



Dear Colleague

Please see below for your information our latest updates during the Covid-19 pandemic:

Translated COVID-19 Patient Information Materials: Covid-10 Infographics

COVID-19 Infographics are a UK-based team of doctors, medical students and volunteers who are aiming to translate evidence-based and easily accessible COVID-19 information into as many languages as possible.

BAME communities are disproportionately affected by COVID-19 and Covid-19 Infographics want to help provide people with access to the information they need to protect their health. The graphics are translated by a team of reliable translators through volunteers and services such as Translators Without Borders and the information included in them are checked over by doctors and is sourced entirely from sources such as NHS England, the WHO and NICE.

As Kent & Medway covers an area with a number of people who speak languages other than English, you may find these materials useful to distribute within the communities your practices are based in. There are translations of infographics into over 20 languages, including Urdu, Polish, Hindi, Lithuanian, Arabic and a number of South Asian and Eastern European languages. Covid-19 Infographics would also value your input and insights into their work as well as if there are any topics or languages you would like them to cover. For further information and to access the translations please go to: <https://covid19graphics.info/index.html>

Primary Care Network Contract DES 2020/21 (England)

Over the last three months, and following the Special LMC Conference, GPC England has been raising issues relating to the PCN DES with NHSE/I, particularly in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic and as many practices are in the process of making decisions about whether to sign up. NHSE/I has responded in a letter outlining gratitude to the many thousands of GPs and practice staff who have worked tirelessly to transform their services in response to the pandemic and noting that the DES was modified to provide greater support to practices working together in their areas. They will continue to keep the DES under close review in response to the pandemic and they believe PCNs have enormous potential to support the sustainability and resilience of general practice, and to improve delivery of care to patients.

Importantly it confirms the DES is clear that contract management will be supportive and collaborative and, in the rare circumstances that remedial actions are needed, NHSE/I expects CCGs to focus on the DES itself rather than other elements of the practice's core contract. However they also made clear that should a practice opt out of the DES they will lose their Network Participation Payment of £1.76 per patient from their core practice contract, as well as their entitlements to funding and the workforce employed through the DES. CCGs will not be permitted to offer the service to those practices – or their associated Federation – on better terms through a local scheme as they will be expected to commission an alternative provider.

Their latest figures suggest 96% of practices have either signed up to the DES or expressed their intention to do so, with 74 practices (1%) having informed their CCG that they have decided not to participate.

Remote consultations for learning disability health checks

Providing support to people with learning disabilities is an important part of general practice activity, which includes offering the opportunity for an annual health check. [NHSEI](#) have confirmed that, with regards to health checks for people with a learning disability, where this cannot be delivered safely face to face or where the patient has other medical conditions which require them to shield or socially isolate, the review could be conducted remotely. Decisions about the best way to conduct a health check should be made on an individual basis, taking in to account the challenges some patients might have with this. Our [toolkit for practices](#) now also includes an [FAQ for locum doctors working remotely](#).

BMA Risk assessment guidance

The [BMA has been lobbying government to take urgent steps to address the need to protect Black, Asian and minority ethnic \(BAME\) communities from COVID-19](#), as was highlighted in the [ONS data](#) published last week, which showed that those with BAME background are more likely to die from the virus. The BMA has [written to Sir Simon Stevens](#) this week to address these concerns and the need for more practical advice, to practices, on risk assessment. The letter also highlights that the great local variation in the use of and approach to risk assessments, and that occupational health services are not available to most staff in primary care. Read the [BMA guidance on risk assessments](#). This follows on from the publication of [FOM Risk Reduction Framework for NHS staff at risk of COVID-19](#) and [NHS Employers guidance on risk assessment for staff](#)

New coronavirus life assurance scheme

On 27 April a new life assurance scheme was introduced covering health and social care workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Details of the scheme have now been published by NHS Business Service Authority - scheme rules including guidance for claimants and employers can be found [here](#). This payment is in addition to Death in Service (DiS) benefits linked to the pension schemes. We are aware of outstanding issues around DiS benefits, particularly for locum GPs, and continue to lobby on those.

Testing (UK)

Anyone over 5 who has symptoms of COVID-19 (a high temperature, a new, continuous cough, or a loss or change to their sense of smell or taste) can now access antigen testing. Practices in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland should direct symptomatic patients to the [NHS website](#), for further information on how to access the test online.

