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GPC meeting

The GPC held its meeting on 19 December 2013 and this newsletter provides a summary of the main items discussed.

Contract changes 2014/15 - updated FAQs

Information about the key changes for the 2014/15 GP contract, and updated FAQs which now include some questions in relation to funding, [are available on the BMA website](#).

PMS letter from NHS England

NHS England has sent out a letter to its Area Teams on PMS agreements, [available online](#). The letter confirms arrangements for the uplift for PMS practices relating to locum employer superannuation

costs, which for those practices who have not already received it will need to be backdated to April 2013. This confirmation comes after a long period of lobbying from us for this issue to be resolved. LMCs who are aware of practices still not receiving this uplift should contact the GPC office at info.gpc@bma.org.uk.

The letter also refers to announcing wider steps on PMS in around a month's time, linked to applying equitable funding to PMS practices. Again, we have been pushing for some time for a resolution to this issue, in order to provide more certainty to practices about their funding in the coming years. We will provide more information about this when it is available.

New guidance published on reconciling GP payments

NHS England has been working closely with stakeholders, including GPC, to tackle the issue of some GP practices experiencing difficulties receiving and reconciling payments. To help practices on payments, NHS England has published a new NHAIS Statement & NHS Shared Business Services Remittance Guide document, to highlight the improvements made to practice statements generated by the National Health Application and Infrastructure Services (NHAIS) system. The guidance is available on [Health and Social Care Information Centre \(HSCIC\) website](#) and **is only accessible to those on the NHS web**.

Christmas and New Year opening hours

Following dissemination of the NHS England guidance on Christmas and New Year opening hours this year, many practices will be uncertain about what they should do. In the light of this GPC has issued updated guidance to all practices, which is [available on the BMA website](#).

If you experience any problems with your arrangements, please contact the GPC at info.gpc@bma.org.uk.

GP newsletter

The latest email newsletter from Chaand Nagpaul to all GPs was sent this week (appendix 1). The newsletter focuses on concerns about the CQC's press announcement last week of its initial inspection results, explaining that Dr Nagpaul is contacting the CQC's chief inspector of general practice, Professor Steve Field, to express those concerns.

Winter pressures

The BMA has launched a winter pressures initiative with ideas about how the NHS can best plan and address the inevitable increase in activity in the coming months. This is not about turning away patients who are ill, but about improving access to those who do need to see a GP. We have produced posters with an emphasis on patient self-care which have been sent out to practices and which can also be [downloaded from the BMA website](#). There are separate versions for each of the nations, as well as a version in Welsh.

This is part of a wider initiative on winter pressures in the NHS, and other material, including a briefing paper on winter pressures and information about self-care, are [available on the BMA website](#).

Prime Minister's Challenge Fund: now inviting expressions of interest

On 1 October, the Prime Minister announced that there would be a new £50 million Challenge Fund to help extend access to general practice and stimulate innovative ways of providing primary care services. The Government has asked NHS England to lead the process of inviting expressions of interest and oversee the pilots. Details on how to apply to become a pilot site, the application criteria and timescales are all now available on [NHS England's website](#).

NHS England audit of the use of 084 numbers

Area Teams were recently instructed to carry out audits of practice telephony arrangements by NHS England. This is to determine the scale of continuing non-compliance with [regulations](#). As stated in the GPC [guidance](#) on the use of non-geographical numbers, practices that signed contracts with telecommunications providers prior to 1 April 2011 should have taken all 'reasonable steps' (as referred to in the regulations), with the support of their provider, to ensure practice telephony arrangements are compliant.

It would not, however, be reasonable for practices to re-negotiate, vary or terminate these existing contracts (signed before 1 April 2011) if this meant a significant financial penalty. In these cases, the vast majority of telecomms providers are able to offer alternative solutions to ensure practice arrangements are compliant. Practices should only sign new or renewed contracts if the provider can assure them that the arrangements will comply with the regulations.

Guidance for the implementation of repeat dispensing

Guidance for the implementation of repeat dispensing [is available on the BMA website](#). This joint guidance produced by the BMA, PSNC and NHS Employers explains briefly but clearly what repeat dispensing is, how suitable patients might be identified and the potential benefits. It also gives the tops ten tips for successful implementation; which have been suggested by GPs, practice managers and pharmacists.

Care.data – important information

In January 2014, every household in England will receive a leaflet from NHS England which will support practices with their public awareness raising activities. The leaflet will describe how information in medical records is used for purposes beyond the direct care of the patient, including the care.data programme.

It is important that GP practices continue to raise awareness proactively with their patients about the ways in which patient information is used and shared beyond direct care. The content of the leaflet being sent to households is very similar to the [leaflets](#) provided to practices in September 2013 and will include the telephone number of a dedicated patient information line that will come into

operation on 6 January. The BMA and patient representatives have been involved in the wording of both leaflets.

GPs will receive an email communication shortly before the household leaflet drop. This will include a link to the leaflet and updated GP and patient FAQs.

Once the leaflet has been delivered to households, patients will have a minimum of four weeks to read the leaflet and register their objection at the GP practice, if they wish to do so before the first extract begins. Extractions of GP data for care.data will begin in Spring 2014.

