

8<sup>th</sup> February 2021

## **GPC UK REGIONAL ELECTIONS – MESSAGE FROM DR GILLIAN FARMER, WORCESTERSHIRE LMC SECRETARY**

Nominations for seats for GPC UK in Herefordshire/Worcestershire/Warwickshire/Coventry are now open for a three-session term from 2021-24 and after careful consideration I have decided to stand for election.

Dr Simon Parkinson stands down from the role and I would like to thank him for all of his hard work over the years in reflecting our views and concerns back to GPC. His feedback on key issues has been incredibly valuable to our LMC. I too am keen that we maintain our close links with the GPC Executive Team and wish to ensure that grassroots GPs will continue to have their voices heard at national level. We have proved in recent months that we are innovative, flexible and resilient.

We must now work to ensure that general practice is a sustainable, rewarding and attractive career and we must be supported to recover fully from this difficult time. I am keen to drive that ambition on your behalf and to reflect the challenges and opportunities to our executive team.

I would like to ask for your support and hope that you recognise the advantages that this offers to our region. Voting will take place from 19 March.

## **COVID-19 VACCINATION PROGRAMME**

### **Vaccination of JCVI Cohorts 1-4**

NHSE/I wrote a [letter to LVS sites](#) yesterday, to remind them that everyone in JCVI cohorts 1-4 should be offered the opportunity to be vaccinated by *Monday 15 February*, and to try to minimise any inequalities in vaccine uptake between different patient groups in those cohort wherever possible. NHSE/I are asking each PCN site to confirm that they have made an offer to all patients in cohorts

1-4 by the 15th by filling in the form in this [link](#) by close on **Monday 8 February**.

If a vaccination site does not believe they have sufficient vaccine to complete this, they should contact NHSE/I through their local system as soon as possible so that additional supplies can be provided.

The letter also included details about a welcome additional supplement of £10 per visit to a housebound patient to administer the COVID-19 vaccinations. This supplement is on top of the £12.58 Item of Service fee. The supplement applies retrospectively to any first dose vaccinations since 14 December 2020, and second doses within the arrangement.

### National Call/Recall Letters to Clinically Extremely Vulnerable People

As of 3 February, people aged 18 and over in the clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) cohort (as identified through the [Shielded Patient List](#)) will receive letters from the national call/recall service informing them that they are now eligible to receive their COVID-19 vaccine. The letters make it clear that people have a choice of where to get vaccinated and can choose to wait for their GP services to contact them directly, if they haven't already, or book into a vaccination centre or community pharmacy. A [copy of the letter and a PCN letter template](#) are available in the letter pack on the [FutureNHS platform](#) (sign in required).

It is concerning that these letters are not directly linked to a patient's local GP vaccination service, nor the stage at which the local area has reached in terms of vaccination coverage, and GPC are continuing to discuss how to improve this with NHSE/I.

### Movement of AstraZeneca Vaccines

Moving the AstraZeneca/Oxford vaccine between locations across a single PCN grouping is both encouraged and legal if it will help minimise inequalities, maximise access and ensure timely vaccine usage. The [Standard Operating Procedures](#), outlines the cold chain arrangements which need to be adhered to do this. See more information in the NHSE/I letter of [7 January 2021](#).

NHSE/I has also published a [position statement for the vaccination of care home residents using COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca \(AZ\)](#), recommending that when planning a vaccination session for local care homes, a risk assessment should be undertaken to identify the risk factors associated with the transfer of the vaccine for administration to remaining care home patients.

Annex B of the recent NHSE/I document [Mutual aid and the transfer of COVID-19 vaccines between Hospital Hubs, Vaccination Centres and Local Vaccination Services](#) sets out that as long as the relevant guidance is followed, local commissioners should be offering a supportive role in facilitating the movement of the AZ vaccine within a PCN grouping and do not need to seek formal approval for moving the vaccine in line with the arrangements set out in the letter. It also advises that once moved, the vaccine should either be administered or immediately put in a refrigerator at a practice site within the PCN grouping, and ideally administered within 24 hours or over the following days.

