



8th April 2024

Dear Colleague

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

- PCQS Update
- EMIS business continuity mode testing
- GP Appointments in Kent & Medway February 2024
- South East Complaints Hub
- A Reminder about LMC Buying Group Membership
- 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:

- BMA guidance on physician associates
- Headlines from the latest NHS stats: GP workforce/GP appointments – February 2024
- GPC England committee pages and guidance for practices

PCQS Update

Practices should have received the attached letter advising that the PCQS contract has been extended to 30th September 2024 to allow for the current tariffs to be renegotiated. We recognise that the current tariffs have not kept pace with increasing practice costs and that many are in fact loss making. Through our ongoing positive engagement with the ICB team, they are aware of this and that, if services are not to be cut, tariffs need to be appropriately uplifted to reflect the increased cost of delivering services and that is what we are collaboratively working towards. We are disappointed that our negotiations could not be completed in time for the new financial year but are reassured that any agreed new tariffs should be backdated to 1st April 2024.

EMIS business continuity mode testing

Practices are advised to ensure that they test their EMIS business continuity mode on a quarterly basis as this can provide back up in the case of an issue with accessing EMIS. Instructions on how to do this can be found [here](#). If your EMIS business continuity mode is not functioning, please raise a call with EMIS in the first instance. If practices are not being supported by EMIS to get this resolved, please let the LMC know, and we can raise on your behalf.

GP Appointments in Kent & Medway February 2024

The LMC has updated the ' [GP Appointments in Kent & Medway](#) ' poster 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.

South East Complaints Hub

In 2023 it was agreed that NHS Frimley Integrated Care Board (ICB) would host the South East Complaints Hub to manage complaints about primary care services on behalf of the six ICBs within the Southeast Region. NHS Frimley ICB has recently changed their headquarters and with this change, the postal address of the South East Complaints Hub has also changed.

From **Monday, 1 April**, the postal address is now:

South East Complaints Hub
NHS Frimley Integrated Care Board
King Edward VII Hospital
St Leonards Road
Windsor
SL4 3DP

The email remains: Frimleyicb.southeastcomplaints@nhs.net and telephone number remains: 0300 5610290. NHS Kent and Medway has updated information about [comments, compliments and complaints](#) on its website, and Kent LMC have updated their Listening Responding Improving leaflet in the [Communicating with Patients](#) section.

If you also have information on your website please make sure it is updated with the new postal address.

A Reminder about LMC Buying Group Membership

The LMC Buying Group helps GP practices save money on products and services they regularly buy. The Buying Group have negotiated excellent discounts on a wide range of products and services from their approved suppliers.

Buying Group membership is completely free and there is no compulsion to use all the suppliers. They do the hard work associated with finding the most competitive suppliers in cost and customer service, so they save you time as well as money on your purchasing!

Although the Buying Group was originally set up to help GP practices save money on the products and services they regularly buy, membership is now also open to GP Federations and Primary Care Networks.

Why use the Buying Group?

- No membership fees
- Excellent negotiated discounts from a range of suppliers
- Quality products and services
- Free cost analysis for members
- No need to 'shop around' anymore – we've done the hard work already!
- Access to a recruitment platform to advertise your clinical and non-clinical roles for free and a premium 'Featured Job' package for a small fee.
- Access to a community resource hub

If you're not sure whether you're a member and/or have access to the Buying Group website (this is where you can view the pricing/discounts and get quotes) then contact the Buying Group team on 0115 979 6910 or info@lmcbuyinggroups.co.uk. They can also help you with any questions you might have about your membership or the suppliers.

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.

Kent & Medway GP Board - In Person – Wednesday 17 April
Full LMC Committee – Thursday 18 April
LMC Sessional GP Sub-Committee – Thursday 18 April

Kind regards
Kent Local Medical Committee