



11th July 2022

Dear Colleague

Welcome to this week's edition of the LMC Express.

The local updates for this week include:

- Rebuild General Practice
- General Practice Alert system (GPAS) - to be launched in September 2022
- National Data Opt Out
- Medication Optimisation Scheme (MOS)
- Business Rates - COVID Additional Relief Fund (CARF)
- Talking Wellness
- Public Consultation - review of regulations relating to the Care Quality Commission (CQC)
- Kent Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA)

Rebuild General Practice

The BMA and GPF have launched the '**Rebuild General Practice**' campaign with a call to action to UK and Devolved Governments

The campaign aims to highlight the crisis in general practice with appointment numbers now at post -pandemic levels whilst GP numbers are declining. The campaign sets out a 3-point safety plan

1. **Recruitment** - The UK Government delivering on its commitment of an additional 6,000 GPs in England by 2024.
2. **Retention** - Tackling the factors driving GPs out of the profession such as burn out.
3. **Safety** - A plan to reduce GP workload and in turn improve patient safety.

Practices are invited by the BMA to help build awareness of the campaign:

1. Sign the '**Letter to my patients**'. To add your signature, simply email hello@rebuildgp.co.uk with your full name.
2. Use **#RebuildGP** Follow and share content, news, and updates on the campaign Twitter page
3. Access campaign materials which are available on the [Kent LMC website](#)

General Practice Alert system (GPAS) - to be launched in September 2022

Hospital trusts use Operating Pressures Escalation Level (OPEL) to communicate their demand and capacity to the NHS systems. OPEL is used by the NHS system to identify where support is required in the short term, and where transformation is required in the long term.

General practice does not currently use an official OPEL system. Kent LMC have been working with the local NHS partners to better understand workload pressures in general practice and to develop an OPEL system which can accurately quantify the status of general practices. This system will be known as General Practice Alert System (GPAS).

GPAS will enable us to provide system partners with weekly reports that highlights describing the pressure that general practice in Kent and Medway is under. Practices provide a weekly measure of their workload demand and capacity, using a digital interface. We then use this data to provide an anonymised report to local NHS partners about the pressures in general practice for each HCP. This report does not allow outside agencies to identify practices which may be struggling but does highlight to the whole health and care system that help is required.

A recent article in [GP Online](#) describes how Devon LMC declared a county wide Red alert for general practice, and practices were supported to just focus on urgent care due to the impact of covid-19 on staff absence.

The GPAS report highlights what Alert State each practice is at, and can also indicate PCNs, localities, or areas where demand is excessive. The four Alert Status are

- **Black:** The practice is unable to provide safe care and there is a risk of service failure. Without intervention, it is likely the practice will be forced to close. The practice would be expected to declare this state to the commissioner and seek guidance from the LMC.
- **Red:** This indicates the practice is under severe pressure and although it may be able to run safely for a very limited period, immediate action is required to mitigate the situation. The GPs in the practice are continuously working beyond **BMA recommended safe working limits** and significant levels of patient demand cannot be met by the practice
- **Amber:** This indicates the practice is under moderate pressure. The practice is unable to fully meet patient demand or expectations. GPs in the practice are likely to be working beyond **BMA recommended safe working limits** meaning some patient demand cannot be met by the practice. This is unsustainable in the long term without action.
- **Green:** This implies low level of pressure; the practice is appropriately staffed and there is sufficient capacity to meet patient demand and expectations. GPs in the practice are working to **BMA recommended safe working limits**.
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Kent LMC will soon be asking GP practices across Kent to provide simple data about workforce capacity, workload demand, and practice list size on a weekly basis so that we can generate a GPAS report weekly. These reports will be used to highlight where support is required in the short term and identify patterns where support is required in the medium to long term. We ask that you engage with this process as it will help articulate to our NHS the pressures which we are facing.

We will shortly be emailing each practice to ask for the contact details of the person in the practice that will complete the weekly status report.

When we start to roll out GPAS we will provide you with more information. A webinar will be held on 28th July, at 12.30pm, where we will explain more about the GPAS process and answer any questions.

National Data Opt Out

You should all be aware that practices need to be compliant with this by 31st July 2022. The DPOs (kmccg.northkentgpdataprotection@nhs.net) are available to assist with any queries but we are all still awaiting full guidance and for EMIS to rollout the changes that will enable auto removal of opted out patients. You should also receive information for patients.

The information that is currently available can be found on the NHSD website <https://digital.nhs.uk/services/national-data-opt-out/information-for-gp-practices>

Medication Optimisation Scheme (MOS)

Kent LMC hope that practices have seen the communication from the medicines team regarding the proposed Medication Optimisation Scheme (MOS).

'We are aware that some practices have expressed concerns regarding the perceived volume of work required in the MOS for 22-24. We have met with the LMC this week and have listened to the concerns you have raised.'

We have agreed to work on an updated and clearer proposal with the LMC to address the issues raised. We will share this with practices next week.'

We have raised the points that have been fed back by our LMC reps, if practices have any concerns they wish to raise please email the office on info@kentlmc.org

Business Rates - COVID Additional Relief Fund (CARF)

Practices should be aware they may receive a letter from their local council regarding the COVID Additional Relief Fund (CARF).

Business are **not eligible** for this help if they have not been adversely affected by the pandemic and/or have been able to adequately adapt to any impact. **General Practices are therefore not eligible for this relief fund.**

Each council may have a different process but you may receive a letter identifying your business as a potential recipient of business rates relief which also details an intention to make automatic award unless you declare you are not eligible by a specified date.

If you receive a letter please do check whether you need to actively declare you are not eligible.

Talking Wellness

COVID-19 pressures on the wider NHS brought national recognition that the mental health and wellbeing of health and social care staff was at risk of deteriorating, to the point where some staff were in real danger of developing symptoms of trauma, such as anxiety, depression, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and other mental health disorders.

In response to this NHS England (NHSE) funded 40 resilience hubs across the country to deliver mental health and wellbeing support to NHS and social care staff; *talking wellness*, Kent and Medway's staff mental health and wellbeing service, is one of those hubs.

The service, which is free of charge, is delivered by a team of professional clinicians, providing confidential psychological support, signposting to other services, individual interventions, and the facilitation of group sessions for teams.

The team also provides support for GPs and staff working within primary care, including, but not limited to, practice managers, reception staff and practice nurses.

Staff can self-refer into the service, or refer a colleague, providing they have their consent to do so. Members of the team are also on hand for a chat should people feel they'd like to talk things through with someone, in a confidential space, away from the office. This can be an in-person session, a face-to-face video call or a telephone conversation.

More information and contact details can be found on our [talking wellness](#) staff portal.

Public Consultation - review of regulations relating to the Care Quality Commission (CQC)

The Department of Health and Social Care is reviewing regulations made under the Health and Social Care Act 2008. These regulations cover:

1. Registration with the CQC
2. Regulated Activities that require registration and the fundamental standards required of registrants

3. Inspection and Ratings regime

We encourage you to take this opportunity to feedback on your experience of the CQC. The consultation runs until the midday 22 July 2022 and can be [accessed here](#).

Kent Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA)

The Kent Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA) is currently out for public consultation until 21 August 2022. The draft PNA and consultation questions are available at;
https://letstalk.kent.gov.uk/pharmaceuticalneedsassessment/survey_tools/questionnaire-pna
All responses and comments will be greatly appreciated.

Kind regards
Kent Local Medical Committee