

To:

LMC Chairs
LMC Secretaries
LMC Office

Our Ref: CN/CM

9 September 2015

Dear colleague

Working with the General Practitioners Committee – LMC survey results and update on GPC developments

You will recall that in June/July the GPC conducted a survey of LMCs as part of the ongoing review of its activities and to ensure that we can improve our services to LMCs and genuinely respond to what LMCs have told us they need.

I am enclosing the results of that survey for your information. I am pleased to say that we received a good response, and in particular that there was a spread of responses from all areas. I thank all of you who took the time to complete the survey. We would always be interested to hear from any LMCs who did not send in a formal response, and do feel free to email the secretariat (cmusonda@bma.org.uk) with any further thoughts.

As you will see from the attached report, there was much positive feedback on the current ways of working and the support LMCs receive from GPC. However there are a number of areas for improvement, including the need for us to develop a more proactive approach to policy development, to improve our media presence and the public and media perception of general practice, and to engage better with wider stakeholders. We have also noted the expressed wish for GPC to engage LMCs more with our programme of work and be more consistent in responding to queries and providing support and guidance. We also recognise that you would like more support in the delivery of local implementation of national policy.

A more detailed summary of all the feedback is contained in the report.

Over the coming months you will be hearing more detail from us about how we intend to address these issues. In the meantime I thought you would find it helpful to have an overview of some of the initiatives

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planned and how we hope they will lead to improvements in the services and support we provide to LMCs.

Over the summer the GPC executive hosted a series of stakeholder dinners to discuss the future of general practice and in particular the new models of care, with a view to publishing a definitive statement about this in the autumn. Guests included Simon Stevens and other senior officials from NHS England, DH, Kings Fund, Nuffield Trust, and HEE. We also invited a few LMC secretaries/chief executives to highlight the unique representative role of LMCs, and their key role in enabling positive change locally.

We are continuing to have input into the monitoring of vanguard sites and from the secretariat; Fleur Nielsen in particular is the key liaison point for such developments – please feel free to contact her if you wish to share any information or would like to discuss anything, as we are building up a considerable body of knowledge and expertise.

Working with the BMA, the GPC has established a programme of support for GP networks. This includes a funding programme whereby LMCs have been able to bid for grants to assist the development of networks in their area, the results of which we hope to be able to share with applicants very shortly; the establishment of a dynamic database with over 100 GP networks and federations covering over 3000 practices; and a BMA Community to allow staff from emerging networks to exchange information and ideas. This is open to practice and business managers as well as LMCs. We have already provided guidance on different aspects of practices working together, and will continue to build on the existing guidance portfolio. We will also be hosting a network conference on 20 November at BMA House.

We are planning to pilot regional GPC/LMC meetings on Thursday 21 January 2016, based on strong interest from our LMC survey. This will help us to learn together how best to respond to the developing devolution of health and social care in parts of England. A number of LMCs have already kindly agreed to host these meetings. It is very much a pilot and we would welcome feedback after the meetings as to whether this is something we should do on a regular basis or not. Our staff also have a rolling programme of visits to LMCs during the year so you should be seeing us more often going forward. We are also planning to improve engagement with the GPC Executive Team and build on the roadshow events which the survey suggests you find helpful,

The secretariat are currently implementing a revised protocol for dealing with queries, which we hope will introduce more consistency. They are also preparing a considerable amount of guidance in addition to what has already been published this year – planned topics include seniority, practice earnings, pensions, maternity leave chambers working for locums, and contract breaches, and specifically to support practices working together, legal structures and governance, pensions, competition law and pricing contracts. The Salaried GP Handbook is also being updated in conjunction with BMA regional services. Future guidance will also include shared records, NHS complaints procedures, medical indemnity, and bidding for enhanced services (though these are likely to be later in the year).

I recognise that significant concerns are still being expressed about accessing and navigating the GPC pages of the BMA website, and the suggestion that this could be addressed by a separate GPC website. We have been working with the designer of some of the most popular LMC websites as part of a fundamental review of the BMA website. Thank you to those who took part in a recent survey that has fed in to this review. I hope in the meantime that the improvements already made to the current site over the last year have been helpful. The feasibility of greater use of social media is another aspect that is being explored.

The LMC listserver is now reviewed on a daily basis, to identify and channel queries promptly and to ensure that the team is alert to any emerging issues, and can take steps either to advise on or to raise with NHS England.

Finally we are looking at delivering more training to LMCs; suggested topics to date include contract updates, media training, negotiating skills, advocacy and mediation skills.

While none of this will happen overnight, I hope that you will see better engagement and more appropriate and timely services provided to you and your constituents. Please do not hesitate to contact your GPC representative or the secretariat if you have any questions or would like to pass on any further feedback.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chaand Nagpaul". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'C'.

Chaand Nagpaul

Chair
General Practitioners Committee