

GP contract changes guidance

Following the [announcement of the GP contract changes](#) for 2022/23, which will come into effect from 1 April, GPC have now published an [explainer video](#) explaining what this will mean for practices.

Read also the GPC [guidance about the contract changes](#) to support practices in their decision making and next steps.

Rebuild general practice campaign launch

GPs and their teams faced an extremely challenging time during the COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, general practice in England continues to face a worsening workforce crisis. BMA research published last year showed that the NHS has lost nearly 2,000 full-time equivalent GPs in England since 2015.

In response, working in partnership, the BMA and GPDF have launched the [Rebuild General Practice](#) campaign. To launch the campaign, Dr Kieran Sharrock, GPC England Deputy Chair, gave a [keynote speech](#) at the King's Fund, where he was joined by Jeremy Hunt MP, to outline the impact on patients that the workforce crisis is having.

You can read more about the launch event on the [BMA website](#)

To coincide with the launch, the campaign [released the findings](#) of a survey of GPs in England, Wales, and Scotland, which showed that:

- nearly nine in 10 GPs fear patients aren't always safe at their surgeries
- 7 out of 10 GPs feel the risk to 'patient safety' is increasing
- staff shortages and too little time for appointments were main factors putting patients at risk
- 86% of GPs stated they didn't have enough time with patients
- 77% of GPs said GP shortages were putting patient safety at risk.

It is vital that we build as much support for the campaign as possible. You can find more information on the [campaign website >](#)

You can also follow and share content, news and updates on the campaign [Twitter account >](#)

Future of general practice - Health Select Committee evidence

Dr Kieran Sharrock gave oral evidence on the [future of general practice to the Health and Social Care Committee](#), where he told of the ongoing criticism and general negativity about GPs and general practice must end if the NHS wants to retain the doctors we have and recruit more.

He said: "One in five GPs has been the butt of abuse as a result of the recent campaign against general practice. Dialling down the rhetoric against general practice is really important if you want to retain and recruit GPs.

"We have to be honest with the public about what general practice is delivering now, not what it should be delivering - clearly a 10 or 20-year plan is needed for that, including a workforce plan – but at the moment we can't provide the care to the level we want to. We need the Government to support us and say, 'This is what your GP can do at the moment because of the rise in demand, the huge backlog and the loss of staff.'"

Read the [BMA press statement](#) and get a snapshot of the session on the [BMA's GP twitter account](#)

Dr Sharrock also met with Shadow Minister for Primary Care and Patient Safety, Feryal Clark MP, where he outlined the key aims of the BMA and GPDF's joint campaign to restore general practice. They discussed the impact of the ever growing workload, and falling numbers of GPs on both the health of doctors and patient safety. In addition, they also discussed how these critical issues could be addressed through better workforce planning, reductions in bureaucracy and increased resources, alongside an honest public facing campaign explaining these pressures and outlining how NHS services and access, have changed following the pandemic.

Safe working guidance

General practice is in under increasing pressure, and GPC have recently published a [safe working guide](#) to enable practices to prioritise safe patient care, within the present bounds of the GMS contract.

GPC have now added some videos to the resources section directing practices to the safest way to continue deliver patient care, including one on [redirecting patients to the safest part of the system](#).

Correction: GPC have updated their [Safe working guidance](#) to correct some data we had extrapolated from figures in '[At Your Service](#)' (published by the Policy Exchange) to clarify that is 37 patients per day that GPs are seeing on average.

MCCD and death certification

There have been many queries around seeing a body, and a recent email about having 'seen' or 'attended' a body for the issuance of an MCCD. There were changes under the Covid Regulations, some of which are continuing from 24 March 2022. You can view those continuing [here](#)

Please note, to complete an MCCD, there is no legal requirement to have seen a deceased patient in the 28 days before death or at any time after the death. However, if a deceased patient has not been seen in the 28 days before death or at any time after death, the registrar will automatically refer this to the coroner.

Health foundation report on access to general practice

The Health Foundation and NHSE/I have published an [analysis on access to patient preferences when accessing GP services](#), which suggests that while not suitable for everyone or all conditions, in many cases patients themselves will often prefer and indeed request a remote consultation.

Despite the fact that General Practice continued to provide high quality care throughout the pandemic and in line with national guidance in place to keep patients and staff safe, leading to a rise in remote consultations, this evolution in how we provide care attracted significant criticism.

Going forward it's crucial that patient choice, clinical need, and staff and practice capacity are at the centre of decisions around how people can interact with their surgery, rather than pressure from politicians or the press. Read the full BMA statement [here](#)

GP to patient ratio

Recent [NHS Digital data](#) has shown that patient ratios vary widely across England, from 41,000 patients per GP at a practice in Coventry and Warwickshire, to just 96 at a Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin surgery.

This data shows worryingly large disparities in GP to patient ratios across the country and it is wholly unacceptable that patients should have to experience such variations in access to care.

The Government has failed to address the longstanding recruitment and retention issues in general practice and we now have a unsafe situation where fewer GPs are being tasked with the responsibility of caring for significantly more patients.

The Government should therefore provide urgent and substantial support to enable high quality care.

Infection Prevention Control in healthcare settings

Although the COVID restrictions have been lifted in England, the [Infection Prevention Control](#) (IPC) guidance for healthcare workers remain in place and still advises that face masks should continue be worn by staff and patients in health care settings.

Read also the BMA's briefing in response to the Government's '[Living with COVID-19](#)' strategy which sets out the plans for managing COVID-19 going forward.

