

11<sup>th</sup> January 2021

## **NATIONAL LOCKDOWN, WORKLOAD PRIORITISATION AND VACCINATION OF HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS**

The [BMA believes the right decision was made to introduce](#) the third national lockdown in England, [announced by the Prime Minister](#) earlier this week, which comes at a time of immense workload for doctors. Practices must continue to be supported, in particular with shielding having been reintroduced, and all healthcare professionals must receive the COVID-19 vaccine as soon as possible to be protected so that they can continue to provide a service to patients.

As the workload pressures caused by the pandemic grow, and as practices engage in the COVID vaccination programme practices will need to prioritise their work. GPC have now agreed with NHSE/I further measures that help with this, and which are outlined in a [letter](#) published last week. This includes income protection for QOF QI and prescribing indicators, meaning the vast majority of QOF is now income protected, income protection for minor surgery for this quarter, a direction to CCGs to suspend LESs and to take a supportive pragmatic approach to contract management, and crucially, providing additional funding to support the work of PCN clinical directors and those who have worked so hard in the initial delivery of the COVID-19 vaccination programme, with an increase in payments from 0.25 WTE to 1 WTE for those PCNs where at least one practice is taking part in the vaccination programme. This follows the additional £150m secured in November to support practice workforce expansion.

In addition, the [BMA and RCGP published guidance on workload prioritisation for primary care](#), published earlier in the pandemic, continues to be a useful resource and sets out what practices should consider doing now that we are in a national lockdown. This guidance followed the joint guidance with the RCGP published at the start of the pandemic, on workload prioritisation for clinicians

in general practice during COVID-19. We also have our own local prioritisation documents which you will have seen.

The [JCVI](#) and [NHSE/I](#) have advised in their recent communications, that vaccinating all healthcare professionals is a priority and whilst hospital hubs have been tasked with doing this practice sites can also do this when asked alongside those in their 80s (or those 75 and above once that older cohort has been covered). NHSE/I also published an update yesterday which provides [additional operational guidance on the immediate requirement to vaccinate frontline health and social care workers](#). Practices should ensure locum GPs they are in regular contact with are invited for vaccination either via hospital hubs or by the practice itself. Additionally, any healthcare staff who self-identify with their own registered GP practice should be vaccinated as per the JCVI guidance above. Our CCG is working to ensure all community based healthcare workers are given the opportunity to be vaccinated as soon as possible. It is essential that this is now operationalised and for the vaccine to be readily available to all healthcare staff in primary care.

### **COVID-19 VACCINATIONS PROGRAMME**

This week Richard Vautrey met with the CMO in England, Prof Chris Whitty, Sir Simon Stevens and Prof Steve Powis, NHSEI medical director, to discuss the crucial role general practice is already playing in the COVID vaccination programme. It is good to see, following the [MHRA authorisation of the AstraZeneca \(Oxford\) COVID-19 vaccine](#) for use in the UK, that the vaccine was rolled out to practice sites last week, following the initial use in hospital hubs. We are also pleased to see [NHSE/I confirm](#) that this vaccine can, with appropriate cold-chain requirements, be transported from designated sites to other practices. We believe this will both improve access to vaccinations for patients and significantly speed up the delivery of the programme, particularly as more vaccine becomes available.

NHSE/I stated in a letter on the 30 December on the [next steps for COVID-19 vaccination](#) that the second dose of the Pfizer BioNtech vaccine should be given 12 weeks after the first dose. This followed a [letter to the profession](#) by the four CMOs in the UK. The [JCVI has also published a statement](#) about prioritising the first dose.

This decision has had a significant impact for many practice sites, with staff working hard to re-book the appointments of thousands of elderly patients and at-risk healthcare workers. This was in addition to the need to reschedule many vaccination sessions due to changes in vaccination delivery for some sites. In a [statement released last week](#), and in conversations with NHSE/I, R

Vautrey made it clear how difficult this would be at such short notice not least over the New Year Bank Holiday weekend. NHSE/I have subsequently put in place a national call centre that can be used to support practices with rebooking appointments and provided £1000 for sites in recognition of this additional workload.

The COVID-19 local vaccination services deployment in community settings [Standard Operating Procedure](#) has been updated to reflect the addition of the AstraZeneca vaccine and the change to the second dose.

NHSE/I has also amended the [Enhanced Service specification](#) to permit the vaccination of unregistered frontline health and social care workers as well as those who are registered with a practice outside of the PCN grouping and to reflect the JCVI guidance on administration of the second dose, with the item of service payment now to be paid per dose.

The [Patient Group Direction](#) for the Pfizer vaccine has been amended to permit the drawing of 5 or 6 doses from the vial, and the administration of a potential sixth dose is now covered within the PGD. All the NHSE/I guidance about the COVID-19 Vaccination programme can be accessed [here](#).

NHSE/I has started publishing [weekly data report showing the number of COVID-19 vaccinations](#) provided by the NHS in England. The latest figures (7 January) show that a total of 1,112,866 people have received an NHS vaccination since 7 December when vaccinations began.

The [PGD for the AstraZeneca \(Oxford\)](#) vaccine and guidance about the [movement of the AZ/Oxford vaccine](#) have now been published. The [Green Book chapter about COVID-19](#) has also been updated to include advice about the AstraZeneca (Oxford) vaccine. Unlike with the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine, there is no requirement for 15 minutes observation after administering the AZ/Oxford vaccine unless this is indicated after clinical assessment.

