

26th June 2020

Trust GPs to Lead: Learning from the Response to COVID-19 within General Practice in England

The BMA's new report, [Trust GPs to lead: learning from the response to COVID-19 within general practice in England](#), which was published this week, explores how demands on general practice can be managed both in the short and long term.

The report sets out a range of solutions that will enable GPs and practices to manage the ongoing demands of responding to COVID-19, and looks at GPs being supported to continue delivering innovative patient-focused local services for both the short and long term.

BAME Doctors Not Being Given Access to COVID-19 Risk Assessments

The BMA updated their [guidance on risk assessments](#) last week to include two new sections for GP practices looking at the implications of risk assessments for practices and the risk assessment tools that are available to practices to use.

NHSEI have issued a [letter](#) which sets out that CCGs should commission an occupational health service to support practices with this risk assessment process. This should be made freely available to practices as soon as possible through local OH capacity, or by commissioning more to complement existing OH services via this [Dynamic Purchasing Solution](#), if additional capacity or access outside normal working hours is needed. CCGs are asked to assure that this is happening comprehensively and speedily in their areas.

Need for Robust Digital Systems and Sustainable Plans to Manage GP Workload

The latest BMA [tracker survey](#) has shown a lack of robust IT systems and digital solutions to help secondary care colleagues complete necessary tasks, leading

to work being transferred to general practice without sustainable services in place. At the same time, there are still intense resource shortages, with 80% of GPs surveyed saying they need an increased supply of face masks for staff.

Half of those responding to the survey said that they are having to provide care that would normally be delivered by secondary care colleagues and 81% said they have been asked to carry out new investigations and manage ongoing care, which would also usually be done in hospitals, further adding to GPs' growing workload.

Due to reduced numbers of patients attending hospital across England, practices are being expected to perform blood tests for hospital outpatients, prescribe medication that would normally be given in secondary care, and at times complete tests before making a possible cancer referral, which could lead to delays in treatment in the BMA's view. This is something that we have challenged locally for some time. We need rapid action to deliver long-term solutions to improve the interface between secondary and primary care, and make sure we have the digital infrastructure in place to stop unnecessary prescribing, duplication of workload and extending patient pathways. The NHS must be properly joined up and resourced at all times – not only in preparation for something as serious as COVID-19, but also for when the crisis has subsided.

It is clear that clinicians in general practice, hospital and other services have all been under immense pressure throughout the last few months as we all played our part in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and it's now vital that we work together to develop improved care pathways that are sustainable and do not place unrealistic expectations on anyone.

Shielding Update

The [Government has announced](#) that from Monday 6 July, the advisory guidance for clinically extremely vulnerable people who are currently shielding from coronavirus, will be eased, and that they will be able to gather in groups of up to 6 people outdoors and form a 'support bubble' with another household. The guidance will be relaxed further in August, should the reduction in viral prevalence continue. In relation to this the Government in England has informed practices that it will [write](#) to those on the shielded list to make them aware of the updated guidance. Read the [Government's guidance on shielding](#) for patients.

The NHS will continue to maintain the Shielded Patient List in order to enable targeted advice and support to those who are most vulnerable should that be

required in the future. Practices should therefore continue to add or remove patients from this list as is clinically appropriate. In addition, GPC are talking to NHSEI about research being done that could refine the identification of those who are most at risk and would benefit from shielding should that necessary.

Indemnity Arrangements for NHS Primary Care Staff Undertaking COVID-19 Antibody Tests

NHSE/I has now confirmed that where primary care staff undertaking COVID-19 antibody tests are not covered for this activity under their existing indemnity/insurance arrangements, they will be indemnified under the [Clinical Negligence Scheme for Coronavirus \(CNSC\)](#) which was established in accordance with new powers from the Coronavirus Act 2020. NHS Resolution has added a [FAQ](#) which states:

Where you are appropriately trained and competent to undertake this activity, and you are not covered for this activity under your existing indemnity/insurance arrangements, you will be indemnified under the Clinical Negligence Scheme for Coronavirus (CNSC). The CNSC has been established by NHS Resolution to meet liabilities arising from the special healthcare arrangements being put in place in response to the coronavirus outbreak.

GP Standard Operating Procedure Updated

NHSE/I have added two new sections to the [GP Standard Operating Procedure](#) and updated it with some additional information and links for ease of access. The updated sections are on:

1. Outbreak management in the context of COVID-19 – with a recommendation to review business continuity plans.
2. Suspected or diagnosed cancers, including ongoing cancer treatment – information on referral into secondary care.

Nurse Mentor Support

Mentoring support for nurses has now been launched following a successful training session recently. Please see a [flyer](#) for this.

There is also extended local mentoring support in place for members of your practice teams as we navigate the challenges of Covid-19.

Please find a flyer highlighting how you can access peer support during this time [here](#). More information about [wellbeing](#) support can be found on the LMC website.

GP Air and Share

Please see a [flyer](#) for the latest GP Air and Share Event.

GP Support Team –The CCGs and LMC have a well-established GP Support Team in place, whose main focus is to respond to and empower practices to make operational and team changes that directly and indirectly address challenges they are facing in the short to medium term. The GP Support Team can be accessed via the LMC or the Workforce Team sowoccg.workforce@nhs.net.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

The BMA continue to offer [wellbeing services](#) and confidential 24/7 counselling and peer support for all doctors and medical students, as well as their partners and dependents, on 0330 123 1245.

Let's hope that the sun lasts a little longer to take us through the weekend!

Worcestershire Issues

LARCs Payments

As you know, we have been trying to gain some assurance around continuation of LARC payments and the Health and Care Trust have now confirmed that funding the service element of LARCs will be covered for a defined period of time.

The national block contract arrangements are for the first 4 months, so the initial agreement is to pay practices a block equivalent to their usual value (ie based on 19/20 achievement) for April – July. Beyond this, they wish to see how the national picture unfolds. They do appreciate that practices need to know as soon as possible whether income will be maintained beyond July for this service and negotiations are ongoing in this respect taking into account feedback from some of those practices who undertake this work.

LMC Website

The following guidance has been added to the LMC website www.worcslmc.co.uk this week:

[CCG Restoration Reimbursement Principles Letter](#)

[CCG Restoration Principles Appendix 1](#)

[CCG Appendix 2 - E-Dec Practice Unlock Plan](#)

[CCG Restoration Reimbursement Appendix 3 Claim Form](#)

[NHSE Revalidation Update](#)

Other COVID 19 Resources

[BMJ – news and resources](#)

[RCGP COVID-19 information](#)

[NHSE/I primary care bulletins](#)

[NICE resources](#)

WORCESTERSHIRE AND HEREFORDSHIRE LMC LTD

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All topical issues relating to local general practice are discussed at the monthly LMC meetings and those minutes can be read on the LMC [Website](#). Should you require further information on any issues raised at the LMC meetings please do not hesitate to contact the LMC representative for your area or practice.

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All 20 practices are represented at Committee Meetings

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**THIS NEWSLETTER IS PRODUCED FROM THE LMC OFFICE AT
ST STEPHENS SURGERY**

The next LMC meetings will be:

Worcestershire – 9th July 2020
Herefordshire – 22nd July 2020