

APRIL 2021 NEWSLETTER

LOCAL MEDICAL COMMITTEE

LMC
GLOUCESTERSHIRE

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COVID-19 ONE YEAR ON

We are a year on since the first UK lockdown was introduced in order to combat the spread of COVID-19 and the fight back, with the help of the vaccination roll-out, is gathering speed. It is concerning that national daily case numbers have stopped falling and in some areas are rising again. There is clearly some way to go in dealing with the pandemic.

The vaccination effort started only a few short months ago, and more than half of the adult population in the UK have already received at least one dose of the vaccine. It is an incredible achievement to have reached such a significant milestone so quickly. Thank you to all involved in this vitally important task which has been achieved whilst at the same time managing many other workload pressures.

The vaccine roll-out demonstrates the value of general practice. GPs, by the very nature of their contractual arrangements, are incredibly adaptive, flexible and responsive to new situations. They understand their patients and their communities. If you give practices the necessary resources and the flexibility to get on with it, that's what we will do. And that is exactly what has happened.

SUPPORT FOR CCGs IN ADDRESSING VACCINE INEQUALITIES

In February, £4.2 millions of funding was allocated to STPs to be used across CCGs to support and enable locally led community engagement in all areas with health inequalities. NHSE/I has now pledged an additional £3 million of funding to support further local activity in addressing local vaccine inequalities. From 26 March, regions are invited to submit funding applications for their CCGs. Read more [here](#)

COVID-19 VACCINATION PROGRAMME

There will be a [reduction of supply](#) of COVID-19 vaccinations from next week for about four weeks due to reductions in national inbound vaccines supply. We are told that this should

not impact the delivery of second doses. Vaccination sites are encouraged to continue their efforts in maximising uptake in cohorts 1-9 which are yet to be vaccinated.

We are expecting a statement from JCVI shortly on details relating to the next phase of vaccination for groups 10-12.

Frequently Asked Questions for second doses

NHSE/I has published some [FAQs to help answer some questions relating to second doses of the COVID-19 vaccination](#), including location of second doses, interval period and consent.

Quality Assurance Framework and SOP for lateral flow devices for COVID-19 vaccination sites

NHSE/I has published a [Quality Assurance Framework for COVID-19 vaccination sites](#), to use as a tool aligned to the operating frameworks and standard operating procedures underpinning the delivery models for these settings.

NHSE/I has also published a [Standard Operating Procedure \(SOP\) for usage of lateral flow devices for asymptomatic NHS staff testing](#) at vaccination sites.

COVID-19 vaccines and pregnancy

There has been some confusion around the eligibility of pregnant women for the COVID-19 vaccine. While it is not currently available to all pregnant women, those who are at high risk of exposure to the virus, including health and care workers, or with high risk medical conditions *are* eligible. This includes women diagnosed with gestational diabetes in pregnancy or those with a BMI of more than 40 at their antenatal booking appointment.

The benefits and risks of COVID-19 vaccination in pregnancy should be discussed on an individual basis. The discussion should include acknowledgement that, while there is no known risk associated with giving other non-live vaccines to pregnant women, there are no specific data as yet about the safety of COVID-19 vaccination in pregnancy. More information including FAQs and a decision aid are available from the [RCOG website](#).

In addition, the National Clinical Director for Maternity and Women's Health, and the Chief Midwifery Officer, have published a [letter setting out actions for maternity services to identify and invite pregnant women for vaccination](#), and enabling them to make an informed choice about receiving it.

Read more about the latest changes, including the delivery of second doses, added funding, and what practices need to do and the support available in our updated [guidance page about the COVID-19 vaccination programme](#).

Vaccine dose data

Nearly [29 million people in the UK](#) have now received their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, and the latest [data report](#) shows that as of 25 March nearly 27 million doses of the COVID-19 vaccine have been given in England.

MEDICAL ASSESSMENTS FOR PROSPECTIVE FOSTER CARER AND ADOPTERS

This week, the BMA published a [joint statement](#) with the Royal College of GPs, to support GPs in considering requests for medicals for prospective adopters and foster carers. These assessments play an important role in safeguarding vulnerable children and are the final requirement for many families across the country.