Download the GPC updated [poster about using face coverings in practices](#).

New policy for applications to the Performers Lists

NHSE/I has published a [new policy for applications to the Medical Performers List](#) (MPL), which introduces a number of changes including the removal of duplicated checks, introduction of more nuanced support tailored to the specific needs of the performer, and confirmation that performers are able to increase or decrease their scope of work whilst on the MPL.

It is hoped by NHSE/I and the BMA that the new policy will bring positive changes for GPs in England. It is anticipated that it will allow a quicker application process due to the reduced documentary evidence required, and that the majority of applicants will be able to be included on the list with an education and/or clinical support plan and a probationary flag. These applicants will not require consideration by a Performers List Decision Panel. Read more [here](#).

If you have any questions or feedback on implementation of the new policy please contact info.ret@bma.org.uk

Friends and Family Test

The requirement to submit Friends and Family Test (FFT) data was temporarily suspended in March 2020 to allow resources to be freed up for prioritisation during the pandemic.

The requirement that practices report to commissioners about the FFT returns will now be reintroduced into the GP Contract from 1 April 2022. To allow practices time to get fully up to speed, practices will only be required to submit data from Q2 in 22/23 onwards and commissioners will be made aware of this.

Practices will need to implement the new [FFT guidance](#), and the key requirements for practices are:

- make the FFT available for people who want to use it to give feedback
- use the standard FFT question (Overall, how was your experience of our service?)
- include at least one free text question, decided by the practices
- submit monthly data to NHSE using CQRS.

Emergency GMC registration to end in September

The UK government [has announced](#) that the temporary emergency GMC registration they introduced to support the pandemic response, will close on 30 September 2022. The GMC will shortly be in contact with doctors who still hold this type of registration to outline their options and to thank them for holding this type of registration during such a challenging period. The options are likely to include retaining temporary emergency registration until the 30th September deadline, asking the GMC to remove it, or applying to restore their routine registration and licence to practise.

Read more about temporary registration on the [GMC website](#)

Flu orders

Following the recent publication of the [guidance for the 2022/23 flu programme](#), we are aware that some practices may have based their orders on last year's expanded cohorts and be experiencing difficulties in amending them. GPC have raised this with NHS England who have assured that they have received commitments from manufacturers to being flexible if the reimbursement letter impacted existing orders. If manufacturers are refusing to be provide this flexibility, practices should contact the NHS England flu inbox (phco.fluops@nhs.net) with the specifics and they will assist.

Fit Notes

In July 2021, the Government outlined plans to deliver fit note improvements including:

- removing the requirement to sign fit notes in ink (from April 2022) and allowing a wider range of eligible professionals to sign fit notes in (planned for summer 2022).
- embedding electronic fit notes in hospital systems are planned from spring 2022 and encouraging hospital doctors to issue fit notes to patients in their care will also further reduce the burden on GPs.

We are expecting further detail of these changes from the DWP over the coming weeks to enable awareness of and preparation for them and will update members accordingly.

GP and LMC Representation in ICSs

Ensuring a strong voice for General Practice within ICSs (Integrated Care Systems) remains a key priority for GPC and the BMA, particularly as the Health and Care Bill nears the end of its passage through Parliament and the development of ICSs as statutory bodies gathers pace.

The BMA has been campaigning, both independently and as part of a wider coalition, for ICSs to include a strong voice for GPs. This includes specific asks to ensure enhanced representation on ICBs (Integrated Care Boards) – the element of the ICS responsible for NHS funding and commissioning – beyond the single GP representative set out in the Bill, as well as ensuring LMCs have a recognised voice throughout ICSs.

ICBs are also beginning to establish how their GP representatives will be selected and whether additional positions for GPs, or other representative functions such as GP advisory boards, will be established. GPC are monitoring this situation closely, working with Regional Councils and BMA policy teams. Find more information on the BMA's work on the [Health and Care Bill](#) and [ICSs](#).

Uyghur crisis educational webinar

You may have heard about the persecution of the Uyghur and Turkic Muslim minority populations in Xinjiang, China. In December 2021, the People's Uyghur Tribunal found the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the People's Republic of China (PRC) guilty of genocide. The Tribunal also found evidence of sustained medical involvement in genocide using methods such as forced abortions and forced birth control.

In response to medical involvement in these atrocities, the BMA Ethics and Human Rights department is hosting an educational webinar, 'Doctors and Genocide – medical involvement in the persecution of the Uyghur people' on Monday the 4th of April, 6:30pm-8:00pm. It will focus on medical involvement in the abuse of fundamental rights in Xinjiang and seek opportunities for concrete action.

If you would like to learn more about the Uyghur Tribunal and its Judgement, the clinical and human rights analysis of the genocide, the Chinese politics behind this oppression, and listen to a personal account from a survivor, please join the webinar.

Email Julian Sheather at jsheather@bma.org.uk or Carrie Reidinger creidinger@bma.org.uk for more information and joining link. Do also visit the [webpage](#), where you will find more information.

GPC GP Bulletin & Informal Messaging

Read the latest GP bulletin (England) [here](#)

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

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

Read more about the work of the [GPC England](#)

Read practical guidance for [GP practices](#)

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-sTH1W9qv49d9Tq3hhwg9jJZZ5MFs>

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.

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. 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

There is also a wealth of [ICS provided support through their North East Support Hub](#) Telephone: 0191 223 2030 or Email: Hubstheword@cntw.nhs.uk or via online form on the website

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.