



Dear Colleague

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

Faulty PPE

MHRA have advised a product recall notice to practices and care homes with safety warnings, notices for destruction and distribution stoppages for more than 85 million Cardinal Surgical masks and 3m and Cardinal respirators in the PIPP stockpile since it was deployed in March. This comes despite repeated assurances by Public Health England, NHS England and the Department of Health and Social Care, that all PPE products had been rigorously tested and are safe for use.

This is an unacceptable situation that has put healthcare workers at risk and now could leave some practices without any face masks to use, therefore potentially having a major impact on patient care. The BMA has raised serious concerns about this with NHSE/I. They have responded to say that they have not supplied any Cardinal masks since May and are working through a replacement plan with the wholesalers who supplied primary care. Practices can obtain PPE supplies via their LRFs (who have good supplies) and the Portal that can be delivered within 48 hours. Find out how to register and contact the Portal Customer services team [here](#)

New to Partnership Payment Scheme (England)

The [New to Partnership Payment Scheme](#) was launched on 1 July and will apply to all new clinical partners from 1 April 2020. The partnership model, which gives GPs based in communities the autonomy to lead and advocate for their patients, is the foundation of general practice, and vital for its survival and sustainability. However, in recent years the number of partners in England has been steadily falling. This scheme, secured through GPC contract negotiations, follows the Partnership Review and shows faith in GPs and the partnership model – backed with additional investment – so that new partners can have the confidence in taking on this important role.

COVID-19 risk assessments

The [latest BMA tracker survey](#) found that more than a third of BAME doctors in the UK are still not being given access to potentially life-saving COVID-19 risk assessments – nearly two months after NHS England issued recommendations that risk assessments should be carried out for all staff as a precautionary measure.

In response to lobbying by the GPC, NHSE/I have issued a [letter](#) which sets out that CCGs should commission an occupational health service to support practices with this risk assessment process. Practices should be expected to pay for this, and it should be made freely available as soon as possible through local OH capacity, or by commissioning more to complement existing OH services via this [Dynamic Purchasing Solution](#), if additional capacity or access outside normal working hours is needed. CCGs are asked to assure that this is happening comprehensively and speedily in their areas.

Read the BMA's [guidance on risk assessments](#) which includes specific information for practices.

Shielding update (need to mention guidance released on 3/7)

The BMA has updated its [guidance on shielding](#) following the [announcement](#) that the guidance for clinically extremely vulnerable people who are currently shielding from coronavirus, will be eased in two stages – on 6th July and 1st August.

These patients will be [sent a letter](#) advising them to continue with the care/treatment arrangements currently in place. More detailed advice will be provided by the Government as the changes in advice come into effect, and unless there is a significant rise in COVID-19 cases the shielding programme is expected to be paused on 31 July.

The shielded patients list will continue to be maintained after August so that it can be used again in the future if necessary. Work is also being done to develop a new predictive risk tool which could lead to an updated list in the future.

There have been reports of situations where individuals, employers, businesses or insurance companies have been suggesting that shielding patients obtain a letter from their GP to engage in certain activities, including having their hair cut. There is no requirement or necessity for such letters and patients and others should follow the government guidance relating to social distancing and other necessary precautions.

Read the [Government's guidance on shielding for patients](#) and the [letter to the NHS on shielding](#)

Trust GPs to lead: learning from the response to COVID-19 within general practice in England

The BMA's report [Trust GPs to lead: learning from the response to COVID-19 within general practice in England](#), which was published last week, explores and highlights the scale of extra

work being taken on by GPs during the pandemic, which was also highlighted in the [BMA's latest tracker survey](#).

Richard Vautrey, Chair of the General Practitioner Committee (GPC) of the BMA, has joined a ministerial working group on renewal and recovery in general practice, set up by Jo Churchill MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Care. This is also linked to the contract agreement for a government review to reduce unnecessary bureaucracy impacting general practice. The BMA will be submitting evidence to the review and participating in the ongoing discussions. The final recommendations will be agreed by the ministerial working group to take forward. Read more [here](#).

COVID-19 has rewritten the rulebook for how the NHS operates

Richard Vautrey has written a feature in the [HSJ](#) (log in required) highlighting how the pandemic saw general practice rapidly responding to enable the needs of patients to be met safely. The NHS has had to adapt significantly since the start of COVID-19, with general practice leading the way, and now most patients will have recognised the changes made over the last few months – all of which have been done more easily due to the reduced bureaucracy and increased autonomy for practices.

Performers List processes associated with GP Registrars and professional standards (England)

Please find attached PLAN 07 that provides formal notification from NHSE/I confirming the joint agreement with Health Education England that GPRs due to start training in August 2020 are exempt from the requirement to be included in the England Medical Performers List.

BMA COVID-19 guidance

The BMA continues to regularly update the [toolkit for GPs and practices](#), which includes a large range of topics relating to COVID-19. There is also guidance on the following topics:

[Model terms of engagement for a GP providing temporary COVID-19 services](#)
[Terms and conditions for sessional GPs](#)

For further information, see the [BMA's COVID-19 Webpage](#) with all the latest guidance including links to the BMA's [COVID-19 ethical guidance](#) and [priorities for easing lockdown](#).

Kind regards

The Kent Local Medical Committee

