

15th June 2021

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DELAY IN ROLL-OUT OF PATIENT DATA SHARING PROGRAMME (GDPR)

It was announced in the [Parliamentary health questions](#) last week that the planned roll-out of the GP Data for Planning and Research (GDPR) would be delayed by two months, from 1 July to 1 September 2021.

This follows extensive engagement by BMA and RCGP with NHS Digital and a direct meeting with the health minister, [calling on NHS Digital and the Government to delay the introduction](#) of their new data programme until patients and the public have had time to be aware of and understand the programme and choose to opt-out if they wish.

Along with the RCGP, GPC have made it clear to both the Government and NHS Digital that this programme needed to be delayed to allow for a proper in-

depth public information campaign to give the public a chance to make an informed decision about whether they want their data collected as part of the new GP data extraction programme. There was insufficient time until the first extraction to allow for the public and patients to have a proper understanding of what the programme was intended for and to give enough time to make fully informed choices on whether they should opt-out or not. It is clear that previous communications from NHS Digital on this programme had been either inadequate or non-existent.

While we understand that data sharing plays a key role in planning and research as well as developing treatments, we also know that the crux of the GP-patient relationship relies on trust, transparency and honesty, and therefore allowing the public and patients to make fully informed decisions is paramount.

It is important that the Government now takes full responsibility for ensuring that there is an adequate public engagement ahead of the roll out so that all patients across England can make an informed choice. GPC and LMCs will also continue to hold NHS Digital to account, to ensure that there are appropriate safeguards in place as to how the data collected is used, and that the views of the profession are represented in all discussions pertaining to patient data.

Read the full statement about the announcement to delay [here](#).

There is a very useful podcast which you can direct patients to should you receive queries on this matter. The podcast is entitled "GDPDR: The NHS data opt out and how to control your medical data" and can be found on the right hand side of the page following this link: <https://egplearning.co.uk/>.

The following website is also worth sharing with your patients when they are considering their options with regard to GDPDR as it provides further information and allows patients to set their opt out choices directly <https://digital.nhs.uk/services/national-data-opt-out>.

COVID-19 VACCINATION PROGRAMME

COVID-19 Vaccine Enhanced Service specification

The [COVID-19 Vaccine Enhanced Service specification](#) has been updated to include the following amendments:

1. Introduction of a 3 month-maximum period for payment claims.

From the beginning of June, the deadline for practices claiming payments for COVID-19 vaccinations will be 3 calendar months following the

calendar month in which the vaccination was administered, to ensure good financial governance.

2. Restriction for PCN groupings to use a single Point of Care system.

To minimise the risk of duplicate payments resulting from a PCN grouping entering vaccination events on two Point of Care systems simultaneously, PCN groupings can now only use a single Point of Care system within a single calendar month to enter new vaccination events (except for changes to existing events or during the transition period to the new Point of Care system).

3. A change to permit the administration and payment claim of a single dose vaccine

With the introduction of new vaccines that can be given as a single dose, the specifications have been amended to allow the administration and payment claim of a single dose vaccine.

Vaccine cohorts

Those aged 25 or over (within cohort 12) are now eligible for the COVID-19 vaccines and will be receiving texts inviting them to book a vaccination via the national booking service, at an NHS vaccination centre, pharmacy or GP vaccination site. Sites should also continue to work through vaccination of cohort 11 who are yet to receive their first dose.

COVID-19 vaccination: accelerating second doses for priority cohorts 1-9

In addition, sites should continue to bring forward the appointments for a second dose of a vaccine from 12 to 8 weeks for the remaining people in the top nine priority groups who have yet to receive their second dose.

Funding and support for COVID-19 vaccination sites

NHSE/I has published a document outlining the funding and support available for PCN and Community Pharmacy-led COVID-19 vaccination sites. This includes an additional £20 million to ICS/STPs to support primary care providers to draw down additional staff to help deliver the COVID-19 vaccination programme between 16 June and 14 July 2021.

Vaccine data

Nearly 70 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines have now been delivered in the UK, and nearly 29 million have also received their second dose. Over 70% of all doses have been delivered by general practice teams. It is through the hard

work and dedication of GPs and their staff that the UK is emerging from the restrictions imposed by the coronavirus crisis.

Read the [BMA guidance page about the COVID-19 vaccination programme](#).

EXTENDING THE MEDICAL EXAMINER INTO PRIMARY CARE

The National Medical Examiner (NME) and other parties last week published a [letter](#) announcing the extension of the medical examiner (ME) scrutiny to non-acute settings. The new ME system is likely to be enabled through primary legislation (the Coroners and Justice Act 2009) and is due to be implemented across England and Wales through statutory instrument.

