

Message to Locum GPs 05/05/2020

Dear Locum GP Colleagues,

These are challenging times for all of us. General practice has changed completely over recent weeks and practices across our Counties are working in new hub models of care and remotely where possible. Online consultation and telephone triage have become the norm. The lockdown remains in force with social distancing expected to continue for some time even when this is relaxed.

The local primary care response to COVID-19 has been inspiring. Faced with almost daily changes to guidance and national expectations, Worcestershire has stepped up to the mark and faced the challenges head on.

We know that our locum GP colleagues have felt frustrated. We know that you want to contribute and want to work even though the new way of working poses challenges. We realise that the NHS111 CCAS service has been extremely difficult to access for locum GPs.

You have expressed concerns that there are limited locum opportunities currently. This is the picture nationally as well. Unsurprisingly, many partners have not taken annual leave and therefore locum work may have been cancelled and new work may not have been offered due to uncertainty over a national exit strategy at this point. We also know that many patients have deliberately stayed away from practices sometimes through fear and sometimes through not wanting to burden the NHS and so the workload has been manageable over recent weeks.

It seems unlikely that this current picture will continue. Already there are discussions about how we can encourage patients to access more routine care and practices have noticed the work building up for non Covid related medical conditions.

It is certain that we will need all of our workforce to address the physical and psychological impact of the pandemic as we make our way through the restoration phase within population. We also know that many locum and GP principles have portfolio work to supplement their main roles and that funding for these roles has been lost.

We are aware of some opportunities for locum work through the federations and you may wish to contact either Staywell Healthcare or Taurus Healthcare depending on your location.

Teamnet is being used for information sharing and there is a link available to the public, that is updated daily on all covid related issues. Please visit <https://bit.ly/HWCOVID19>

The Sessional GP Committee, working with GPC and BMA Law, has produced a [model contract with terms for the engagement of a GP providing temporary COVID-19 services](#). The model terms are intended to provide practices with the ability to flexibly employ additional GPs to deal with the demands of responding to COVID-19.

In particular, it is aimed at locum GPs in order to provide access to employment benefits such as maintaining continuous coverage of death in service benefits while supporting COVID-19 services, and access to the employer's occupational sick pay and annual leave entitlements.

Read more about supporting locum GPs in the COVID-19 crisis in this [blog](#) by Ben Molyneux, Chair of the Sessional GPs committee

Please also make use of the free local wellbeing offers, there is a free mentoring service – we have attached the flyer and would welcome any requests. We are also developing a locum GP distribution list, if you'd like to join this list please e-mail hw.workforce@nhs.net

If you have any concerns you wish to raise with us please contact the Worcestershire and Herefordshire LMC or the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Workforce Team. hw.workforce@nhs.net

We will get through this together.

Dr Gillian Farmer
Worcestershire LMC Secretary

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Herefordshire LMC Secretary

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