

Worcestershire

Local Medical Committee Ltd

NEWSLETTER

6th December 2021

In this week's Newsletter...

[Changes To QOF And IIF](#)

[Additional Funding for Covid Vaccination Programme](#)

[New Covid-19 Omicron Variant – New Measures and Booster Programme Extension](#)

[Health Select Committee Inquiry into the Future of General Practice](#)

[BMA Report: Weathering The Storm](#)

[Joint Statement on Inclisiran](#)

[Integrated Care Systems](#)

[LMC England Conference 2021 - Resolutions](#)

[Mentor Support](#)

[Mental Health and Wellbeing](#)

[LMC Website](#)

[Covid Resources](#)

Click on any title to go directly to an item

CHANGES TO QOF AND IIF

NHSE/I published a [letter](#) last week announcing changes to QOF and IIF and changes to the COVID vaccination DES. More detail and operational guidance on these changes will be forthcoming in days to come.

Given the recent announcement on QOF and IIF, hopefully it will become possible for practices to consider how they may be able to support the national vaccination effort whilst continuing to clinically prioritise patients who need them. We recognise the significant unprecedented challenges that everyone is facing at the moment. We should be incredibly proud of what has been achieved so far. Read the BMA [press statement](#).

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Sajid Javid, has written a thank you [letter](#) to Primary Care, thanking them for their efforts on the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme.

ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR COVID VACCINATION PROGRAMME

Following the identification of the COVID-19 omicron variant, government have accepted [JCVI advice](#) to widen the age range for vaccine eligibility to include all 18-39 year olds and to shorten the time from last vaccination to booster to three months.

In addition, 12 to 15 year olds can now receive a second dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine, no sooner than 12 weeks after the first dose. Severely immunosuppressed individuals who have received three primary doses, should also be offered a booster dose.

To support the quicker and larger roll-out of boosters, NHSE/I announced earlier this week that there will be some additional funding to support PCN Groupings to step up capacity by:

- Increasing the Item of Service (IoS) fee for COVID-19 vaccinations to £15 from 1 December to 31 January (Mondays to Saturdays)
- Increasing IoS fee to £20 for vaccinations administered on Bank Holidays and Sundays from 1 December to 31 January
- Increasing the supplement for vaccination of housebound patients to £30 from £20 between 1 December and 31 December backdated to 16 September

Although we welcome additional funding being made available, we remain concerned about the high workload and lack of workforce capacity in general practice. GPs and their teams will now need to balance the clear national priority to deliver booster vaccinations to as many people as possible with ensuring that people who need care and treatment from their GP practice and the wider NHS continue to receive it.

If practices physically do not have the staff or time to dedicate additional time to the vaccine programme because they are also focused on other contractually required work it will do little to help. We recognise that with a finite number of staff and hours in the day there is a limit to what practices can safely do. We are grateful to our CCG for the relaxation of the Revivo local contractual requirements for those practices supporting the vaccination programme.

It is hoped that these recent changes, removing some of the more bureaucratic and target-based requirements within practices' contracts, will create capacity to step up delivery of the vaccination programme to quickly protect as many as possible from COVID-19. Read the BMA [press statement](#).

NEW COVID-19 OMICRON VARIANT – NEW MEASURES AND BOOSTER PROGRAMME EXTENSION

Following the reports of a new COVID-19 Omicron variant, two weeks ago the [BMA called for mandatory mask-wearing and social distancing in indoor crowded spaces](#), and that public buildings, offices and hospitality venues have adequate ventilation to disperse the virus as much as possible.

The [Prime Minister then announced](#) that new targeted measures in England to prevent the spread of the new variant would be [introduced on Tuesday 30 November](#), including mandatory mask wearing in shops and on public transport. The public was also encouraged to ensure they get vaccinated, to help protect themselves and others.

A [CAS alert](#) has been sent out to healthcare workers, with advice to continue to follow the national [Infection prevention and control for seasonal respiratory infections in health and care settings for winter 2021 to 2022 guidance](#), wearing face masks for staff and face masks/coverings for all patients and visitors within health and care settings over the winter period.

It also recommends that physical distancing should be at least 1 metre, increasing whenever feasible to 2 metres across all health and care setting, and that it should remain at 2 metres where patients with suspected or confirmed respiratory infection are being cared for or managed. Read the BMA statement [here](#).

HEALTH SELECT COMMITTEE INQUIRY INTO THE FUTURE OF GENERAL PRACTICE

As reported in recent newsletters, the Parliamentary Health and Social Care Committee (HSCC), chaired by former Health Secretary, Jeremy Hunt MP, has launched an inquiry into the future of general practice. The inquiry presents a key opportunity for the BMA and LMCs to raise our concerns and recommendations. Worcestershire LMC has now formally submitted comments to the committee. See our [LMC response](#).

Members of the public, GPs and practices staff can also submit their comments directly to the inquiry by 14 December.

There is guidance on how to submit evidence here: <https://www.parliament.uk/get-involved/committees/how-do-i-submit-evidence/commons-witness-guide/>.

