

GPC England Update

GPC England debated and voted on a motion regarding the working conditions of independent contractor GPs. This motion was passed by the committee and reaffirmed GPC England's commitment to defending the independent contractor model, whilst highlighting the committee's concerns about the pressures that the model is currently under, and its undervalued nature by the government. The motion also contained a proposal for a separate committee for independent contractor GPs to be established. After a considered and rich debate, this part of the motion was not passed. The committee believed the interests of independent contractors, and defence of the model, were best served through representation by one united committee for all GPs in England.

Commenting on the motion GPC England Chair, Dr Farah Jameel, said:

“General practice has evolved over many years, changing to meet the needs of communities, but with the independent contractor model sustaining as the core on which it is built. We know that patients appear to benefit from continuity of care, with the quality, strength and consistency of their relationship with their family doctor having a significant impact on their health outcomes. All of this and more is possible through the independent contractor model.

The outcome of this motion reaffirms the committee's wholehearted support and commitment to this model that allows for high-quality, cost effective and timely care, despite it being poorly valued by policymakers. And it further demonstrates how important it is that the profession stands together with strong representation for all GPs, regardless of career path, at a time when general practice and the whole of the NHS and care system are facing unprecedented challenges.

With the NHS undergoing significant reorganisation, it is vital that a strong, high quality general practice is able to thrive as part of the wider system and meet the needs of patients.”

Rebuild General Practice: support the campaign

The [Rebuild general practice campaign](#) continues to tackle the crisis facing general practice. The campaign has been building awareness of the key issues in the media, with the public and with politicians. We need your support to amplify the message and make the campaign a success.

Rebuild General Practice #LetterToMyPatients launched on Monday 23rd May on Twitter and in a national newspaper.

Here's a reminder of how GPs can get involved...

1. [Sign the open letter](#) - you simply need to email hello@rebuildgp.co.uk with your full name to add your signature
2. [Share the open letter](#) on the platform of your choice
3. [Write your own letter](#) to your patients - please send your letters to hello@rebuildgp.co.uk and they will be shared on the [@RebuildGP](#) Twitter account.

All rebuild general practice assets and guidance can also be [accessed here](#)

[More information](#) on how to get involved and to access campaign materials. You can also follow and share content, news, and updates on the campaign [Twitter page](#)

Navigating the GP sponsorship process webinar

The BMA has partnered with legal firm Magrath Sheldrick, who oversee the BMA [immigration advice service](#), to develop a webinar on navigating the GP sponsorship process. The webinar is aimed at GP employers and offers practical tips on how to navigate the current sponsorship process to recruit non-UK nationals and addresses frequently asked questions on the process itself. The link to the webinar is enclosed: www.magrath.co.uk/gp-practices-sponsor-licence-process/

If you have any questions, or would like to share your experiences of navigating the sponsorship process, please contact Caroline Strickland, Senior Policy Advisor, International Affairs (cstrickland@bma.org.uk).

More information about certificate of sponsorship is available on the [BMA website](#)

GP training needs reform: the status quo isn't working for anyone

A recent BMA survey has shown a shocking level of unacceptable behaviour towards trainees. Read more in this [blog](#) by Euan Strachan-Orr, chair of the BMA's GP Trainees Committee.

Preceptorship to support ARRS roles within Primary Care

This [flyer](#) outlines details about become a Preceptor to support ARRS roles within Primary Care. If interested please send an expression of interest form to Jonathan Armstrong Jonathan.armstrong@hee.nhs.uk by the 1st July 2022.

In order to increase recruitment and retention into ARRS (Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme) roles in Primary Care, North East and North Cumbria's Primary Care Training Hub is piloting a Preceptorship for 3 ARRS Roles, Mental Health Practitioners, First Contact Physiotherapists and Pharmacy Technicians. Health Education England are seeking expressions of interest from people who would like to become a Preceptor with the programme. The Preceptor will support those new into an ARRS role in General Practice, especially those new to Primary Care, to get a great start in their role.

