

LMC Update Email
30 July 2021

Dear colleagues

We were all shocked and saddened to hear of the death of Professor Kailash Chand OBE, a former member of GPCUK, LMC medical secretary and deputy chair of BMA council. He was a hugely influential NHS campaigner and prolific writer of articles making the case for general practice and the wider NHS. For much of his career, he worked as a GP in Tameside in Greater Manchester. Kailash was first elected to BMA council in 2006 and served as deputy council chair from 2012 to 2016. He was also elected to the BMA board in 2020.

Kailash was named GP of the year by the Royal College of General Practitioners in 2009 and was recognised for his services to the NHS with an OBE in 2010. He recently featured on the BBC documentary [Our NHS: A Hidden History](#), describing how nurses, doctors and health workers from overseas transformed the NHS despite hostility and discrimination. Kailash was a role model, mentor and friend for many and will be a great loss. We wish to offer our sincere condolences to his family at this difficult time.

New NHS England chief executive

The new chief executive officer of NHS England and Improvement will be Amanda Pritchard. She is currently the chief operating officer at NHSE/I and was previously chief executive of Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust after beginning her NHS career as a graduate management trainee in 1997. She is the first woman in the health service's history to hold this post, which she will take up on 1st August.

As I previously highlighted, Amanda Pritchard recently publicly praised GPs and their teams and acknowledged the work we are doing saying: 'a really big thank you to primary care – working well beyond pre-pandemic activity – (they are) really really working at an astonishing rate'.

We've welcomed her appointment and hope this provides an opportunity to reset our relationship with NHS England in such a way that GPs can see tangible evidence of both understanding and support for them and the teams they work with at this critical time of workload pressure and workforce exhaustion. We believe that a strong and supported general practice is the core foundation on which the wider issues facing the NHS can be dealt with and it's vital that NHSE/I under this new leadership do all they can to address the fundamental issues we all face.

Read the [BMA response to the announcement](#).

GP appointment data demonstrates workload pressure

The latest [GP appointment data for June](#) has been released. The data shows a 3.5m increase in the number of appointments provided during June this year compared to June 2019 (26.7m compared to 23.2m), with an additional 4m COVID vaccination appointments delivered on top of that. Taken together the total number of appointments during June was approximately 31.1m.

The appointment figures continue to demonstrate the immense pressures that GPs and practice teams are under with the ever-increasing workload generated by the pandemic and NHS backlog. Figures like these have become all too familiar but to see them in the summer when the workforce



should normally be able to take time out to rest and recharge after such a difficult year is very concerning. We will be highlighting to the new incoming NHSE/I chief executive that there is a critical need to alleviate the severe pressure GPs and their teams are under.

[Read the BMA response here.](#)

Supporting general practice campaign

In the coming weeks, we will be sending to practices materials and tools they need to explain to their patients the pressures general practice is facing. The monthly appointment data clearly shows the need for this as we all experience unprecedented pressures which are increasingly hard to deal with. There is no evidence that these pressures are going to lessen in the coming months as we face what many are predicting to be a very difficult winter.

RCGP report echoes BMA call to tackle general practice pressures

The RCGP has published a [report](#) reinforcing many of the key public messages regularly made by the BMA in recent months including that general practice is now 'at breaking point'. It proposed a five-point recovery plan to prevent GPs and other members of the practice team from burning out and ensure patients can continue to receive the care they need, well into the future. The RCGP described the pressures within general practice as unsustainable and said that they must be urgently addressed as we move beyond the 'emergency' pandemic period. During this time, GPs have to deal with the aftermath of COVID in their local communities, including long COVID, and the additional mental and physical health problems it is causing in patients of all ages.

They call for much more work to be done by the Government on recruitment and retention of GPs and the wider workforce. There is an urgent need for investment in premises so staff have space to work safely while providing care for patients. In addition, [workload pressures must be reduced](#), including the removal of unnecessary bureaucracy, and GPs need to have a strong voice in the new ICS arrangements. We would agree that all these goals must be delivered to see a real change in the crisis we currently face.

Chief Midwife urges pregnant women to get NHS Covid Jab

Professor Jacqueline Dunkley-Bent, Chief Midwifery Officer for England, has written to midwives and GP practices stressing the need to encourage pregnant women to be vaccinated to protect them and their baby. [England's top midwife is urging expectant mums to get the Covid-19 vaccine](#) after new data shows the overwhelming majority of pregnant women hospitalised with the virus have not had a jab. The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) and the Royal College of Midwives have both recommended vaccination as one of the best defences for pregnant women against severe COVID-19 infection.

GP payments and pensions system update

As we approach the end of the second month of its use, we continue to see an unacceptably high level of issues being raised about the new online portal. We continue to liaise with PCSE several times a week but the progress is frustratingly slow. The survey for GPs in England to provide their experiences of the new system will remain open until 13 August. If you haven't already, we would urge you to please [fill out the survey](#) so that we have further evidence of the full extent of the issues and can hold PCSE to account. Note that this survey is not a forum for individual issues – [please raise these with PCSE directly](#).

