



Dear Colleague

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

- NHS Property Services
- Wellbeing
- GP Practice Website Benchmarking Tool
- DSQS Update
- Interface
- Updated Network Contract DES
- NELFT (Childrens Mental Health Service) Referral Form
- East Kent GP Board
- Practice Digital Requirements
- Conference News - Annual Conference of Local Medical Committees Representatives 18 and 19 May 2023
- GPAS
- Life after CCT Pensions and Tax/Accountancy - An update from the experts for new to practice General Practitioners Wednesday 28 June 1-2pm
- GP Health and Wellbeing - a message from Sandra Isibor
- Upcoming LMC Interface Meetings

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

- BMA secures significant reduction in NHSPS service charge claims for practices
- Accelerated Access to Records
- Parliamentary activity
- Safe working and preparing for balloting on industrial action
- Junior doctors' and GP trainees strike action
- COVID therapeutics
- BMA member briefing on the GP delivery plan
- Sessional GP Week 2023
- NHS.net email for locums

NHS Property Services

The legal case against NHSPS in which BMA was assisting 5 GP practices has now been concluded.

The BMA has successfully assisted five GP practices in significantly reducing years of unsubstantiated service charge claims demanded by NHSPS, with one practice seeing NHSPS' claim against them reduced by more than £400,000, a reduction of more than 80%.

BMA lawyers challenged NHSPS on two issues: the legal basis on which the charges were being imposed, and the magnitude of the fees. NHSPS launched a countersuit against each of the practices demanding recovery of the historical service charges, transforming the dispute into a major commercial lawsuit.

In June 2020, NHSPS admitted that its charging policy had not been incorporated into or retrospectively varied the practices' legal terms of occupation and existing service charge obligations.

The BMA then assisted the five practices in settling with NHSPS the fees and service charges sums outside of court, for the period between 2013/14 and 2019/20, securing reductions on the amounts claimed by NHSPS for the five practices ranging from £25,000 to more than £400,000, a total reduction of more than £750,000.

This has been a really long and difficult process. We will continue to keep you updated on future developments.

You can find more on the story here: <https://www.bma.org.uk/news-and-opinion/fighting-back>

Practices can find more advice from BMA on how to approach these issues here:

<https://www.bma.org.uk/advice-and-support/gp-practices/gp-premises/nhs-property-services>

Wellbeing

Have you had enough of the wellbeing narrative? Well meaning, coming from a place of kindness, but how is it going to change what is taking place every week? Here we are in June, the practice feels like it is December, I have patients, Docman, prescriptions and econsults mounting up, and my emails?! Annual leave season is upon us, we need a holiday but those left behind are working hard to cover it. Sound familiar?

This is a situation which has evolved slowly over decades. Political and workforce factors are driving an untenable working environment. Many other factors are contributing too.

Writing this I am not going to change the situation overnight. I am going to ask you to stop for a minute, take a breath, and reflect on what is in your control and what is not? As an individual you have a limit. You have obligations to your family, friends, your patients, and also to yourself. As a working professional the balance is always a juggle and I have come to realise it will never feel

'just right'. It is time to make peace with that and ring fence time for you. Nourish yourself with healthy food, good sleep and movement. If you cannot see the wood for the trees and life is overwhelming then it is time to reach out into your support network. This will be personal to you, it can be friends, family or fellow professionals – the LMC support individuals. We can signpost you to additional support if needed and we can always provide a safe place to vent. Contact us info@kentlmc.org, or reach out to any of the officers, our emails are on our website. NHS Practitioner Health offer a confidential service for individuals who need mental health support, you can self refer [here](#).

GP Practice website benchmarking tool

NHS England has launched a the website benchmarking tool at [NHS England » GP website benchmarking and improvement tool](#) to enable practices to check their website to understand how easy it is for patients to navigate their website and also to make sure it meets the contractual requirements in the GMS contract. It's not compulsory to use this tool but could be useful way of ensuring a website is fit for purpose both for patients and the practice. There are contact details for the NHSE project lead in the spreadsheet and practices are invited to contact them for help if needed. NHSE has create a guide for practices as to how to create an effective website [NHS digital service manual \(service-manual.nhs.uk\)](#)

DSQS Update

Following the announcement of the proposed changes to DSQS we are pleased to announce we had a positive meeting with the ICB and they have agreed that the only change from previous years will be that you will need to share some of the evidence ie copies of SOPs, which previously practices have only had to assure NHS England that they were in place. The ICB has written to practices confirming that there will now be no changes to the way patients are selected for DRUMS and also that there will now continue to be a requirement for only one audit. The request for the evidence such as SOPs is detailed in the specification so we have agreed that more time will be given to practices to provide these details (end of July) and in subsequent years only any changes to the SOPs will need to be submitted.

Interface

We know the Interface issues and transfer of unfunded work are impacting practices every day. The LMC are meeting regularly with the ICB and the Medical Directors of all the Acute Trusts to work on improving the situation. The GP Recovery Plan has directed ICBs to report back on progress in the Autumn to the ICB Board. We are feeling optimistic that there is now a common goal which will exert positive change. There is recognition that to implement changes in behaviour we need to increase interface between working colleagues in primary and secondary care. This is happening in areas of Kent and Medway, in West Kent the Clinical Directors of the

hospital have been regularly meeting with local GPs. In East Kent local meetings continue between the ICB/LMC and EKHUFT, and relationship building meetings are taking place between working colleagues. The LMC are working closely with every acute trust and the ICB and we will keep you updated.

Updated Network Contract DES

NHS England has updated the [Network Contract DES service specification](#) to bring the maximum reimbursable amounts under the Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme (ARRS) in line with the new 2023/24 Agenda for Change pay scales. The ARRS uplifts will apply from 1st July 2023 onwards.

