



11th March 2024

Dear Colleague

Welcome to this week's edition of the LMC Express. The local updates for this week include:

- GP Contract 2024/25 Imposition
- End to Visa Sponsorship Licence Renewal
- REMINDER: Manage Your Mind Workshops Virtual Sessions
- General Practice Alert State (GPAS) National Reporting Dashboard
- Useful Links
- Upcoming LMC Interface Meetings

This week we have also attached the national update from the BMA, and we particularly draw your attention to the important announcements therein:

- 2024-25 GP contract referendum – England
- GP Workforce – January 2024
- HRT guidance updates
- Preparing for the Spring 2024 COVID-19 vaccination campaign
- PRSB survey – GP activity data
- NIHR In-Practice Fellowship
- Professional Record Standards Body
- GPC UK Regional Elections

GP Contract 2024/25 Imposition

Kent LMC, along with over 900 colleagues, attended the national GPC webinar regarding the GP Contract 24/25 imposition from NHSE. Further local webinars are due to take place and for colleagues who missed it the future BMA GPC Webinar dates are below:

Webinar dates, times and Microsoft Teams joining links:

South East Coast: Wednesday 13th March 19.30 - 21.00 [Microsoft Teams link](#)

National Catch-Up: Thursday 21st March

12.30 - 14.00 [Microsoft Teams link](#)

19.30 - 21.00 [Microsoft Teams link](#)

It was helpful to understand from the GPC their position, when embarking on negotiations on your behalf, and the response from NHSE.

GPC England feel this contract will not help general practice or patients. They advised us over 1300 practices have been lost since September 2015. Inflation outstrips any uplift and it is a real terms cut that threatens more practice closures, more headlines around redundancies and GP unemployment, more patients losing 'their GP' and 'their practice'.

The GPC want to hear what you think, this webinar is open to ALL GPs delivering the contract, including registrars and locums and Practice Managers.

The referendum is open to all BMA Members and is impartial and objective. This is a national contract, so must be led by our national trade union, the BMA. **The referendum closes on the 27th March and is followed by a GPC meeting on the 28th March.**

The referendum question is:

Do you accept the 2024/25 GMS contract for General Practice from Government and NHS England? Answer - Yes or No

We were also advised that this referendum is an opportunity to have your say as a profession, as General Practitioners, with every single GP, whether partner, salaried, locum or a GP registrar, eligible to vote. There is a 2 minute YouTube video here, where Dr Katie Bramall-Stainer, the Chair of GPC England, sets out the process, <https://youtu.be/5hdRdEO1yzA>.

Kent LMC is setting up a Broadcast only WhatsApp Group to enable us to pass on important information from the BMA regarding the 2024-25 GP Contract Referendum. This group is open to all GPs, including registrars. If you would like to join the group please complete the simple form via the link below at your earliest convenience.

<https://forms.office.com/e/uqawQEkcV3>

GP Absence Financial Support

Practices are reminded that they are able to claim financial support for the cost of backfill for Salaried and Partner GP absence including sickness absence and parental leave (paternity, maternity, adoption). Cover for an absent GP can be provided by a locum, another GP already employed in the practice or by Advanced Clinical Practitioners. Advanced Clinical Practitioner must have an advanced scope of practice, and this will need to be agreed in advance of the claim with the ICB Primary Care Contracting Team.

Phased returns are eligible for support, as long as the absent GP has a fit note that recommends a phased return, or an occupational health report and will be covered up to the maximum weekly amount or the actual costs incurred. The maximum weekly amount can be claimed for absent part-time GP's and should not be pro-rated in line with the working pattern of the absent GP. Further guidance can be found on the BMA site at [Locum GP cover for parental and sickness leave \(bma.org.uk\)](https://www.bma.org.uk/locum-gp-cover-for-parental-and-sickness-leave) or please contact the LMC office for support.

End to Visa Sponsorship Licence Renewal

From 6 April 2024 employers will no longer need to renew their sponsorship licence. The Home Office has [announced](#) that from 6 April 2024, employers that already hold a sponsorship licence will no longer be required to apply for a licence renewal after four years. There is no action needed for employers. If a practice has a sponsorship licence that is due to expire on or after this date, the Home Office will automatically extend the expiry date on the licence by 10 years.