### Second Doses

[Chapter 14a \(on COVID-19\) of the 'The Green Book'](#) has been updated for patients due to start immunosuppressive treatment, so that for example, if prior to cancer the patient has had therapy or a solid organ transplant they could be offered a vaccine prior to starting treatment, if clinically recommended. This includes potentially having the second dose at 3 or 4 weeks after the first.

GPC has raised with NHSE/I the need for practice sites to be able to start planning giving second doses by booking appointments. On Friday, LVS (Local Vaccination Service) sites were sent a message about the scheduling about preparing for the second dose vaccination clinics for cohorts 1-2 which should go live as of week commencing 1 March 2021. The allocated quantity of vaccines will be based on the quantity of first doses delivered by site (full pack unless a pack-down option was provided). The second dose clinics will take place 11 weeks post first dose clinics so the 12 week lead time between doses is achieved. Practice sites should be provided with scheduled delivery day of second dose volumes by the end of this week, and are asked to schedule clinics up to the end of March once delivery schedule by day has been communicated.

GPC have also stated that it would be reasonable for GP sites to now give all those patients who have received the AstraZeneca vaccine an appointment for a second dose, and to do this for these patients when the first dose is given to reduce the workload involved in contacting patients at a separate time.

### New vaccination Information Helpline and Alternative Point of Care Systems

A new COVID-19 vaccination information web resource and helpdesk has been set up for practice managers to help you find answers to questions about records of vaccinations.

New assured point of care systems for recording COVID-19 vaccinations will also be available soon for practices which can be used as an alternative to Pinnacle. This provides greater choice and reduces reliance on any one supplier. As currently happens, all the data will flow into the GP record within 48 hours. These developments are in direct response to requests from GPC England on behalf of general practice.

Find out more information about your COVID-19 vaccination queries, how the vaccinations are recorded, common errors or difficulties and how to get help in these [FAQs by NHS Digital](#).

Read the BMA [guidance on the COVID-19 vaccination programme](#) which includes information about what is expected of practices and the support available to enable practices to prioritise vaccine delivery.

### Vaccine Doses Data

This week, we are celebrating the milestone of over 10 million COVID-19 vaccination doses having been [given in the UK](#) and the latest [data report](#), shows that as of 3 February a total of 9,126,930 doses have been given in England. This is an enormous achievement, in particular when practices have also provided millions of flu and childhood immunisations this year. Well done and thank you to all those who have made this possible so quickly.

The most recent [BMA vaccine survey](#), which aims to track the roll out of first and second vaccine doses among members UK wide, shows that as of 29 [January](#):

- 93% have received one or both doses
- 13% have received both doses
- 5% have are still to receive a single dose
- Almost half (46%) of those who have received their first dose have a date for a second dose - the majority expect this to be in 10-12 weeks' time.

The survey also showed that with regards to ethnicity and being at higher clinical risk, there is no difference in one or both vaccine dose rate by ethnicity (BAME doctors 94%, white doctors 93%) or by being at a higher clinical risk (higher risk 94%, not at higher risk 94%).

## **GOVERNMENT BACKS BMA PROPOSAL TO FIX UNLAWFUL AGE DISCRIMINATION OF THE NHS PENSION SCHEME**

The Government has backed the main proposal from the BMA to fix the unlawful age discrimination that resulted when transitional protection was offered to older but not younger members when the 2015 NHS pension scheme was introduced. However, BMA pensions committee chair Vish Sharma warns the overall changes do not go far enough. Read more [here](#).

The BMA's pensions committee will be holding webinars at 7pm on 17 and 23 February discussing in detail the changes and what they mean to members.

### **BAME FORUM LAUNCH**

The BMA launched its first national [BAME \(black, Asian and minority ethnic\) member forum](#) last week. The forum aims to unify and empower the voices of our BAME members and influence positive change in the pursuit of race equality across the NHS. The event was chaired by BMA council chair Chaand Nagpaul, with talks from Baroness Doreen Lawrence, Doyin Atewologun and Roger Kline. A recording of the launch event can be found [here](#).