NELFT (Childrens Mental Health Service) Referral Form

We met with NELFT this week to review changes to the online referral form. As you will be aware, the email referral route was switched off as part of NELFT business continuity as they started taking referrals via 111 option 2 into their Single Point of Access. We had a positive meeting and the outcomes are that NELFT acknowledge that the use of referral forms are not mandatory, the form for NELFT is used to enable the triage team to quickly assess the level of urgency. We agreed to slim down the form and are working on a version which integrates with EMIS and will support the ability for practice administrative teams to drop in a referral letter. Once the changes are made and we have reviewed them the form will be shared with practices and we are led to believe that NELFT will return to accepting referrals via email. Remember that patients parents can self refer on the online portal, they often have more information that you will have been able to gather in your consultation and the referral is currently dealt with in the same way whether it is from a GP or a parent. All referrals go into the triage team and are categorised in terms of urgency from there.

East Kent GP Board

The board, attended by East Kent Clinical Directors, heard that a midwife to GP communication form has been developed and will be piloted for the next 3 months. Mairead McCormick Kent Community Health Trust CEO, joined the meeting for a discussion about how to facilitate greater provider collaboration and to understand how the barriers to collaboration can be eliminated. The Clinical Cabinet will be making representation to the ICB about the lack of commissioned gender dysphoria service.

Practice Digital Requirements

The ICB Digital team would like to scope GP practices future clinical and operational requirements for online consultation, messaging and video and produce a 'Kent and Medway

acceptability criteria' based on practice's requirements. The ICB is grateful for responses to its previous survey but is now asking for more insight and your comments via an update version of the survey

<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/KVLPIA/>

The closing date for this survey is Tuesday, 13 June.

Once the survey closes, the digital team will start to look at detailed options from suppliers. If you would like to be part of this process, please email Kmicb.digital@nhs.net to express your interest.

Conference News - Annual Conference of Local Medical Committees Representatives 18 and 19 May 2023

[Read here](#) the conference news from the Annual Conference of Local Medical Committees Representatives that was held on 18 and 19 May 2023

General Practice Alert State (GPAS) - Submission to National Dashboard

Thank you to all practices that continue to provide a weekly a submission. The information you provide is invaluable in evidencing the pressure general practice is operating under.

The Kent GPAS report is now included in a National GPAS reporting dashboard and we will need to submit our Opel Status (GPAS state) into the national dashboard by 2pm every Thursday so we would ask that all practices complete their GPAS submission by noon on Thursday of each week.

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 provide comments and feedback.

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

Furthermore, if you are experiencing acute operational pressures please do get in touch. **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](#)

Life after CCT Pensions and Tax/Accountancy - An update from the experts for new to practice General Practitioners Wednesday 28 June 1-2pm

Please join the Kent LMC, Andrew Leal, a partner at MacIntyre Hudson, and Paul Gordon, Head of Medical Specialist Wealth Planning at Atomos, for a lunchtime virtual update on Wednesday 28 June 1-2pm, to inform you about the NHS pension scheme and tax / accountancy working independently as a GP

Andrew will look at the tax issues relating to working as either a salaried GP, a locum or a partner and whether a limited company may be beneficial. He will also look at what GPs need to do via PCSE online to ensure superannuation contributions are correctly collected and some of the key issues to consider if contemplation becoming a partner in a practice.

Paul will look to run through the current NHS Pension arrangements and implications as you move from a trainee into general practice. He will cover general financial planning including the likes of mortgages, protection and even wills, and can be quizzed on all areas of finances.

This event will be held virtually via Microsoft Teams, please book your place [here](#)

GP Health and Wellbeing - a message from Sandra Isibor

My name is Sandra Isibor and I am currently a locum GP in Kent and Medway. I will be working with Jessica Cross who is a practice manager in Medway to get some perspective on the stressors impacting the wellbeing of General practitioners across Kent and Medway. We are both very keen to help improve Job satisfaction for primary care staff starting locally.

There are recurring themes highlighted that makes the job more difficult and less satisfying. We need to work together to create a work environment where we can all thrive, fulfil our purpose and foster excellence in patient care. It is imperative we continue to shine some light on the challenges we are facing in the workplace as GP's, make our demands clear and hold the responsible stakeholders accountable. Every journey starts with a step.

We are pleading for 30mins of your time to participate in a discussion to support our research into GP job satisfaction and well-being. Your participation can be anonymous (just pick a username that you are comfortable to share). We will present our findings to the integrative care board and other primary care leads across Kent and Medway. We are happy to provide updates on the progress of our project.

How does it work?

1. Record your own thoughts on the discussion question and complete a brief survey
2. Listen to other people's answers.
3. Discuss live in small focus groups in a digital meeting room.
4. Vote on the most significant ideas that exist in your group.

Why are we doing this?

This discussion is hosted by People Supported Intelligence (PSi), a primary research tool to hold focus groups at scale. PSi is designed using principles of collective intelligence (also called wisdom of the crowds). We need your collective intelligence to help us get an robust understanding of the barriers to improving GP job satisfaction and wellbeing. We will be having 30mins discussion hosted by Psi on the 28th of June. Participants can also join anonymously using this link. <https://bit.ly/psi-gp-job-wellbeing>

More information can be found on the attached flyer

Thanks for your help!

Sandra and Jessica

Upcoming LMC Interface Meetings

The following meetings are taking place over the next couple of 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.

Full LMC Committee – Thursday 22 June

Sessional GP Sub-Committee – Thursday 22 June

West Kent Primary Care Transformation Board – Tuesday 27 June

EK GP Board – Thursday 6 July

Kind regards

Kent Local Medical Committee



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*Supporting list based personalised care,
the partnership model and meaningful collaboration*