Please note this offer is open to all staff.

Healthier Together | Home (nenc-healthiertogether.nhs.uk)

CLMC have been made aware of this resource from the Children's Network. It contains useful information to increase parental confidence in self managing illnesses, with clear information as to when to seek help from general practice, and when to attend A&E. This may reduce demand for urgent appointments into your practice, and/or assist in care navigation of these requests. A link to this resource could be added to your website.

There are also a wide range of clinical guidance pathways which provide a helpful aide memoire for clinicians to alternative diagnoses and red flags for urgent assessment.

Annual health checks to patients aged 14 years or over on the learning disabilities register

Under the Learning Disability Health Check Scheme (LDHC) Directed Enhanced Service (DES), GP practices are required to offer an annual health check to each patient aged 14 years or over on the learning disabilities register. [The requirements are set out in the DES Directions 2022](#). During the pandemic, NHSE advised GP practices that the LDHC could be undertaken with a blend of remote and in person appointments.

However, recent feedback of patient experience has indicated a preference to return to face to face checks NHSE are encouraging GP practices to ensure that at least part of the check is face to face unless there is a strong clinical and / or patient preference for not doing so. Where the LDHC has already been delivered virtually this financial year, this will still be counted. [More information can be found here](#)

The GP Learning Disability Register (GPLDR)

A person does not need a formal learning disability diagnosis to access the GPLDR. [Guidance](#), including a [checklist](#), is available to support Primary Care where they believe someone meets the criteria and would benefit from an Annual Health Check (AHC), with the option of using a non-diagnostic SNOMED code to support this process.

It's important to capture Children and Young People (CYP) in the GPLDR, so that eligible people aren't missed. GPLDR should be reviewed and updated at least annually. New additions to the GPLDR are supported via QOF with four points allocated for new additions.

Improvements to benefit eligibility at the end of life

On Monday 4 April 2022, eligibility for the Special Rules changed. This means that individuals can make a fast-tracked claim to two working age benefits if they have an estimated 12 months or less to live. To support people accessing these benefits and to find out more about the new process and medical evidence form, [DWP have published this guidance](#).

Medical exemption service

As of 12 May 2022 the domestic NHS COVID Pass was no longer available, and the medical exemptions service (119) no longer accepts new applications from people who want to use the domestic NHS COVID Pass to prove they cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons.

The 119 service will continue running at a minimal level until 11 July, only accepting queries to the call centre and processing outstanding applications via GP assessments into the Summary Care Record application (SCRa). GPs will be required to continue processing applications until 11 July to comply with the amendments to GP regulations. Previously granted exemptions will continue to show throughout in the NHS Covid Pass under "view my records" except where they have expired due to time-limited grounds.

The NHS COVID Pass for international travel will continue to be available as normal. More information about medical exemptions can be found on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).

LMC UK conference 2022

The [2022 UK LMC Conference](#) of 10-11 May was the first in-person UK LMC conference since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. The conference was adeptly chaired by Katie Bramall-Stainer and her deputy Matt Mayer. Our thanks go to them, the rest of the conference agenda committee, the GPC secretariat, including Dominic Norcliffe-Brown, Kathryn Reece and Karen Day, Caroline Eason from the BMA conference unit, as well as the numerous other members of BMA staff who provided support during the conference.

The conference was opened by Dr Phil White, chair of GPC UK, who congratulated the profession for all its hard work during the pandemic, including rolling out remote consultations and the vaccination programmes in record times. Dr White admonished the media and Westminster government for their unfounded attacks on general practice, particularly the false claim that GP practices had been closed during the pandemic. Furthermore, he congratulated the BMA and GPDF on the success rollout of the [Rebuild GP media campaign](#), intended to combat these false narratives and promote an urgent workforce strategy and safe workloads for GPs. Read the [GPC UK Chair's speech](#)

Of particular note, the conference voted through a motion calling on the national GPCs renegotiating the GMS contracts to include workload limits in order to protect patients and staff. With a dwindling, overstretched workforce, this motion gives our national committees the mandate to demand an end to endless unsafe demands on our GP services. Read the [BMA's safe working in general practice guidance](#).