This is the latest development as part of the ongoing work to transform the sponsorship system and will help reduce visa sponsorship related admin and costs for practices.

GP Appointments in Kent & Medway January 2023

The LMC has updated the GP Appointments in Kent & Medway poster and it is available to download from the [Communicating with Patients](#) section of our website to help practices evidence to patients the amount of work being carried out, and the pressures faced, by general practice, and the steps patients can take to help themselves manage their care. Practices may wish to display this in their waiting rooms or add to their websites and social media sites. The data is sourced from NHS digital. The next update will be published soon after the next release of GP appointments data.

REMINDER: Manage Your Mind Workshops Virtual Sessions

For all GP Practices, including those who may wish to use this as a resource to help complete the QOF well-being module, we are arranging a webinar with Dr Farnaaz Sharief to discuss the importance of positive self-care for healthcare professionals, key factors that contribute to wellbeing, and how you can 'manage your mind' at work and at home.

After the session staff should be better able to:

- Understand why positive self-care amongst health and social professionals is important.
- Recall key factors that contribute to wellbeing.
- Grasp principles that help maintain wellbeing whilst juggling many responsibilities.
- Use practical techniques at work or at home to 'manage your mind'
- Appreciate the role of breathwork in releasing stress, improving energy and creating a subjective feeling of wellbeing.

We are running a number of dates for the webinars, all sessions will take place over lunch 1-2.30pm. Please click on the date below to book a place:

- [12th March 2024](#)
- [2nd April 2024](#)

General Practice Alert State (GPAS) National Reporting Dashboard

The national GPAS reporting dashboard has been published and shows the pressure general practice is under. Last week Kent & Medway practices reported GPAS Red/Opel 4. Thank you to practices that continue to provide input into GPAS on a weekly basis. The information you provide is invaluable in evidencing the pressure general practice is operating under. The GPAS information from the national dashboard will be used by the BMA and feed into contract negotiations.

Submissions continue to be completely anonymised. The LMC is not able to identify individual practices from the submissions. The only data that is shared with either the ICB or other stakeholders is aggregated at HCP or Kent and Medway level. The more practices that take part in GPAS, the more robust the evidence will be. **Collecting this data is assisting the LMC in illustrating operational pressures in general practice. The report takes less than 5 minutes to complete each week.**

We would encourage every practice to submit a report on weekly basis and to also provide comments and feedback. Furthermore, if you are experiencing acute operational pressures please do get in touch with either the LMC or the ICB to seek support

The LMC is able to assist with getting practices started on reporting. Information can be found on our website at [Kent LMC - General Practice Alert State \(GPAS\)](#) or please email the LMC at info@kentlmc.org **If your GPAS contact person changes or leaves the practice, please update us with the new contact person at info@kentlmc.org**

[To view the latest GPAS SitRep please click here](#)

The LMC is currently working the ICB to explore the support that can be offered to practices when declaring any state beyond Green. For example this could be additional resources, changes to operations with a practice or the wider healthcare system, assistance with communications. We would welcome any ideas from practices as to the help or support that could be offered to a practice when challenged by increased operational pressures and so declaring, a state of amber, red or black: please send them to the LMC at info@kentlmc.org

Useful Links

Subscribe to Kent & Medway ICB General Practice Updates
Previous issues of the General Practice Update available online
Subscribe to NHSE Primary Care Bulletin
Email Newsletters from CQC
Kent and Medway Primary Care Training Hub
Sign up to Primary Care News

Upcoming LMC Interface Meetings

The following meetings are taking place over the next few weeks. If you have any issues that you would like us to raise please email info@kentlmc.org with the title of the meeting and details of your request.

K&M Social Care Partnership Trust Interface Meeting (KMPT) – Tuesday 12 March
Manage Your Mind - Virtual Session – Tuesday 12 March
NELFT Interface Meeting – Tuesday 12 March
DVH Interface Meeting – Thursday 14 March
EKHUFT/ICB/LMC Interface Mtg – Thursday 21 March
Manage Your Mind - Virtual Session – Tuesday 2 April
Kent & Medway GP Board - In Person – Wednesday 17 April
Full LMC Committee – Thursday 18 April

Kind regards
Kent Local Medical Committee