There are some key points to consider below:

- Write your submission in a word document referencing some of the key areas you want to make. Don't worry if you don't have time to complete it all. Get your main points across. Use no more than 3,000 words and don't add any logos, or use any information that has already been published. Say who you are and why you are submitting the evidence. Put your evidence in a Word, ODT or RTF document. Make sure the file is no more than 25MB in size.
- Follow this [link](#) and enter your details:
- Attach your document via the website

Please do take the opportunity to get your views across if you can and encourage others to do so too. We really must have our collective voices heard.

BMA REPORT: WEATHERING THE STORM

The BMA published a report, [Weathering the storm: vital actions to minimise pressure on UK health services this winter](#).

The report outlines practical recommendations for stemming the winter crisis that health services across the UK are facing. These include calling on political leaders to have honest conversations with the public about the immediate challenges facing health services so that patients and the public alike have the best information possible about how to access safe and appropriate care.

The report calls for urgent and immediate action by government and health service leaders and asks them to do more to:

1. Communicate honestly with patients and the public about health service pressures
2. Retain existing staff and maximise workforce capacity
3. Promote responsible public health policies to keep people safe and healthy and help manage demand on services
4. Direct resources to where they are needed most to manage health service demand

Access the report and read more [here](#).

JOINT STATEMENT ON INCLISIRAN

The BMA have published a [joint statement](#) with the Royal College of GPs regarding the implementation of [Inclisiran](#) in primary care.

Although the BMA is supportive of innovation of new drugs, they have serious concerns about how this particular drug is being introduced. In particular they have raised issues about where the long-term responsibility lies when prescribing this drug, and the lack of clarity about where doctors and patients can turn if there are concerns or problems.

There is also an issue of capacity, the lack of clear resources to support the additional work required and how the impact that introducing new treatment plans will have on teams that are already stretched to their limits. Those concerns have been raised with NICE and NHSE/I.

This guidance aims to advise practices that may want to prescribe these drugs of our concerns and that they should only do so if they feel comfortable. Read the statement [here](#).

INTEGRATED CARE SYSTEMS

The BMA continues to lobby on a range of issues relating to the Health and Care Bill, including strengthening the involvement of general practice, and the role of LMCs. As part of this they have co-signed a [letter](#) with other representative bodies for primary care, to Ministers and the Health and Care Bill Committee, asking for a commitment from Ministers in Committee that:

- The government honours its commitment for primary care to be represented and involved in decision-making at all levels of the Integrated Care Systems (ICS) including strategic decision-making forums through formalised roles for GPs, dentists, pharmacists, primary eye care and primary hearing care audiologists in Integrated Care Partnerships (ICPs)
- These roles are remunerated to ensure parity of availability and voice with NHS Trusts, NHS staff, social care and public health colleagues in strategic thinking and decision-making
- That existing statutory Local Representative Committees, such as LMCs, have the right put forward nominations for those roles
- Transparency and accountability - ICBs and ICPs to be under duty to explain in writing in public when they choose not to heed advice from local primary care bodies.

A [briefing](#) outlining what collectively we want government to do has also been sent to Ministers.

LMC ENGLAND CONFERENCE 2021 - RESOLUTIONS

The resolutions and election results from the Annual Conference of England LMCs 2021, which was held last week, have now been [published](#). Watch recordings of the event:

Read more about the event here: [Local medical committees \(bma.org.uk\)](http://Local%20medical%20committees%20(bma.org.uk)).

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.

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.

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:

[GPST Recruitment Flyer](#)

[Call for Evidence – LMC Response](#)

COVID 19 RESOURCES

[BMJ – news and resources](#)

[RCGP COVID-19 information](#)

[NHSE/I primary care bulletins](#)

[NICE resources](#)

WORCESTERSHIRE AND HEREFORDSHIRE LMC LTD

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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.

MEMBERS OF THE WORCESTERSHIRE COMMITTEE

- CHAIRMAN:** Dr David Herold
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Representatives:

- | | | | |
|---------------------|--|-------------------|--|
| BROMSGROVE: | Dr D Pryke Dr K Hollier | REDDITCH: | Dr I Haines Dr M Shah |
| WYRE FOREST: | Dr M Davis Dr S Morton Dr J Rayner | WYCHAVON: | Dr D Herold Dr J Rankin Dr K Gines |
| MALVERN: | Dr P Bunyan Dr R Khehar | WORCESTER: | Dr F Martin Dr C Whyte Dr R Benney |

Co-opted Representatives:

Out of Hours: Dr E Penny
Dispensing: Dr J Rankin
Registrars Rep: Dr J Chun (North)
Dr E Ukorebi (South)

First5 Rep: Dr L Jones

IT Rep: Dr R Williams

Non Principals: Dr S Manton

Clinical Directors: Dr R Williams

EDI: Dr R Benney

Practice Manager Representatives:

Helen Garfield, Representative WF PM
Michelle Hallahan, Representative R&B PM
Meryl Foster, Representative SW PM

Worcestershire GPC Representative: Dr S Matthews

The next LMC meetings will be:

Worcestershire – 9th December 2021