The [BMA's guidance on the COVID-19 vaccination programme](#) has been updated to include information about the changes to the dosing schedule, approval of the Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine and the ability for practices to transport and administer it from sites other than the designated site, access to vaccines for all frontline health and social care workers, and further support to enable practices to prioritise vaccine delivery.

## **VOTE ON FUTURE NEGOTIATIONS ON THE PCN DES**

Following a resolution of LMC England conference in November, the BMA have [emailed the profession](#) to vote as to whether GPC England should continue negotiations on the PCN DES. The ballot has been designed with the agreement and in careful collaboration with GPC England and the LMC England conference chair and agenda committee, as well as in consultation with the BMA's internal experts on survey design.

We know that this is currently an extremely busy period for all in general practice, however we would encourage as many GPs as possible to participate as this will have a direct influence upon negotiations and funding available for the 2020/21 contract and beyond. The vote will run until 23:59 on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> January and is open to all GPs in England, regardless of contractual status (partner/sessional/trainee) or BMA membership status. Read more about the vote [here](#).

### **PCN CLINICAL DIRECTOR SURVEY RESULTS**

At the end of last year the BMA conducted their second annual survey of PCN clinical directors. They have now published the results of the [Survey of PCN Clinical Directors](#).

A significant number of clinical directors responding were confident that by 2023/24 PCNs will have contributed to providing better support for patients in care homes (66%), increasing the wider GP workforce (59%), improving the quality of prescribing (57%), delivering new services (49%), and better collaborative working between general practice and community care (49%). 44% of clinical directors think that provision of adequate funding is the most important condition for the success of PCNs with the second most highly ranked option being the availability of the GP workforce (20%), followed by the need for adequate premises (17%).

The results of the survey also revealed that not surprisingly both PCN clinical directors and member practices are still facing a high level of workload which they are managing with increased difficulty, and which is also having an impact on workforce morale across their network. 59% of clinical directors class their workload as manageable with difficulty while 27% have indicated that their workload was not at all manageable. The announcement this week of additional funding for clinical directors involved in the COVID-19 vaccination programme is therefore a welcome step in recognising this.

### **HOME DELIVERY OF MEDICINES AND APPLIANCES**

Following the announcement of the national lockdown, NHSE/I will be commissioning the Home Delivery Service of medicines and appliances again

for those identified as clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) on the shielded patient list until 21 February. If friends and family are not able to collect medicines for CEV people, and it is not possible to arrange a volunteer, then CEV patients will be eligible for free medicines delivery.

Read more in the [letter announcing the service](#) published this week.

### **LETTER TO PATIENTS**

Please see the attached [letter](#) to patients regarding how they might wish to support practices to deliver the Covid Vaccination Programme at this time. Feel free to use this on your Website/Facebook pages etc should you wish to. I was also interviewed on Herefordshire and Worcestershire local radio on Saturday morning which was an opportunity to explain to our patients how hard you are all working to deliver the programme. I did manage to squeeze in a comment about waiting to be contacted rather than calling the surgery and how seeking self care advice for minor ailments is more important than ever. Keep up the good work!

### **BMA LAW PARTNERSHIP WEBINAR**

BMA Law's specialist solicitors hosted a webinar in December covering every aspect of partnership agreements and why they are vital to protecting your partnership. From the perils of partnership at will to last man standing and green socks clauses, this webinar outlines why you need a partnership agreement, how often you should update it, and the common pitfalls to avoid when drafting one. Access a recording of the webinar [here](#).

### **GPDF RESPONSE TO ICS CONSULTATION**

Please see attached the response to the [Integrated Care Systems Consultation](#) together with the initial letter sent to NHSE/I and the reply received on 31 December. The BMA response will be available shortly. You can read our LMC's response to the proposed legislative changes [here](#).

### **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](http://www.worcslmc.co.uk) this week:

[NHSE Call Centre Letter](#)

[JCVI – First Dose Prioritisation Statement](#)

[PGD – AZ Vaccination](#)

[Operational Guidance: Vaccination of Frontline Health & Social Care Workers](#)

[Letter to Patients for Practice Use](#)

[Response Letter to NHSE](#)

### **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**

**CHAIRMAN:** Dr David Herold  
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**EXECUTIVE OFFICER:** Lisa Siembab  
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## **Representatives:**

**BROMSGROVE:** Dr D Pryke  
Dr K Hollier

**REDDITCH:** Dr I Haines  
Dr S Pike

**WYRE FOREST:** Dr M Davis  
Dr S Morton  
Dr J Rayner

**WYCHAVON:** Dr D Herold  
Dr J Rankin  
Dr R Kinsman

**MALVERN:** Dr P Bunyan  
Dr B Fisher

**WORCESTER:** Dr F Martin  
Dr C Whyte  
Dr R Benney

## **Co-opted Representatives:**

**Out of Hours:** Dr E Penny  
**Dispensing:** Dr J Rankin  
**Registrars Rep:** Dr J Chun (North)  
Dr L Jones (South)  
**First5 Rep:** Dr M Venables  
**IT Rep:** Dr R Williams  
**Non Principals:** Dr W Safdar

## **Practice Manager Representatives:**

Helen Garfield, Representative WF PM  
Lisa Luke, Representative R&B PM  
Meryl Foster, Representative SW PM

**Clinical Directors:** Rotating  
**BAME:** Dr W Safdar

## **MEMBERS OF THE HEREFORDSHIRE COMMITTEE**

**CHAIRMAN:** Dr Nigel Fraser  
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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 – 14<sup>th</sup> January 2021  
Herefordshire – 13<sup>th</sup> January 2021