

2nd November 2020

GP Appointments Data

The latest [GP appointments data](#) for England was published yesterday, which shows that there were 6.5 million more appointments in September than in August and almost a million more appointments than in September 2019. The data also shows that there were:

- 4.7 million more face-to-face appointment in September than in August
- 56% of appointments in September 2020 were face-to-face and 38% of appointments were via telephone, compared to 81% and 13%, respectively, in September 2019.
- 1.8 million more same day appointments in September than in August, with 1.5 million more same day appointments than in September 2019.
- Over 2 million more same or next day appointments in September this year compared to August 2020 and September 2019.

This data clearly shows that despite the pandemic and what has been portrayed in the media, general practice remains open and is delivering more appointments that we did at this time last year. The BMA [tracker survey](#) (see Q30) also shows that remote consultations actually take longer than face-to-face ones, leaving GPs more tired and with longer working days as a result - so simple appointment numbers only tells half the story of the change taking place. Read the BMA statement in response [here](#).

The attached letter was sent to NHS England/Improvement yesterday to highlight the serious concerns over increasing pressures in general practice as evidenced both in the GP appointment data and the latest tracker survey, and the immediate need for NHSE/I support.

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Matt Hancock, has [recorded a video message](#), thanking all NHS staff for their work during COVID-19 and going into the winter. Nikki Kanani, Medical Director of Primary Care for NHSE/I has also sent a [message of thanks to Primary Care](#).

Tracker Survey Results

The BMA's [latest tracker survey](#) was published this week which shows that more than 74% of GPs responding are quite or extremely anxious about work in the coming months and 47% say their levels of stress, anxiety and emotional distress had got worse since the pandemic began.

64% of GPs reported higher than normal level of fatigue or exhaustion from working during the pandemic and 62% reported that they or a clinical colleague in their practice had been forced to self-isolate within the past two weeks - with 39% of all respondents reporting a 'moderate' or significant' impact on patient care. View the [GP specific results](#).

The survey also demonstrated that worries about workload pressures are more from non-covid related issues - underlining why we need more support from NHSE/I to support practices maintain some degree of services at a time when hospitals can and are stopping doing routine elective work.

These figures clearly highlight the increasing pressure on general practice during the second wave of the pandemic. Staff are working harder, they are very tired and concerned that they are going to have difficulty satisfying demand in the next few months and the overwhelming reason for moving to remote consultations is to keep staff and patients safe.

COVID-19 Vaccination

Recent media reports have highlighted the possibility of a COVID-19 vaccination being available by December. Government have been planning for this but it depends on a number of fundamental issues such as the effectiveness of the early vaccines once trials have completed, the quantity that can be produced, supply logistics and the licencing arrangements.

JCVI have published their [interim recommendations](#) outlining the priority for vaccination.

GPC are now in negotiations with NHSEI to agree the role that general practice will play in the vaccination programme. They have successfully made the case to government that practices are experts in mass vaccination, as is clearly demonstrated by the current massive flu campaign, and patients, particularly

those who normally receive a flu vaccination, would expect to receive their COVID-19 vaccination from their local practice team.

The nature of the first vaccinations that are likely to be available will require different arrangements to the flu campaign but GPC believe that practices, probably working together within their area, will be best placed to deliver this vitally important programme. They hope to be able to share more details in the next few days.

General Practice Workforce Initiatives

We have published a guide to inform GPs about the range of [workforce initiatives and schemes](#) in England. The guide includes helpful information about what is on offer in each of the scheme and how to apply for them.

The BMA have also published a new guide to applying for the [GP partnership scheme](#), which will help you navigate what can be a complicated application process. The scheme was launched on 1 July and supports clinicians who are interested in becoming a practice partner. You can read more in this [blog](#) by Krishna Kasaraneni, member of GPC England's Executive team and workforce lead.

No Change to CQC Fees

The CQC fees scheme will not change in 2021/22. This means that, for most providers, their fees will remain the same as in 2019/20 and 2020/21, providing their registration or size does not change. The fees for General Practice remain fully reimbursable. Since the fees scheme will remain the same in 2021/22 as in the last two years, you can find the fees scheme, guidance and calculator at www.cqc.org.uk/fees.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Wellbeing

We are fortunate to have excellent mental health support in place for general practice locally across both our counties. Do please access support if you need it and remember that it is very hard to look after others if you are not looking after yourself! The latest support available can be found on our [website](#).

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.

BMA Mental Health and Wellbeing

The BMA continues 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. Access the [BMA's COVID-19 wellbeing pages here](#).

The BMA has welcomed the NHSE/I [announcement](#) of further funding for the expanded and rapid access provision of mental health services for NHS staff in England over the winter. This is urgently required and something the BMA has been calling for to support the major challenges NHS staff are facing. At the ARM, a motion was passed expressing concern at the potential long-term impact of the pandemic and called for resources to support the profession. As we head into a second wave of the virus it is vital that staff are protected. [Find out more here](#).

LMC Website

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

[BMA Letter to NHSEI – support for General Practice](#)

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 – 12th November 2020
Herefordshire – 9th December 2020