

Friday 20 February 2015

Issue 12

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GPC meeting

The GPC held its meeting on Thursday 19 February and this newsletter provides a summary of the main items discussed.

The BMA’s No More Games campaign (England, Wales and Northern Ireland)

This week, the BMA has launched its ‘No More Games’ campaign calling on all political parties to stop playing games with the NHS, focusing on three areas:

- No More Games with the public’s health;
- No More Games with NHS funding; and
- No More Games with who is providing healthcare.

The NHS is one of the UK’s towering achievements and for too long it’s been used to play political games. The BMA believes this must end now and is calling for an open and honest public debate about the future of the NHS. The BMA has not run a major public campaign for some years. The fact that we’re doing so now shows how strongly BMA members feel about what’s happening to the NHS.

Most BMA members work in the NHS. Decades of political game playing, including successive disruptive and wasteful reorganisations, have taken their toll on the health service. The Punch and Judy politics over the NHS has a direct impact on the care which doctors can provide to patients, as well as on doctors’ morale.

These games have been played by politicians across the political spectrum for short-term gains over decades. In the run-up to a general election and at a critical juncture for the health service, the BMA is calling for all members and doctors to help get the message heard, by adding their voices and saying No More Games with the NHS.



The launch of the campaign was received extensive news coverage and there has been widespread billboard advertising. A programme of further activity is planned over the coming months.

The GPC is fully supportive of the campaign and urges GPs to get involved and add their voices to the campaign. Full details of how to get involved and campaign materials to download are [available on the BMA's website](#).

GP networks

The GPC is continuing actively to engage in the topic of GP networks (also known as GP federations). As a part of that programme of activity, the GPC recently launched guidance covering the different legal forms that GP networks can adopt. [The guidance is available on the BMA website](#)

Additional guidance, including work covering key steps to setting up a GP network, is currently being developed and will be launched soon.

CQC guidance – England only

GPC has issued two separate pieces of guidance on the CQC registration and inspection procedure and these are available on the BMA website:

- [Guidance on CQC inspections for GP practices](#)
- [Guidance on CQC registration](#)

There will be additional detailed guidance on how to prepare for and deal with a CQC inspection, which will be available on the BMA website shortly.

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and Disability Living Allowance (DLA) claimants – England only

From 23 February 2015 the DWP will extend the areas in which existing Disability Living Allowance (DLA) claimants will start to be reassessed for Personal Independence Payment (PIP). From that date the DWP will further extend the rollout of PIP natural reassessment to some DLA claimants living in the postcode areas beginning AB (Aberdeen), BB (Blackburn), BD (Bradford), DD (Dundee), DN (Doncaster), EX (Exeter), HX (Halifax), KA (Kilmarnock), KY (Kirkcaldy), LS (Leeds), PH (Perth), PL (Plymouth), PO (Portsmouth), PR (Preston), S (Sheffield), SO (Southampton), TS (Cleveland) and WF (Wakefield) where:

- an existing DLA claimant's fixed term award is coming to an end, or
- they are approaching age 16, or
- the DWPs receive information about a change in their care or mobility needs, or
- an individual chooses to claim PIP instead of their DLA.

The DWP has said consistently that it would take a controlled approach to the introduction of PIP, including the reassessment of existing DLA claimants, continuously learning lessons from live running. In the areas chosen to extend the natural reassessment rollout, the assessment provider has sufficient local capacity to handle the increased volumes.

Extending rollout in this gradual way ensures that the DWP can continue to focus on reducing delays and improving the service to claimants. DWP will continue to monitor progress before making any decisions on extending natural reassessment further. Existing DLA claimants who have a lifetime or indefinite DLA award will not be affected until at least October 2015, unless the DWP receives information about a change in their condition that would affect their rate of payment or if they reach the age of 16.

Potentially avoidable appointments – England only

The Primary Care Foundation has been commissioned by NHS England to look at ways of reducing GP practice workload. They are carrying out an audit of avoidable GP appointments, as well as a survey on reducing bureaucracy.

They need a better response rate from practices, and the GPC recommends that LMCs encourage practices to carry out this short audit, since the data will provide much needed information in objectifying the scale of inappropriate appointment demands on practices. If each LMC were to encourage a small sample of practices to take part, this would be very helpful.

Please see the [Primary Care Foundation website](#) for more information on the audit tool and to access a paper or spreadsheet version. Completion of the tool could be included within personal development plans.

Sessional GPs newsletter

The monthly e-newsletter for sessional GPs was sent out yesterday afternoon. It focusses on the findings from our recent appraisal and revalidation survey.

[The newsletter is available on the BMA website.](#)

It has been sent out to all the sessional GPs on the BMA's membership database but, to ensure that it gets to as many sessional GPs as possible, we would encourage you to distribute the link as widely as you can. Using the new format it is also possible to easily highlight different sections of the newsletter via social media if you use Twitter, etc.

GPC roadshows – England only

The GPC is holding a series of roadshows around England, organised through LMCs, which are an opportunity to hear from one of the GPC executive team about the current issues affecting general practice and discuss these issues with them. Details of dates and venues [can be found on the BMA website](#) and GPs are encouraged to attend.

Election of GPC regional representatives and a prison GP representative, 2015-2018

The BMA's General Practitioners Committee represents all UK GPs - partners and sessional GMS and PMS, men and women, whether members of the BMA or not. It is important that the composition of the committee reflects the diversity and all the interests of the profession. To achieve this, the more doctors standing for election for the GPC seats, the better.

The GPC is holding elections now for regional representatives in 14 different constituencies (please see [the BMA website for more details](#)). The GPC is also looking for a GP who provides NHS primary care in prisons and other secure environments to represent other GPs who work in similar settings.

The GPC's remit covers all the areas of work affecting all GPs. GPs who want to change things need to get in there and do something about it. Anyone even vaguely considering election, is urged to [look on the BMA website](#) or contact Holly Higgs hhiggs@bma.org.uk to find out more details.

Deadline for nominations for regional representatives: 5 March 2015
Deadline for nominations for a prison GP representative: 12 March 2015.

LMCs – change of details

If there are any changes to LMC personnel, addresses and other contact details, please can you email Karen Day with the changes at kday@bma.org.uk.

The GPC next meets on 19 March 2015, and LMCs are invited to submit items for discussion. You may like to review these, beforehand, with the representatives in your area who serve on the GPC. The closing date for items is 10 March 2015. It would be helpful if items could be emailed to Holly Trotman at htrotman@bma.org.uk. You may also like to use the GPC's listservers to exchange views and ideas.

GPC News

LMCs are reminded that their regional representatives can provide more detailed information about the issues covered in GPC News, and other matters. Other members of the GPC would also be pleased to accept invitations to LMC meetings wherever possible. Their names and addresses are in the GPC Yearbook. The secretariat can also provide a written background brief if required, but it would be helpful to have such requests well in advance of your meetings.

Finally, if LMCs require assistance on local issues, they can also contact the BMA's local offices: addresses are on page 3 of the GPC's yearbook.

This newsletter has been sent to:

Secretaries of LMCs and LMC offices
Members of the GPC
Members of the GP trainees subcommittee
Members of the sessional GPs subcommittee