If there are any questions about a test that has been booked, you can call the customer contact centre from 7am to 11pm. In England and Wales – call 119 free. Read more [here](#)

Temporary residents and travelling patients (England)

GPC England has issued new guidance on the use of remote consultations as a way for practices across the country to support colleagues working in practices in tourist areas who may face a large increase in visitors this summer. Patients are now much more likely to contact their own practice by phone or video rather than having to temporarily register with another practice. Read the guidance [here](#)

Domestic abuse during COVID-19: advice for NHS staff (England)

There has been a concerning increase in domestic abuse cases during the pandemic, and the Home Office have launched a national campaign to raise awareness of the support available. NHSEI has sent a [letter with advice for NHS staff on dealing with domestic abuse during pandemic](#), which lists a number of resources that may be useful for NHS staff in signposting to specific support teams.

The DHSC has also launched a [resource](#) that looks at how health professionals can support patients who are experiencing domestic abuse. The document helps health staff to identify potential victims, initiate sensitive routine enquiry, respond effectively to disclosures of abuse.

BMA paper on principles for restarting non-COVID care

The BMA has published a paper on the [Ten principles for how the NHS should approach restarting 'non-Covid care'](#). The paper warns that healthcare leaders should be 'realistic and cautious' about restarting shelved, non-treatment NHS work and re-balancing COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 capacity. The principles suggest that managers should take a realistic and cautious approach, that there must be adequate PPE for HCWs, and that decisions about staffing levels and redeployment must be safe and measures must be taken to safeguard staff wellbeing.

Restoration of cervical smear services

NHSE/I and Public Health England have published guidance on the restoration of cervical smear services, following the advice to step up urgent services which includes screening. The document provides guidance to NHSEI regional public health commissioning teams to support conversations with providers of NHS Cervical Screening Programme services to ensure that they are restored in a consistent, safe way. Read the guidance [here](#)

Premises update – NHSPS and NHSE/I engagement (England)

Last week, GPC premises policy lead, Gaurav Gupta, and deputy, Ian Hume, met for the first time with the recently appointed CEO and COO of NHS Property Services (NHSPS). Initial dialogue was constructive, and the group have resolved to meet regularly to escalate and troubleshoot operational concerns relating to COVID-19, as well as ongoing issues raised by members. The leads also met with NSHE/I for an update on the Premises Review, and to set expectations regarding engagement and consultation as more of the review workstreams get underway.

NHS Digital national GP data extraction to support COVID-19 planning and research

[The DPN for the GPES Data extraction for pandemic planning and research \(COVID-19\)](#) was uploaded last week, which will allow data to be collected using GPES to be made available for approved uses through NHS Digital's Data Access Request Service in accordance with robust information governance standards and consultation with the BMA and RCGP.

As of 19 May, 54% of practices have participated in the extract, which represents 3815 practices (from a total of 7013). If you haven't already registered, the DPN can be found [here](#). NHSD have asked all practices to try to register by 27 May with extractions taking place on a fortnightly basis.

An opportunity to join a virtual 'Doctors' Mess'

Former GPC member and London GP, Dr Rebecca Viney, has developed a twice-weekly confidential meeting place to talk, share, offload and give space to plan and prioritise in small virtual break out rooms. It began in April 2020 and now meets every Tuesday at 15.30-16.30 and Thursday 18:30 – 19:30. See more information in the attached flyer – or email direct to contactdoctorsmess@gmail.com

Wellbeing

As part of Mental Health Awareness Week this week, the BMA has published a report on the [mental health and wellbeing of the medical workforce - now and beyond COVID-19](#), which sets out ten recommendations to be addressed to protect staff now and in the future. Read more [here](#)

The BMA continue to offer [wellbeing services](#) and confidential 24/7 counselling and peer support for all doctors and medical students, regardless of BMA membership, as well as their partners and dependents, on 0330 123 1245.

Online Portal for Ordering PPE

Practices are now able to register on [the online portal for ordering emergency PPE](#) from a central inventory, to supplement routine supply routes.

Other COVID 19 resources

[BMJ – news and resources](#)

[RCGP COVID-19 information](#)

[NHSE/I daily primary care bulletins on COVID-19](#)

[NHSE/I COVID-19 webinars](#)

[COVID-19 Google Drive resource](#)

[Primary Care Pathways COVID-19 resource centre](#)

[NICE resources on COVID-19](#)

Kind regards

Kent Local Medical Committee