We know that practices are the biggest users of the portal and we are aware of the many issues they are facing. Our intention is to release a survey of practices in England at the start of September which we hope to use as a 'snapshot' of progress after three months of its use. There will be further information on this in the coming weeks but, again, the purpose is to help us hold PCSE accountable

for their performance. Please be assured that practice use of the portal continues to be central to the work we are doing on this issue.

There has been continued coverage of this issue in [Pulse](#).

Guidance to support GP practices obtain a sponsorship licence

The BMA and NHS England and NHS Improvement have published guidance to support GP practices obtain a sponsorship licence to recruit a GP from outside of the UK or a UK medical graduate switching from a Tier 4 visa. After hearing from GP practices, it will address the questions that are often raised and is designed to support GP practices to complete the online registration process and identify the right documents to send to the Home Office. Please note this does not replace the official [Home Office guidance](#).

You can access the guidance on the following [link](#)

Improving the NWRS (National Workforce Reporting Service)

NHS Digital has [improved the way they collect primary care workforce data](#) making the new NWRS is easier to use, and as simple and efficient as possible to help minimise the burden placed upon practices and primary care networks.

From July, users should access the new NWRS via the [Strategic Data Collection Service](#) (SDCS) - using the same login you use to complete other data collections, such as the General Practice Annual Electronic Self-Declaration (eDEC). Visit the [SDCS Data Submission site](#) to check that you have access to the new system. If you have never used SDCS, [you will need to register for an account](#).

It is important to understand staff capacity in the health service - this information helps shape GPC's negotiating strategy and how investment, training and resource is directed across the primary care workforce. It is therefore critical that the information you submit to NHS Digital about your staff is accurate and complete. Provision of workforce data is also a contractual requirement for practices and PCNs as it is crucial for understanding changing capacity across the primary care workforce.

To find out more about the changes to the NWRS, Practice and PCN Managers can [join one of NHS Digital's webinars](#) which are running twice weekly until end of August.

Media

Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland GPC Chair Dr Alan Stout was interviewed on [BBC Good Morning Ulster](#) on Monday about how vaccinated healthcare staff should not be exempt from self-isolating, in a bid to cope with staff shortages. The piece starts at 1:36:59 with Dr Stout's interview at 1:37:24. His comments were then picked up by the [Newsletter](#), Q Radio News and [BBC News](#) online. BMA Northern Ireland was mentioned in a piece in [The Irish News](#) on the same subject.

England

The latest annual [National Training Survey report](#), published by the General Medical Council (27 July), found that [as many as a third \(33%\) of trainee doctors](#) felt burnt out to a high or very high degree because of their work. Efforts to increase the number of GPs in general practice could be undermined with the new report highlighting increasing levels of burnout among GP trainees. I commented that it is incredibly concerning that GP trainers were increasingly likely to suffer from burnout and emotional exhaustion. There was a need for a renewed effort to protect staff's

wellbeing, while providing practices with the resources they need to meet the growing list of demands they face.

There was continued coverage in [GP online](#) of the Government announcement in England on pay and the impact on GP partners. GPC England exec team member Dr Krishna Kasaraneni commented that 'The government has said that practices will not be given additional funding on top of the 2.1% for staff already allocated for this year. This means GP partners could be faced with deciding between service cuts or being able to pay the full amount to salaried GPs. It is therefore not acceptable and disingenuous to speak of an uplift while refusing to provide the necessary funding. The government has completely and shamefully ignored the incredible response made by GP partners and their teams during the pandemic, suggesting that this year's pay award was to recognise the role played by other NHS workers. This will further damage GP morale and demonstrates that the government does not value general practice as it should. Liverpool LMC medical secretary Dr Rob Barnett commented that the pay award was a 'kick in the teeth' for practices that had delivered the vast majority of COVID-19 vaccinations and endured a significant rise in workload through the pandemic.

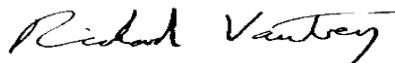
Dr Brian McGregor talked to BBC Radio York about falling Covid-19 cases. Interviewed on [BBC Radio York](#) (starts at 07.10) he said that one of the reasons case numbers appear to be dropping, is because people are deciding not to be tested as they don't want to have to self-isolate. He went on to say that with schools now on holiday, many asymptomatic cases will no longer be picked up. He also said that people in hospital with Covid tended to be those who were younger and unvaccinated and he urged listeners to have their vaccine as soon as possible, saying that vaccinations are the best protection against this illness.

Read the GP bulletin [here](#).

We would encourage LMCs to share this GPC update with GPs and practices.

Have a good weekend

Richard



Richard Vautrey
Chair, BMA GPs committee