

LMC Update Email

31 January 2020

Dear colleagues

Brexit

As Britain prepares to leave the EU today, 31 January 2020, the BMA has released a statement saying that European doctors must continue to be welcome in the UK. Chaand Nagpaul, BMA council chair, said: "Freedom of movement has allowed talented doctors and other healthcare staff to travel, work and teach across Europe, letting those from the EU to both contribute to and learn from the NHS, while UK-trained clinicians have been able to share their skills in other European nations. Our message to our European colleagues – and indeed those around the world – is a clear one: you are welcome here." Read the full statement [here](#) and the BMA work on Brexit [here](#). This was reported by [GPonline](#)

The European Medicine's Agency (EMA) has also published information about what this will mean for medicines during the transition period, including how to prevent shortages. Read more [here](#).

Coronavirus

BMA emergency preparedness lead, Peter Holden, spoke to [LBC](#) on Saturday (just before 11am) about the coronavirus. He said that it's understandable that people are worried, but that it's important to have some perspective on the outbreak and that, compared to flu, general risk and fatalities remain low. He also spoke to [talkRADIO](#) on Tuesday morning (7.15am) about the latest developments in the spreading of the infection. Asked if the UK is prepared for its own outbreak, he said: "Yes, we're prepared, without in any way being complacent. We're as prepared as we can be because we don't know the precise size and shape of this beast yet."

We are in regular dialogue with PHE and NHSEI on this developing situation, particularly following the news of [two confirmed cases](#) in York. We will keep practices informed as we can. Read the PHE [guidance for primary care here](#) and further information, including to the public, is available [here](#).

GPC England contract negotiations

Following the vote not to accept the contract package on Thursday 16 January, GPC England have been in further negotiations with NHS England and NHS Improvement. There will a further meeting of GPC England on Thursday February 6 to discuss the outcome of negotiations. The content and agenda of the meeting is confidential. This was reported in [GP Online](#) and [Pulse](#)

Earlier this week, the GP contract negotiations and the concerns about the draft PCN DES specifications, were discussed in [Parliament's health questions with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care](#), Matt Hancock MP. He replied to a question from Jonathan Ashworth, shadow health minister, about GPC England's rejection of the contract package, and said "Of course, the negotiations with the BMA over the GP contract are always tough: they have been in every year in which they have taken place. The hon. Gentleman will understand why I want to get the best possible value for the money that the NHS spends, but I also want to see a successful conclusion to this negotiation, and we are working with the BMA to that end". Read the full transcript [here](#)
The story was covered by [Pulse](#), [GP Online](#) and [Healthcare Leader](#).

PCN Service specifications report

NHS England has released its response to the feedback from the PCN service specifications engagement exercise, which is published [here](#). The revised service specifications are currently being negotiated as part of the GP contract negotiations.

PCN conference 2020

There are just a few days left to be able to book for the **PCN conference on 8 February**, as spaces are now limited. It will provide an opportunity to hear from experts – including the HMRC who are now confirmed to attend the event – network with your peers and seek professional advice on HR, insurance and the law. Those attending will also hear about the outcome of the GPC England meeting. Find out more [here](#) and the updated agenda is available [here](#)

The GPDF has funded one seat for each LMC, which can be booked [here](#); for any additional LMC seats please go through the standard booking form above.

Pensions tax charges

GPC England has written to NHS England about delays in GPs knowing whether they will face pension tax charges for 2017/18. The letter comes after it was revealed that more than 30,000 GPs had not been provided with a record of their pension contributions. I wrote: "If the delays alone were not enough cause for concern, the situation is being further exacerbated by current pension taxation policies and their management. As you know the BMA, is more widely calling for tax reform to address the punitive annual allowance and taper policies." This was covered by [GPOnline](#) and [Pulse](#). BMA pensions committee chair, Dr Vishal Sharma, was also quoted in [People Management](#) and [Pensions Age](#).

GP appointments data

NHS Digital has published their latest [GP appointments data](#), in response to which I said: "These figures show the intense strain practices up and down the country are under, managing increased demand with a dwindling workforce. While the number of appointments delivered in practices has increased by more than 3 million in 2019, the latest figures show a drop of more than 300 full-time equivalent GPs in a year. So while the largest proportion of appointments are delivered on the day of booking, GPs are spreading themselves more thinly, not only risking their own health and wellbeing, but also meaning there are often long waits for patients to see their doctor."

This was reported by [GPonline](#) and [Pulse](#)

NHS 'rapid response' teams (England)

Urgent community response teams will be rolled out at seven sites from April under a £14m joint NHS and local authority initiative that aims to provide support within two hours to help older people remain well at home and stay out of hospital. In response to this I said: "Providing more support and treatment for patients at home by dedicated specialist teams visiting them rather than having to travel to hospital could help many patients and also reduce the pressure on currently overstretched services, both in hospitals and the community". This was reported by [GPonline](#), [OnMedica](#) and [Pulse](#)

Online booking forms (Scotland)

Andrew Cowie, deputy chair of Scottish GPC, was quoted in the [Scotsman](#) about patients using online forms to book GP appointments rather than calling the surgery. The story comes after a GP surgery in Scotland decided to stop patients phoning in for bookings with their doctor. He said: "GP practices need to design and implement systems for appointments and access based on their own local circumstances and the specific challenges faced by their patients. Clearly innovation and digital solutions have a role to play here, though that does need to be balanced against the need to ensure no-one – including those who are either less technologically literate, or aren't able to access technology – is disadvantaged and unable to access services." This was also reported in [Practice Business](#)

LMC UK Conference 2020

As you are aware, the 2020 UK LMC Conference will be held on Wednesday 6 May and Thursday 7 May 2020 at the [York Barbican](#), Paragon St, York YO10 4AH.

We emailed LMCs earlier this week that the **database to submit motions** is now open, and to use the suggested headings whenever possible. The final deadline for receipt of motions for the LMC Conference is noon 24 February 2020 and motions received after the deadline cannot be accepted.

Please confirm that all motions have been approved by the LMC members, and also please check that the motions are new, and are not already covered by existing conference policy (which can be checked on the [policy database](#)). Please also note that the BMA provides a [motions advisory service](#), where members can email for advice on facts/figures, information on existing policy, or for help with submitting motions correctly. Information about registering for the conference and dinner will be sent out shortly.

GPC UK Regional elections

A reminder that nominations for GPC UK regional representative close at **12pm Monday 3 February**.

Nominees should be aware that the BMA is currently in the early stages of reviewing its governance structures, which may have some potential to impact on the length of terms of office and regional remits during a term of office. This may mean that the term of office that a representative is elected to may be less than the usual three years. Such a decision could be made part way through a representative's term of office.

Please note that alongside each nomination, confirmation must be received from a representative of the candidate's LMC that the candidate contributes to the voluntary levy. This confirmation is part of the candidate's nomination and must be received by the nomination deadline for the completed nomination to be accepted.

It is the candidates responsibility to ask their LMC to do this on their behalf, confirmation emails can should be sent to elections@bma.org.uk.

For further information and to nominate yourself for a seat click [here \(elections section\)](#).

See the last GPC bulletin [here](#)

Have a good weekend

Richard