The conference also urged the GPCs to negotiate a GP contract that incentivises continuity of care. In response, Dr Farah Jameel, GPC England Chair, said that "If continuity of care is to be rewarded and preserved, it will need to be measured and monitored and it will need new payment mechanisms. So we'll need to spend some time thinking about these matters. We must reward continuity of care and it is right that we ask for it. We'll need courage – from policymakers, from us and from parliamentarians."

The resolutions will be published shortly on this page: [Local medical committees](#)

Delayed contractual changes for deceased patient records

NHSE/I have confirmed that the contractual changes for the management of deceased patient records have yet to take effect. This is due to required legislative and system changes remaining outstanding and means that practices should continue printing and sending the full records to PCSE until NHSE/I notifies the profession otherwise. PCSE will also retain the obligation to process AHRA requests it receives directly until that time.

New digital GP Contract requirements and guidance to support GP practices

In October 2021 new requirements for general practice came into effect in the GP Contract relating to digital services. To help explain what these requirements are and to support the implementation of them NHSE have [published new guidance for GP practices](#). The requirements state practices must offer and promote to their patients (and those acting on their behalf):

- An online consultation tool
- A video consultation tool
- A secure electronic communication method
- An online facility to provide and update personal/contact information.

Practices must also signpost patients towards their online consultation tool and the NHS Symptom Checker from their website and other online presence. For any questions please contact england.digitalfirstprimarycare@nhs.net

South Tees Adult Hearing Services Consultation

Healthwatch South Tees is currently supporting Tees Valley Clinical Commissioning Group to review their on non-complex, age-related adult hearing services across the Tees Valley. These services are provided for people usually aged 55+ who have a non-complex hearing need that can be met by a service often delivered in their community. They offer comprehensive support following a referral from their GP, such as a Hearing Needs Assessment, fitting of hearing aids, follow-up assessments and more.

Currently, there are the following providers across South Tees who provide these services:

- Outside Clinic (home visiting provider)
- Specsavers (Newport Road)
- Specsavers (Parkway Shopping Centre, Coulby Newham)
- Scrivens (Borough Road & Nunthorpe Medical Practice)
- Minor Ops Ltd (One Life, Middlesbrough)
- Specsavers (Redcar High Street)
- Specsavers (Westgate, Guisborough)
- Specsavers (Sunnyfield Community Centre, Guisborough)
- Scrivens (Hillside Medical Centre)

Healthwatch South Tees would like to understand the experiences of patients who have used these services in terms of their referral (from their GP), appointment, treatment and follow-up care, in order to see what is working well with these services as well as what could be improved. [A survey has been produced which is accessible online](#) (a printable survey is also available on request). The survey's deadline is 18 July 2022.

Your help is appreciated to:

- Promote this consultation opportunity and encourage feedback with relevant contacts/newsletters etc.
- Let Healthwatch know if you would like them to drop off and collect paper copies of the survey for you to complete with communities you support.
- Let Healthwatch know if you are aware of a local group they can attend to support the completion of paper surveys or engage in a focus group activity.

If you have any queries or would like to chat about how they can best reach local people, please contact Healthwatch South Tees. Thank you for your support.

Shape the future of GP data sharing

NHS Digital want your views on the access to and use of data to help them to shape their thinking and to drive change - [please complete this five minute survey](#). NHS Digital want to hear from all members of staff, so please do share with your team. The survey will close on Friday 10 June 2022.

GPC GP Bulletin & Informal Messaging

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

Read the latest sessional GPs Newsletter [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.

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](#) or email support@bma.org.uk

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

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.