NHS OPERATIONAL PLANNING AND CONTRACTING GUIDANCE 2021/22 (ENGLAND)

NHSE/I has published the [NHS Operational Planning and Contracting Guidance for 2021/22](#), setting out the priorities for the year ahead, to restore services, meet new care demands and reduce the care back logs caused by the pandemic, whilst supporting staff recovery.

One of the priorities is expanding primary care capacity, which will largely be done through the increased ARRS allocation, and a renewed focus on recruiting and retaining an additional 6000 GPs.

INVESTMENT IN GENERAL PRACTICE REPORT AND DATA QUALITY STATEMENT 2015/16-2019/20 (ENGLAND)

NHSE/I has published the annual [Investment in General Practice Report 2015/16-2019/20](#), [Data quality statement](#) and [GP investment](#). This shows the level of investment in 2019/20 compared with previous years. The increased funding received by general practice in England is in a greater proportion compared to other sectors in the NHS and is as a direct result of our 5-year contract agreement.

ANNUAL ALLOWANCE IN VOLUNTARY SCHEME PAYS 2018/19 DEADLINE EXTENSION

An annual allowance repayment scheme was introduced in England and Wales. The scheme guarantees that any annual allowance tax charge in 2019/20, for eligible clinicians, will be compensated at the time of retirement. The deadline for submitting an application form for the scheme for GPs who have or who are planning to retire by 31 March 2021, has been extended to 31 March 2021. For detailed advice on the scheme, please click [here](#).

BMA REPORT ON IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON HEALTH INEQUALITIES

The BMA has launched a report, '[Mitigating the impact of Covid-19 on health inequalities](#)', outlining a range of measures for Governments across the UK to ensure that those who have been most impacted by COVID-19 are protected in the immediate and longer term.

The report highlights concerns that the unacceptable inequalities that existed before the pandemic will only worsen for families who have been pushed into poverty, and disadvantaged communities that face further hardship due to job losses and COVID-19's socio-economic impact.

The BMA wants to work towards addressing the underlying inequalities which lead to unacceptable and avoidable differences in life expectancy, as well as quality of life across all communities. Read more and read the report [here](#)

BMA MORAL DISTRESS SURVEY (UK)

The BMA has launched a [survey on moral distress](#), open to all UK doctors, including retired doctors, although it is not aimed at medical students. The survey will remain open until Sunday 11 April.

The survey asks about your understanding of moral distress and moral injury, whether you have come across these terms before or have experienced them. The impact of COVID-19 and potential solutions are also considered. The findings will be used to make recommendations and allow the BMA to help mitigate this problem throughout the UK's medical workforce.

Take the survey, and read more about moral distress and how it impacts doctors, [here](#).

INAPPROPRIATE WORKLOAD

Covid has changed how everyone works, with primary care and secondary care doing more virtual work. Whilst we sympathise with the pressures of our colleagues in secondary care, it is not possible or appropriate simply to transfer administrative tasks to GPs. General practice is working at 150% capacity compared to last year. It may help practices to know that the BMA has produced a pack of template letters to use when you wish to push back on inappropriate workload. You do not have to be a BMA member to access the resource, and can find it [here](#)

TRAINING: WHAT IS MANDATORY, AND WHAT IS NOT?

Occasionally, an organisation or individual develops a training package on a subject important to them, and decides to describe it as 'mandatory' for GPs.

You can check what is mandatory for GPs in the eyes of CQC by reading '[Nigel's Surgery: Tips and MythBusters for GP Practices](#)'

CANCARD

Some concerns have been raised by practices about the [Cancard UK website](#) and its proposed 'GP endorsed' ID card. The website offers the ability to apply for: "A holographic photo ID card. Designed in collaboration with GPs and verified at the patient's surgery. The card is for people who qualify for a legal prescription but are unable to afford one."

- Applications are said to have opened on 1 November 2020. The Medicinal Cannabis holographic photo ID card is being offered by Cancard UK to patients who meet the following criteria:
- Have a diagnosis (confirmed by their GP) that is currently being prescribed for privately.
- Have tried two types of prescription medication or have discussed and discounted these options based on side effect profile or dependence concerns.
- Are unable to afford a private prescription.
- Are required to be in possession of a small amount of Cannabis in order to manage their symptoms.
- Are at risk of criminalisation.

