

21st July 2020

Face Coverings

Following the Government's announcement [that face coverings will be mandatory for people visiting shops in England from 24 July](#), the BMA called for measures to be introduced immediately rather than waiting for 11 days and that the policy must be extended for all places where social distancing cannot be maintained.

The BMA have updated the [Reducing COVID-19 Transmission and PPE Section](#) of the GP practice toolkit, to include the new advice on face coverings. The Government guidance suggests there is no requirement for evidence for exemption, therefore practices do not have to provide letters of support for those who fall under the list of exemptions, or to those who do not.

The LMC has produced a guidance note for those patients who request letters of exemption. We do not advise you to give exemption letters. We are aware that practices are having high levels of requests for these at the moment. Please follow this [link](#).

LMC Transfer of Work Statement

Please take a moment to read our transfer of [work statement](#). We are conscious that both nationally and locally there are marked changes intended in the restoration of services across our healthcare system and we felt it was important to share our thoughts on this. LMCs across the country along with our own have significant concerns about rising workload pressures for general practice, in part related to changes to hospital out-patient and referral management, as well as plans to use NHS 111 to reduce attendance in Emergency Departments.

Richard Vautrey has today co-signed a [joint letter](#) with Rob Harwood, Chair of the BMA Consultants Committee, to Professor Stephen Powis, NHS England

Medical Director, on behalf of all primary and secondary care doctors, proposing and seeking solutions to the issues in workload and workflow across NHS sectors. His view which we share is that it is imperative that NHS England and CCGs commission sustainable primary and community services to support patients and clinicians, particularly as more patients are being directed away from attending hospital settings. It's vital that we solve these issues as quickly as possible, not least as winter and any potential second wave of the pandemic approaches.

Government Commitment for Additional NHS Funding

Following the Government's announcement that the NHS in England would receive £3bn in funding to help it prepare for winter and a possible second spike in Covid-19 infections the BMA put out a [media statement](#) last night reacting to parts of the announcement that had been trailed. Dr Chaand Nagpaul, BMA Council Chair, said that it was vital that we're given an understanding of how exactly this announced money will be used – and whether it is enough – to boost capacity both for a potential second wave, but also to meet the needs of millions of patients who have had care delayed during the pandemic.

COVID-19 Fund

Following the Prime Minister's announcement, Richard Vautrey has written the attached letter to Sir Simon Stevens, Chief Executive of NHS England, calling for the promised COVID Fund to be released immediately. At the outset of the pandemic the Government committed to establishing a national COVID-fund, to reimburse NHS additional expenses related to the treatment of COVID-19. However, there has been a prolonged and unacceptable delay to releasing this funding, and whilst many CCGs have done the right thing and reimbursed these costs for practices, many have not.

GPC England Guidance on Arrangements for GP Services for Remainder of 2020/21

Last week NHSE/I released its [most recent letter](#) regarding arrangements for practices for the rest of 2020/21. As they have done throughout the pandemic, practices can only work within their capacity and capability, and with the on-going constraints relating to social distancing, the use of PPE, risk assessments, workforce pressures and many other challenges, practices must be supported by CCGs and NHSE/I and not burdened with unrealistic expectations.

Joint Guidance for Remote Intimate Clinical Assessments

GPC England, NHSE/I, RCGP and a number of other relevant organisations have developed the attached joint guidance setting out the *key principles for intimate clinical assessments undertaken remotely in response to COVID-19*.

The pandemic has accelerated the use of online and video consultations in general practice and the guidance is aimed at clinicians who are consulting remotely and focuses on how to safely manage the receipt, storage and use of intimate images taken by patients for clinical purpose, which must be guided by the principle of the interests of the patient. The approach to video consulting, image sharing, and storage should be the same as it would be for face-to-face interactions.

The principles described in the guidance aim to support patients to access care in a way that meets their needs and to support clinicians to provide care in a way that is in the best interests of their patients, whilst protecting both from the risks associated with remote intimate assessments.

Shielding Guidance for Staff on Returning to Work

Shielding will be coming to an end in England, Northern Ireland and Scotland on 31 July, and 16 August in Wales, after which those who have been shielding will be able to return to work provided their place of work is 'COVID-19 safe.' The BMA has published guidance on [Making the NHS 'Covid-19 safe' and supporting return to work](#), setting out recommendations for safe return of staff:

- There needs to be clear guidance and protocols on how healthcare settings can be made safe for staff who have been shielding.
- Funding needed to ensure that practices are able to make the necessary adjustments.
- Practices should be funded to cover the full pay of the staff that can't return to work as well as cover for their replacement.
- Every employer should undertake individual COVID-19 risk assessments which cover the basis of shielding properly and make a decision on return to work on a case-by-case basis.
- Employers should engage with staff on a plan for returning to work and make appropriate workplace adjustments, including access to adequate PPE.
- Employers should support staff to make informed personal decisions about returning to work, by providing honest and open information about risks and act on any concerns.

Read the [BMA guidance on Risk assessments](#). The [latest tracker survey](#) also showed that most GPs who are currently shielding do not feel safe returning to work.

NHS Confederation Report on PCNs

NHS Confederation has published a report about [Primary Care Networks – one year on](#), to mark the one-year anniversary of PCNs being established across England and assess their progress so far. The report sets out a national picture of variability but does describe how some networks are now delivering tangible benefits for the health of their populations and offering mutual support to their member practices.

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.

Worcestershire Issues

DMC

Nicola Daniels is the new Contract and Business Development Manager for DMC who provide our community dermatology service across Worcestershire. She has asked that her details be circulated to practices. She is keen to build a good working relationship with primary care and has asked that if there are quality concerns relating to DMC (such as inappropriate requests to order blood tests for example) that these are passed to her to address. Please also record any quality issues in the usual way through the CCG quality team.

Tel: 07741974358

Email: Nicola.daniels@dmchealthcare.co.uk

LMC Website

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

[Exemption Guidance Notes on Face Coverings 140720](#)

[Key Principles for Intimate Remote Consultations](#)

[LMC Transfer of Work Statement July 2020](#)

[BMA Letter to Simon Stevens July 2020](#)

[BMA Joint Letter on Workload to Prof Stephen Powis](#)

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

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 – 10th September 2020
Herefordshire – 22nd July 2020