Due to the multinational aspect of the roll-out, the BMA's Professional Fees Committee (PFC), which retains negotiations in all four nations, have been involved in the discussions on how to best implement the new arrangements with the aim of minimising both the financial and operational impacts upon GPs and their practices. There have been two small trials of the ME system in primary care in Gloucestershire and the results are not yet published.

The letter presents a significant shift in the pace of implementation in primary care. The BMA is looking to analyse any secondary legislation which may underpin the new ME system. PFC has contacted the National Medical Examiner to clarify the plans and exact legal status of his letter.

NEW PCSE PAY AND PENSION SYSTEM UPDATE

PCSE's new pay and pension system was launched on 1 June and 3,500 GPs have logged onto the system so far. We would urge all GPs to log on and check their details and data ahead of the need to use it. Any errors or issues identified should be [raised with PCSE](#) at the earliest opportunity.

We have been made aware post-launch that PCSE don't have contact details for approximately 6,000 GPs. They assure us that they are working on solutions for this but we would advise any GP who haven't received one or more emails from PCSE since 30 May giving access to the system contact pcse.user-registration@nhs.net in the first instance.

In the same period around 2,500 practices have logged on to the system and allocated roles to their own users. We would encourage all practices to do this and ensure that all details and data are correct at the earliest opportunity, [reporting any issues to PCSE](#).

GPC have been meeting with PCSE almost daily since launch and have raised a myriad of issues relating to missing and incorrect data along with poor usability. We are concerned about the volume of these issues but have been assured that they are all being addressed. We will continue to monitor and pursue the progress of this and other remedial work over the coming weeks.

PCSE have posted user guidance for [practices](#) and [GPs](#) on their website. We would encourage users to make use of them.

GP REGISTRATION FOR UN/UNDER-DOCUMENTED MIGRANTS

GPC England would encourage practices to use the Safe Surgeries [toolkit](#) developed by Doctors of the World (DOTW). The toolkit - endorsed by RCGP and RCN - is an accessible presentation of existing DHSC and NHSE guidance and supports clinical and non-clinical NHS staff to promote inclusive care through GP registration. Notably, it aims to address specific barriers to primary care faced by vulnerable, un/under-documented migrants by ensuring that GP practices are aware of all relevant guidance and rules. This includes, for example, that patients should not be turned away if they lack a proof of ID, address, or immigration status.

GPs and practices are encouraged to consider and adopt the recommendations set out in the toolkit, particularly as it is now more important than ever that patients are registered with a GP. GP registration will likely mitigate the effects of the pandemic on health inequalities by improving equitable access to care and ensuring that marginalised and excluded communities are not missed in the COVID-19 vaccine roll-out.

DOTW also offer FREE [training](#) to clinical and non-clinical NHS staff that aims to improve awareness of migrant entitlements to NHS care and enables staff to better advocate for their patients.

PCN FUNDING

GPC England has had some concerns from practices about payments for IIF for 2020/21. NHSE/I has informed us that this is in progress and calculations of achievement will be available for declaration within CQRS on or around 11 June, with PCN declaration required by 24 June, and payments being made before 31 July.

GPC have also received some concerns about local funding being removed where it was invested in services similar to the PCN DES services previously. The *Update to the GP contract agreement 2020/21 – 2023/24* stated “all funding previously invested by CCGs in LES/LIS arrangements which are now

delivered through the DES must be reinvested within primary medical care” and primarily to bolster the PCN funding. This is a principle for the duration of the GP contract period (so until April 2024), not just for 2020/21.

FALL IN PRESCRIPTION ITEMS DISPENSED

The number of prescription items dispensed in England during 2020-21 fell by almost 2 %, the annual [Prescription Cost Analysis](#) shows. This equates to a decrease of 21.5 million items, compared to 2019-20, taking total dispensing volume to 1.11 billion. However, the cost of the prescription items (each item on a prescription) dispensed in the community in England during 2020-21 rose – by 3.49 % (£324m) to £9.61 billion. This is the second consecutive year that the cost of items dispensed in England has increased following three consecutive years of decreases between 2015/16 and 2018/19. Read more on the [Dispensing Doctors Association website](#).

DEADLINE FOR THE EU SETTLEMENT SCHEME – 30 JUNE

The deadline for applications to be made to the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) is 30 June 2021.

If you are a doctor currently in the UK and arrived before the 31 December 2020, you must apply by 30 June. It is free of charge, and in applying and being granted pre-settled or settled status, you will have secured your rights to continue living and working in the UK.

In addition, an application must be made for every eligible child within your family. If you and your family members have lived in the UK for many years or have a permanent residence document or EEA Biometric Residence Card (BRC), you still need to apply to the EUSS (or apply for British citizenship) to secure your existing rights in the UK.

[Apply on GOV.UK](#) and check your immigration status [here](#).

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING SUPPORT

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.

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:

No New Items

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
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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

The next LMC meetings will be:

Worcestershire – 8th July 2021
Herefordshire – 7th July 2021