The BMA and RCGP supports the use of 'cannabis-based products for medicinal use in humans' under the supervision of specialist clinicians or prescription of MHRA authorised licenced products by doctors who have the necessary clinical experience and competences. These products must have been produced in accordance with the necessary standards for the production of medicinal products in the UK in order to ensure their safety and authenticity. We also support the call for further research into the safety and potential indications for use of these medical products.

The BMA and RCGP cannot however support the use of the Cancard, nor the suggestion that UK registered GPs sign a declaration confirming a diagnosis in order for the card to be issued.

The [Cancard UK website](#) states that the Cancard has been designed in collaboration with GPs, but neither the RCGP nor BMA were formally consulted or gave endorsement. **The BMA and RCGP cannot support the use of Cancard, nor the suggestion that UK registered GPs sign a declaration confirming a diagnosis in order for the card to be issued.**

Read the BMA guidance on cannabis-based medicinal products [here](#)

PENSIONS NEWSLETTER

The BMA's pension committee has been at the forefront of fighting to maximise your pension benefits. Please see the first quarterly newsletter [here](#). The newsletter provides an update you on what actions the committee is taking on a range of issues, and also provides

access to educational resources, blogs and information on how to access BMA support regarding your pension.

SESSIONAL GP ISSUES

NHS mail for sessional GPs has been rolled out, recognising the important contribution of locum GPs to the workforce. GP locums can apply [here](#).

Doctors who move from partnership/salaried roles to locum sometimes have difficulty transferring their NHS e mail address to locum status. If you are stuck with this, contact helpdesk@nhs.net and locumadmin@nhs.net who will help you sort it out.

The NHS pension scheme as a sessional GP Dr Krishan Aggarwal, a GPC England and Sessional GPs Committee member, and deputy chair of the BMA Pensions Committee, has written a webpage for sessional and locum GPs on the NHS pension scheme, which replaces his previous blogs on this issue. The webpage is going to be a live document and if there is anything you would like to be covered please email the BMA at Sessionalgps.gpc@bma.org.uk The guidance sets out which pension tier to use, submitting the right forms, annualisation, the total rewards statement (TRS), the upcoming PCSE portal and how to escalate complaints to PCSE. The webpage is [here](#)

SAFE HOUSE

GP Safe House (GPSH) is a virtual safe house providing a refuge and support for practitioners experiencing professional challenges. It guarantees anonymity, security and confidentiality and understands that these are essential. GPSH has five virtual rooms which offer support, information and resources. Each room corresponds to a different potential problem area. It has recently received a makeover/update from Somerset LMC who devised it.

Services available are:

Consulting Room - Personal Health Information for the Gloucestershire Area

Burnout Recovery Suite - Burnout and Stress

Professional Relationships Bureau - Working Relationship Problems

Library of Solutions - Non-clinical Aspects of Patient Care

Career Development Office - Professional Development

Contacts for Support and Advice - This is a link to the Gloucestershire LMC Advocate Area which offers the possibility of a personal, completely anonymous, one-to-one, online consultation with a professional advisor as well as more everyday modes of communication! If you have misplaced or never received a password and would like one, please contact the office. The LMC pastoral care support continues.

If any GP would like LMC support, but would prefer to ask someone other than their area Rep, please contact the office.

Also, please find below a link to the 'Supporting GPs Mental Health and Well-Being' page on the Training Hub Primary Care Workforce Centre website which has been set up to provide GPs with information and links to the resources currently available to provide support. Read it [here](#). Dr Ansell Consultant Psychiatrist recommends the [covid resilience hub](#).

The Heales Medical Group occupational health service is still available to NHS GPs. To register for the service and for further information please go to the Heales Medical website at www.heales.com/ This service is in addition to the NHS GP Health Service which is available for any registered GP or GP trainee on the NHS England performers' list who has:

- A mental health concern (at any level of severity)
- An addiction problem (whether alcohol, drugs or other addictions)

Further information about how to access this support is available on the GP Health website at <https://gphealth.nhs.uk/contact-us/>.

