

3<sup>rd</sup> July 2020

Dear Colleagues,

You have achieved so much over the last few months in continuing to provide a service for the population of Worcestershire and Herefordshire in the face of adversity. I hope that you will take some time to reflect on that achievement within your own practices.

*"She stood in the storm and when the wind did not blow her way, she adjusted her sails."*

- Elizabeth Edwards

We now find ourselves moving into the "Restoration Phase" of the coronavirus pandemic. There is much work still to be done to determine quite what that will mean for our practices as we continue to face the considerable challenges ahead. It is clear that there will be a "new normal" and that we will need to be fully prepared for any second wave.

Many of you will be exhausted, having worked tirelessly to meet the challenges of recent months. Do consider now whether you can take some time to recuperate, however briefly. Keep your spirits up and don't forget to look after yourselves!

*"I don't think of all the misery, but of the beauty that still remains."*

- Anne Frank

## **Faulty PPE**

MHRA have advised a product recall notice to practices and care homes with safety warnings, notices for destruction and distribution stoppages for more than 85 million Cardinal Surgical masks and 3m and Cardinal respirators in the

PIPP stockpile since it was deployed in March. This comes despite repeated assurances by Public Health England, NHS England and the Department of Health and Social Care, that all PPE products had been rigorously tested and are safe for use.

This is an unacceptable situation that has put healthcare workers at risk and now could leave some practices without any face masks to use, therefore potentially having a major impact on patient care. LMCs and GPC have raised our serious concerns about this with NHSE/I. They have responded to say that they have not supplied any Cardinal masks since May and are working through a replacement plan with the wholesalers who supplied primary care. Practices can obtain PPE supplies via their LRFs (who have good supplies) and the Portal that can be delivered within 48 hours. Find out how to register and contact the Portal Customer services team [here](#).

If doctors and health and care workers have been supplied with, and worn, faulty, re-dated masks, this is clearly a dereliction of duty to ensure the safety of NHS staff and patients. Wearing substandard PPE places doctors at risk of becoming infected and also spreading the illness to patients and nothing short of 100% fit for purpose PPE should have been supplied from the outset.

### **New to Partnership Payment Scheme**

The [New to Partnership Payment Scheme](#) was launched on 1 July and will apply to all new clinical partners from 1 April 2020. The partnership model, which gives GPs based in communities the autonomy to lead and advocate for their patients, is the foundation of general practice, and vital for its survival and sustainability. However, in recent years the number of partners in England has been steadily falling and it was clear that action needed to be taken to attract and equip GPs to take on partnership. This scheme, secured through recent contract negotiations, follows the Partnership Review and shows faith in GPs and the partnership model – backed with additional investment – so that new partners can have the confidence in taking on this important role.

### **Lapse of the Emergency GMS Regulations**

The emergency regulations relating to general practice, which were part of the NHS response to the COVID-19 pandemic, lapsed on 1 July. GPC have been in discussion with NHSE/I about what the arrangements will be for the rest of the year as we are clearly a long way from the end of the pandemic and need to be prepared for a second wave or impact of local outbreaks as we are already seeing. Urgent clarification on this is being sought so that practices can plan for the months ahead.

## **Social Distancing Guidelines**

Following the [PM's announcement](#) last week about the change in the guidance on social distancing, the implications of this are being worked through with NHSE/I in terms of the impact it will have on services.

From 4 July, the guidance will change from 'Stay 2 metres apart' to 'Where it is possible to keep 2 metres apart people should', it also advises people to keep a social distance of 'one metre plus', meaning in areas where it is not possible to keep 2 metres apart such as in public transport and some working environments, they should remain at a minimum one metre apart, while also taking physical steps to reduce the risk of transmission. The government [guidance](#) continues to state that businesses should maintain 2 metre distancing wherever possible. This would apply to practices who should continue to apply social distancing.

The BMA has also [called for the Government to be more open](#) and transparent with local COVID-19 data and about how regional spikes will be managed in the future, following the announcement of a reintroduction of lockdown measures in and around Leicester due to increasing levels of infection in the city.

## **COVID-19 Risk Assessments**

Last week we were disturbed by the results of the [latest BMA tracker survey](#) which found that more than a third of BAME doctors in the UK are still not being given access to potentially life-saving COVID-19 risk assessments – nearly two months after NHS England issued recommendations that risk assessments should be carried out for all staff as a precautionary measure.