A recent [BMA survey also](#) showed that, a year on, Black, Asian and other minority ethnicity doctors still don't feel protected from Coronavirus in the workplace.

### **FLU VACCINE REIMBURSEMENT 2021/22**

NHSE/I has issued [guidelines on vaccines for use during the 2021/22 flu programme](#), following the publication of [JCVI advice](#). The vaccines recommended for use are:

Those aged 65 years and over: aQIV or QIVc (where aQIV is not available)

At-risk adults, including pregnant women, aged 18 to less than 65 years: QIVc or QIVe (where QIVc is not available).

Practices should read the guidelines and submit vaccine orders as soon as practical.

### **STAFF WITH LONG COVID**

CCGs should now have fully allocated their share of the £150m funding to maintain capacity in general practice. This funding can be used when staff are off sick with Long COVID, both for paying extended sick leave for staff that are off with Long COVID and to fill any shortfall to maintain a service when staff are off sick.

## **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS FOR PRACTICES' GIFT AND HOSPITALITY REGISTER**

Practices were this week sent an email by St Andrew's University, asking for copies of their Gifts and Hospitality register and Declaration of Interests Register for 2019/20, following a [recommendation by NHS Employers](#) to request and annually publish declarations of interests in the NHS.

This caused significant concern when practices are so busy focusing on the pandemic and the COVID vaccination programme, and after LMCs escalated the issue to GPC, they raised the issue urgently with the University who apologised for the concern caused and we were pleased that they immediately agreed to withdraw their request.

## **GP RETENTION SCHEME WEBINAR**

A [webinar on the GP Retention Scheme](#) will be taking place on Thursday 25 February from 7pm – 8.15pm. The webinar will be looking at how the GP Retention Scheme works for both employees and employers, tackling some of the common misconceptions about the scheme and hearing from GPs who are currently on the scheme. There will a Q&A session at the end and you can submit any questions in advance to [cscott@bma.org.uk](mailto:cscott@bma.org.uk). A full list of speakers will be confirmed shortly. Click [here](#) to sign up.

## **BRITISH THYROID FOUNDATION**

The British Thyroid Foundation have set up a page on their website where GPs can register for a forthcoming webinar that GPs may find helpful:- <https://www.btf-thyroid.org/meet-the-thyroid-experts-free-webinar-for-gps>.

## **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](#).

### **Wellbeing Message from the CCG**

We are all aware of the significant impact that the pandemic has had on the health, wellbeing and resilience of colleagues across all aspects of the health, social care and emergency services. In addition the ever present stress of the impact of Covid 19 on your families and loved ones, colleagues have also been exposed to increased stress and risk in attending work. This has been further magnified by the need to provide guidance, reassurance, compassion and care

for members of the public who are themselves distressed, exhausted, acutely unwell and at times angry with the developments over the last 12 months.

With this in mind we would like to raise awareness of the help and assistance that we can provide within the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Healthy Minds service. We are able to provide bespoke talking therapies for all colleagues irrespective of their role in your organisations to assist with anxiety, low mood, stress and other common mental health problems. Referral is easy and can be completed via visiting <https://www.healthyminds.whct.nhs.uk/>. We are an NHS service and as such our care is free at the point of contact and confidential.

The Service Manager, Phill Morgan Henshaw is happy to answer any questions regarding referral and treatment and can be contacted on 01432 842200 or via [phill.morganhenshaw@nhs.net](mailto:phill.morganhenshaw@nhs.net).

### **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:

[Covid19 NHSE Vaccine Booking Information Letter Information Pack](#)

### **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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## **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)

## **Practice Manager Representatives:**

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

**First5 Rep:** Dr M Venables  
**IT Rep:** Dr R Williams  
**Non Principals:** Dr W Safdar  
**Clinical Directors:** Rotating  
**BAME:** Dr W Safdar

## **MEMBERS OF THE HEREFORDSHIRE COMMITTEE**

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## **Representatives:**

All 20 practices are represented at Committee Meetings

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

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

Worcestershire – 11<sup>th</sup> February 2021  
Herefordshire – 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2021