Also, there's a list of organisations which clinicians may contact for help and support can be found on the following NHS England webpage: www.england.nhs.uk/south/info-professional/medical/support-for-gps/ - these include:

- Local Medical Committees (LMCs)
- Royal Medical Benevolent Fund
- Royal Medical Foundation
- BMA wellbeing support services
- BMA Charities Trust Fund
- British International Doctors' Association
- The Cameron Fund
- The Medical Council on Alcohol
- Doctors' Support Network
- KSS Deanery
- The British Doctors' and Dentists' Group
- The Sick Doctors Trust
- Practitioner Health Programme
- Alcoholics Anonymous
- Narcotics Anonymous
- Samaritans.

NOTES FROM THE PAG

When a complaint about a GP is made to NHS England, a referral is automatically triggered to the Performance Advisory Group (PAG.) We sometimes glean learning points to share. Doctors are advised not to order investigations, interpret results, or prescribe for themselves or family members. Initial good intentions can lead to a dangerous place. The [GMC](#) has recently updated their ethical guidance on good prescribing, which comes into effect on 5th April 2021.

OTHER COVID 19 RESOURCES

[BMJ – news and resources](#)

[RCGP COVID-19 information](#)

[NHSE/I daily primary care bulletins on COVID-19](#)

[COVID-19 Google Drive resource](#)

[NICE resources on COVID-19](#)

A PENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHTS

I was intrigued to read that a well know comedian has written a book of prayers, to be published in April. In the blurb for 'A Comedian's Prayer Book', the comic jokes that 'God is a tough audience' for his invocations, 'but at least you don't have to explain the references.' Publisher Hodder Faith say that the author 'has tried to retain the bare candour of the rehearsal-room improvisation' in the prayers, which address 'his convictions, his questions, his fears, his doubts, his elations'. This is a no duff. Send the name of the author to

penelopewest@gloslmc.com by 20th April 2021 to be entered into the draw. The prize will be a £10 donation to a charity chosen by the winner, who will retain the bragging rights.

The answer to the March competition was that Banting and McLeod shared the Nobel Prize for medicine for the discovery of insulin. There were no entries, hence no winner.

The LMC will continue to run with a mixture of office and home working. Some of our meetings will be by skype, Zoom or telephone. Dr Penelope West's mobile number is 07415290140 if that is useful.

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

A full list of current job adverts is at <http://www.gloslmc.com/blog-job-vacancies.asp> and available below.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE			Date posted	Closing Date
Partners in Health	Gloucester	Salaried GP Partner with view to extend	30 Sept 20	Open
The Brunston and Lydbrook Practice	Coleford	Salaried GP	10 Feb 21	Open
Pilning Surgery	South Gloucestershire	Salaried GP	10 Mar 21	1 Apr 21
Rosebank Health	Gloucester	Salaried GP	10 Mar 21	Open
West Cheltenham Medical	Cheltenham	Salaried GP	12 Mar 21	Open
The Upper Thames Medical Group	Cirencester	GP/Partner	17 Mar 21	14 April 21
Church Street Medical	Tewkesbury	Salaried GP	17 Mar 21	Open
Coleford Family Doctors	Forest of Dean	Salaried GP	17 Mar 21	Open
Cleevelands Medical Centre	Cheltenham	Salaried GP	31 Mar 21	Open
ELSEWHERE				
Vauxhall Surgery	Chepstow	Salaried GP (Maternity Cover)	12 Feb 21	31 Mar 21
Ledbury Health Partnership	Herefordshire	Salaried GP	12 Feb 21	Open

REMINDER: If you are advertising with us and fill the vacancy please let us know so we can take the advert down.

COURSES

Attached is the next Continuous Professional Development (CPD) GP webinar which carries 3 hours CPD. (CPD 3 hour LIVE WEBINAR - Thursday 29 April 2021 - Medical Emergencies)

The invitation does extend to all primary care medics, to include GPs, Clinical Pharmacists, Practice Nurses and Locum's etc.

Bookings can be made at www.gpforum.com <<http://www.gpforum.com/>> or via email to info@gpforum.com <<mailto:info@gpforum.com>>

Should you have any questions relating to the above please do not hesitate to contact me via the number below or return email.

Kind regards,

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