NHSE/I have now issued [a letter](#) which sets out that CCGs should commission an occupational health service to support practices with this risk assessment process. The LMC and GPC do not believe practices should be expected to pay for this, and it should be made freely available 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.

## **Shielding Update**

The BMA have updated their [guidance on shielding](#) following the [announcement](#) that the guidance for clinically extremely vulnerable people who are currently shielding from coronavirus, will be eased in two stages – on 6<sup>th</sup> July and 1<sup>st</sup> August.

These patients will be [sent a letter](#) advising them to continue with the care/treatment arrangements currently in place. More detailed advice will be provided by the Government as the changes in advice come into effect, and unless there is a significant rise in COVID-19 cases the shielding programme is expected to be paused on 31 July.

The shielded patients list will continue to be maintained after August so that it can be used again in the future if necessary. Work is also being done to develop a new predictive risk tool which could lead to an updated list in the future.

We have heard of situations where individuals, employers, businesses or insurance companies have been suggesting that shielding patients obtain a letter from their GP to engage in certain activities, including having their hair cut. There is no requirement or necessity for such letters and patients and others should follow the government guidance relating to social distancing and other necessary precautions.

Read the [Government's guidance on shielding for patients](#) and the [letter to the NHS on shielding](#).

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

The report [Trust GPs to lead: learning from the response to COVID-19 within general practice in England](#), which was published last week, explores and highlights the scale of extra work being taken on by GPs during the pandemic.

A ministerial working group now exists on renewal and recovery in general practice, set up by Jo Churchill MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Care. This is also linked to the contract agreement for a government review to reduce unnecessary bureaucracy impacting general practice. The BMA will be submitting evidence to the review and participating in the ongoing discussions. The final recommendations will be agreed by the ministerial working group to take forward. Read more [here](#).

### **Pandemic Medicines Delivery Service Extension**

NHS England/NHS Improvement have now announced that the Pandemic Medicines Delivery Service will be extended until 31 July 2020. This new commission will be under the same terms of the current scheme with the same claims processes in place. Their [letter](#) announces that pharmacies and dispensing doctors across England will be required to ensure shielded patients

can receive a home delivery of their medicines until 31 July 2020. Read the service specification and guidance [here](#).

### **GP Appointment Data**

NHS Digital has published the [appointment data in England for May 2020](#), which show that there has been a significant reduction in appointments to non-COVID period in April and May. However we know that the reality on the ground is quite different with many seeing an initial drop in appointments at the start of the pandemic, but now experiencing a significant increase back to historic levels or in some cases over pre-COVID levels as practices manage delayed presentations.

### **Performers List Processes Associated with GP Registrars and Professional Standards**

Please find attached PLAN 07 that provides formal notification from NHSE/I confirming the joint agreement with Health Education England that GPRs due to start training in August 2020 are exempt from the requirement to be included in the England Medical Performers List.

### **Mentor Support**

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.

### **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.

### **LMC Website**

The following guidance has been added to the LMC website [www.worcslmc.co.uk](http://www.worcslmc.co.uk) this week:

[CUES Service Summary](#)

[CUES Practice List](#)

[PE UES Letter](#)

[Revised NHS SOP 240620](#)

[BMA GP Partnership Payments](#)

[BMA Tourism Infographic](#)

[BMA Tourism Summary and Principles](#)

[Local Guidance for those who are unwilling to self isolate](#)

## **Other COVID 19 Resources**

[BMJ – news and resources](#)

[RCGP COVID-19 information](#)

[NHSE/I primary care bulletins](#)

[NICE resources](#)

# WORCESTERSHIRE AND HEREFORDSHIRE LMC LTD

**Registered office: St Stephens Surgery, Adelaide Street, Redditch, Worcs B97 4AL  
Tel. 01527 65082**

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.

## **MEMBERS OF THE WORCESTERSHIRE COMMITTEE**

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Dr J Rayner

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Dr J Rankin  
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Dr B Fisher

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**Out of Hours:** Dr E Penny  
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## **Practice Manager Representatives:**

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Lisa Luke, Representative R&B PM  
Meryl Foster, Representative SW PM

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### **Representatives:**

All 20 practices are represented at Committee Meetings

**Worcestershire and Herefordshire GPC Representative:** Dr S Parkinson

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

### **The next LMC meetings will be:**

Worcestershire – 9<sup>th</sup> July 2020  
Herefordshire – 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2020