](#)

There is also a wealth of [NHSE provided support](#) available to you and your team including a wellbeing support helpline, a 24/7 text alternative, [peer to peer, team and personal resilience support](#), free mindfulness apps and the [#LookingAfterYouToo coaching offer](#).

NHSEI have recently developed a new [communications toolkit](#) and resources to help promote their offers to the workforce. The toolkit has an overview of each offer, including bulletin, email and social media copy, and links to some case studies and posters. You can also follow this link [Primary Care Coaching – Link to Assets](#) to a range of resources, including social media assets, a video, PDF case studies and posters, website and email banners.