We will keep LMCs informed of developments in GPC News and on the BMA website. Background information and existing guidance [are available online](#).

Calculating Quality Reporting Service (CQRS)

The latest CQRS bulletin was sent out to subscribers this week – [please see the HSCIC website](#).

The bulletin provides updates and information on the manual data entry for the Enhanced Services, QOF 2013/14 and preparation for year-end, reports available on CQRS and GPES awareness sessions.

Following feedback from LMCs, we raised concerns with NHS England about the manual data entry for the Enhanced Services, and the additional burden this would place on practices. We suggested that only the minimum data necessary for practices to receive payment for the Enhanced Service should be required to be entered manually.

NHS England has agreed with the need to minimise the effort involved in this process and agree that the data required as part of the manual entry should be the minimum data set. The bulletin confirms that to create a payment declaration in CQRS, practices should enter the achievement for any payment indicators, and that any management indicators need to be set to '0' (zero).

Further instructions are included in the bulletin and the additional guides on manual data entry.

Charges for occupational health vaccinations

It has come to our attention that some GP trainees working in a general practice setting are being asked to pay for occupational health vaccinations. Under no circumstances should GP trainees or any other doctors in the NHS be required to pay for vaccinations where they are involved in direct patient care. This is outlined in the Department of Health 'Green Book' on immunisation against infectious disease (pages 83-90), which states:

“Employers need to be able to demonstrate that an effective employee immunisation programme is in place, and they have an obligation to arrange and pay for this service.”

The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations also requires an assessment to be made (by an employer) of a range of hazardous substances, including “biological agents”, in order that suitable “control measures” can be implemented to minimise the risk. Where a risk has

been identified and where effective vaccines are available these should be used as a method of control. The employer is required to make provision of the vaccines to staff who are not already immune.

Section 9 of The Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 requires that this be offered free of charge to staff.

If you are a GP trainee and have been charged for occupational health vaccinations please contact Christopher Scott via cscott@bma.org.uk.

GP Trainees Subcommittee's newsletter

The GP Trainees Subcommittee's winter newsletter is [available on the BMA website](#). This edition includes:

- top tips for the Applied Knowledge Test (AKT)
- important information on charges for occupational health vaccinations
- 'to do' list for GP trainees going on maternity leave
- the details of the elected regional representatives.

PCC event

Primary Care Commissioning (PCC) is hosting a workshop on **Tuesday 14 January** in Leeds- 'Working together in general practice: getting the legal structure right'.

The workshop covers:

- different models of working together
- pros and cons of merger, federation and formal provider entities
- the alternatives: limited companies, social enterprises and others
- considerations for procurement and ownership of practice lists
- timescales and resource implications
- key factors in making the right decision.

[For further event details please visit the PCC website.](#)

PCC have informed us that they are offering LMC colleagues a 20% discount on the booking fee for attendance which can be triggered by entering the code **LKLMC** on the last page of the on line registration form.

BMA 2014 research grants

The BMA was among the first of the professional bodies to award grants and prizes to encourage and further medical research. Today, ten research grants are administered under the auspices of the Board of Science, all funded by legacies left to the BMA. Grants totalling approximately £500,000 are awarded annually. Applications are invited from medical practitioners and/or research scientists, for research in progress or prospective research.

The 2014 research grants are now available to apply for [online on the BMA website](#). The application deadline is **14 March 2014 at 5pm**.

Subject specifications for each grant vary. For example, in 2014, research areas range from rheumatism and arthritis, cardiovascular disease and cancer to neurological disorders and clinical outcome measures. For more information on the grants on offer in 2014 and details of how to apply, [please go to the BMA website](#).

If you have any questions about the BMA research grants, or would like to receive alerts about them, please contact Hugh Garnett at info.sciencegrants@bma.org.uk or telephone 020 7383 6755.

LMCs – change of details

If there are any changes to LMC personnel, addresses and other contact details please can you email Karen Day with the changes at kday@bma.org.uk.



Season's greetings

On behalf of the GPC secretariat, we wish you all a joyful and restful Christmas and a happy 2014.

The GPC next meets on 16 January 2014, and LMCs are invited to submit items for discussion. You may like to review these, beforehand, with the representatives in your area who serve on the GPC. The closing date for items is 8 January 2014. It would be helpful if items could be emailed to Christopher Scott at cscott@bma.org.uk. You may also like to use the GPC's listservers to exchange views and ideas.

GPC News

GPC News is available via the Internet, via the BMA's web pages: www.bma.org.uk

LMCs are reminded that their regional representatives can provide more detailed information about the issues covered in GPC News, and other matters. Other members of the GPC would also be pleased to accept invitations to LMC meetings wherever possible. Their names and addresses are in the GPC Yearbook. The secretariat can also provide a written background brief if required, but it would be helpful to have such requests well in advance of your meetings.

Finally, if LMCs require assistance on local issues, they can also contact the BMA's local offices: addresses are on page 3 of the GPC's yearbook.

This newsletter has been sent to:

- Secretaries of LMCs and LMC offices
- Members of the GPC
- Members of the GP trainees subcommittee
- Members of the sessional GPs subcommittee