

4<sup>th</sup> May 2021

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## **GP APPOINTMENT FIGURES AND WORKLOAD PRESSURES**

The latest [GP appointment figures](#) in England were published last week which show that practices delivered almost 5 million more appointments in March than they did the month before, and nearly 3 million more than they did in the same month two years ago, long before the onset of the pandemic.

These figures underline the immense efforts that practices are going to to provide care to their communities and the intense workload pressures that staff are under as we continue to respond to the pandemic alongside patients' wider health needs.

GPs and their teams are consistently reporting that they are busier now than they have ever been, and this data – which does not include a large proportion of the vaccine programme undertaken by practices, nor a vast amount of other daily tasks – backs this up.

Every day, more than a million patients in England had an appointment with their practices, whether this was the significant proportion seen face-to-face, on the phone, or via video call. With too few GPs and practice nurses, and a promise in 2015 of 5,000 extra family doctors within five years actually delivering a loss of almost 1,500 by September last year, individual doctors are taking on more and more as demand rises and the workforce diminishes.

## **COVID-19 VACCINATION PROGRAMME**

People aged 40 and over are now eligible to book an appointment via the [NHS national booking service](#) to receive the COVID-19 vaccination. Practice groups can invite these patients for their first vaccination if they have sufficient supplies alongside continuing with second vaccinations to those patients who are due to receive it.

Since the vaccination rollout began in December, over [34 million people in the UK](#) have received their first dose, and 14 million have also received their second dose.

New photographs show the people behind the national vaccination effort  
To mark the start of World Immunisation Week 2021, a series of photographs documenting the vaccination programme has been published by the Government. The photo montage comes as a new campaign begins urging under-50s to get the jab. [Find out more here.](#)

Read more about the latest changes, including the arrangements for the second phase of the vaccination programme and what practices need to do, in our updated [guidance page about the COVID-19 vaccination programme](#).

## **SIR SIMON STEVENS TO STAND DOWN AS NHS ENGLAND CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

NHSE/I have [announced](#) that Sir Simon Stevens is to stand down at the end of July as NHS England chief executive. GPC have worked with Sir Simon and his team over the 7 years he has spent in this role and as a result have secured the 5 year contract agreement with its significant funding increase.

## **DOMESTIC ABUSE BILL RECEIVES ROYAL ASSENT**

This week saw the [Domestic Abuse Bill receive Royal Assent](#) to become the Domestic Abuse Act. This means the provisions in the Bill will come into law over the coming months, and probably before the Summer. The Bill contains a new measure which will prevent doctors from charging patients experiencing domestic abuse for letters to access legal aid. While BMA guidance has

previously advised against charging for these letters, GPC and LMCs continue to push for GPs to be removed from this legal aid process entirely – as we believe the current system disempowers victims and is unnecessary bureaucratic.

### **EXTENSION TO THE SHINGLES IMMUNISATION PROGRAMME**

Individuals become eligible for routine vaccination against shingles when they reach age 70, and all those aged up to and including 79, are now eligible to receive the vaccine until they reach age 80.

Individuals who are eligible for the shingles vaccination programme who turned 80 years during the pandemic and missed the opportunity to be vaccinated can now be vaccinated until 31 July. There are no contractual changes to this programme, the offer of vaccination is opportunistic or if requested for the catch-up cohort. GPs will continue to be reimbursed via the standard item of service fee, which should be claimed manually.

### **LAUNCH OF FRAMEWORK FOR SUPPLIERS OF DIGITAL SERVICES TO GENERAL PRACTICE**

The new [Digital first online consultation and video consultation framework](#) has been launched this week, which is intended to improve the standards of systems available for patients and practices. The new procurement framework means that PCNs working with commissioners can choose assured systems from a range of suppliers to better meet local needs.

The framework will allow products to be better tailored to user needs, including integrating online consultation systems with GP clinical systems and sending requests to other primary care services to reduce pressure on practices and navigate patients effectively.

### **APPRAISAL 2020 SURVEY**

NHS England and Improvement is conducting a survey on Appraisal 2020. If you've used the new, streamlined format, which was introduced following our concerns about workload pressures and the impact on wellbeing during the pandemic, then your thoughts will be valuable to help develop the format and make appraisal more useful for all doctors. Everyone who has used the new format is encouraged to take part. To take part please email [lily.tomkins1@nhs.net](mailto:lily.tomkins1@nhs.net) who will share a survey link according to your designated body.

### **FUTURE LMC NEWSLETTERS**

All future newsletters will now be available on TeamNet on our LMC page. You will see an announcement on your home screen to let you know when they are available. We will also continue to notify you via weekly/monthly email and all newsletters will continue to be available on the [LMC website](#).

It remains important to provide us with up to date contact details in order to receive all other communications from the LMC and if new colleagues have joined your practice teams do encourage them to join us on our distribution list.

## **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](#).

There is help and assistance available within the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Healthy Minds service. They are able to provide bespoke talking therapies for all colleagues irrespective of your 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/>. This is a NHS service and as such 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).

### **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](#).

### **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.

### **LMC WEBSITE**

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

No new items

### **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 M Shah

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

**WYCHAVON:** Dr D Herold  
Dr J Rankin  
Dr K Gines

**MALVERN:** Dr P Bunyan  
Dr R Khekar

**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:** Dr R Williams  
**BAME:** Dr W Safdar

## **MEMBERS OF THE HEREFORDSHIRE COMMITTEE**

**SECRETARY:** Dr Nigel Fraser  
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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 – 20<sup>th</sup> May 2021  
Herefordshire – 26<sup>th</sup> May 2021