



16th October 2023

Dear Colleague

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

- EROS update
- MCH Interface
- Intrauterine Device (IUD) Fitting Tariff
- General Practice Alert State (GPAS) National Reporting Dashboard
- Free Premises Surgery Session Kent LMC - Wednesday 22nd November 2023
- Reminder: Workforce and Wellbeing Programmes
- Diabetic Eye Screening Programme correspondence
- Kent and Medway Mid-Career GP Support
- 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 following important announcements therein:

- Accelerated Access to Records Programme update
- Update on negotiations relating to DDRB recommended 6% uplift
- New BMA guidance for sessional GPs
- DWP Fit note guidance

EROS update

EROS (Electronic Referral Optimisation System) is being developed by Kent and Medway ICB using software called REGO that the clinical Support Unit (CSU) have installed on your practice PCs. The project is funded and supported by NHSE in the hope that it will improve patient experience by ensuring patients referred to secondary care get to the right appointment on the right pathway at the right time while also improving the interface between GPs and secondary care, reducing complex referral forms and help tracking patients who have been referred.

The first of a series of ICB led webinars took place last week as the ICB prepare to launch the first pathway. Many concerns were raised by colleagues on the call to the ICB and we have since been contacted by several colleagues. The LMC are being consulted and have raised the same concerns at every single step of this process. Concerns raised include ensuring that administrative teams can operate EROS in the same way as we do for eRS, that work will not be transferred to General Practice particularly in the form of pre referral criteria being introduced. In early 2023 EROS team presented to the Kent and Medway GP Board, at this meeting we were assured that GPs could continue to dictate and that admin teams would be able to drop in the text to the system and send the referral and there would be a bypass option in place. However, at the webinar last week there was some confusion regarding this and we are seeking clarification. The LMC attend the EROS steering committee and are reporting the GP concerns to this. We have had a further meeting to highlight the need for post implementation support, we have been assured that there is an EROS email for queries and problems and this email will be supported and responded to by a member of the ICB EROS team daily. We have requested the set-up of a Scrutiny Group for ongoing oversight of implemented pathways, we have been advised providers will not be able to unilaterally change pathways.

The EROS team have sought GP volunteers to test the clinical pathways and feedback. We have reviewed some of the MSK pathway, and other GPs and practices are doing this as well and are feeding back. While the use of EROS is not mandated, there are some benefits potentially – we could see the end of forms, the introduction of up to date local guidance (which is not universally available across Kent and Medway currently), nurses and allied health professionals are able to use the system, and a central patient tracking list visible to patients which will enable patients to see what is happening with their referral.

MCH Interface

Our LMC representatives met with colleagues at MCH for our regular interface meeting. We discussed the current commissioning gaps which are apparent preventing adequate access to Spirometry and the demand for wound care is exceeding current capacity. The problem has been raised with the commissioner. MCH advised us as the procurement exercise is underway there is anxiety and uncertainty for MCH staff.

MCH are exploring how community services may wrap around practices and PCNs in the future and have been going out to practice to discuss current issues and how this will work, this has been a helpful exercise. Issues were raised with prescribing in the community cardiology service, MCH will look into this and look to see if and how this can be improved. There have been examples of referral forms which are not loaded onto DXS and MCH are currently undertaking a review of all their forms to ensure they are all uploaded onto DXS, if there are examples of these which GPs come across please do highlight them to the team at MCH or the LMC. Neuro CAS service was also discussed, MCH assured us that all referrals are triaged within 48 hours and if the presenting problem is a seizure these are sent directly to MFT to action. It is important referrers make sure that this is obvious in the referral to ensure they are directly sent on to MFT.

Intrauterine Device (IUD) Fitting Tariff

Kent LMC would like to remind practices that there are 2 separate tariffs for intrauterine device (IUD) fitting dependant on the clinical reason for use. If used for contraceptive reasons this is paid by KCC at £97.50 for fitting and £29.50 for removal. If fitting for any other reasons such as the progesterone component of HRT or menorrhagia then payment is at the ICB PCQS tariff of £113.66 for fitting and £31 for removal. Please ensure you are coding and claiming under the appropriate tariff.

General Practice Alert State (GPAS) National Reporting Dashboard

Thank you to all practices that are continuing to contribute to the collection of GPAS data. Having a system that allows us to evidence to commissioners and other partners, the current pressures that practices are working under, has already proven to be extremely helpful and the explanatory comments provided were invaluable when discussing the impact of the IT failures earlier this year and helped in securing the payment of compensation to practices.

The national GPAS reporting dashboard is now being published on a weekly basis and is attached. Kent & Medway practices are regularly reporting the highest alert level, Opel 4, consistent with the county having the lowest level of GPs per head of population in England. The attached slides were recently shared at the LMC conference and provide an overview of the first year of GPAS as well as the intentions for developing GPAS feedback.

We will continue to embed GPAS data in our conversations with stakeholders and are working with the ICB to develop a package of support/options for practices reporting black, red or amber state and that may welcome some help and support from the system. As we approach winter with covid cases rising, general practice will undoubtedly be asked to provide additional support to cope with demand. It is critical that general practice is also able to ask the system for support when it requires it: GPAS allows us to evidence when that is required.

Currently 86% practices across Kent & Medway are signed up to GPAS with 50% of those practices reporting weekly. We appreciate it is another task for practices to complete GPAS, but would like to strive with 100% coverage of practices with most responding 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. **The report takes less than 5 minutes to complete each week.**

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 to discuss support that might be available.

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](#)

Free Premises Surgery Session Kent LMC - Wednesday 22nd November 2023

We have arranged a **FREE Premises surgery** with Rosemary Jones from Invicta Chartered Surveyors and Edwina Farrell from Weightmans on Wednesday 22nd November 2023 from 9.15am.

Rosemary Jones is a Director of Invicta Chartered Surveyors, based in Kent and is a Chartered Surveyor with more than 30 years' experience. Her work is almost exclusively within the NHS and predominantly for GP Practices. Her day-to-day work includes;

- *Premises developments and improvement;*
- *Current Market Rent Reviews;*
- *Monitoring Surveyor;*
- *Lease Rent Reviews;*
- *Lease Renewals;*
- *Valuations for partnership agreements;*
- *Service charges.*
- *She is an Independent Expert and Arbitrator on the RICS Specialist Healthcare Panels for Dispute Resolution and an Advisor to the NHS Litigation Authority.*

Edwina Farrell is a nationally renowned Chambers and Partners and Legal 500 Ranked GP advisor and head of primary care at Weightmans LLP. She specialises in GP premises and partnership matters but works with a national team specialising in a complete service offering for general practitioners. Edwina has worked with Kent practices and across the country to help GPs in freehold and leasehold transactions, developments and property disputes. In addition, she works with practices in connection with commercial arrangements such as partnership deeds, mergers, contracts advice primary care network matters and some practice disputes. She regularly speaks at GP themed conferences and is a frequent contributor to medical practitioner publications.

These 30 minute appointments will take place virtually via Microsoft Teams and will be allocated on a first come first served basis. If you would like to book an appointment for you and/or your GPs please e-mail info@kentlmc.org . Please note we only have a few afternoon appointments remaining.

Reminder: Workforce and Wellbeing Programmes

We would like to outline 2 separate offers the LMC working with the training hub have released this week for practices. The intention is that the offers enable practices to achieve the 'Workforce and Wellbeing Points Thresholds' in QOF: The contractor can demonstrate continuous quality improvement activity focused upon workforce and wellbeing as specified in the QOF guidance. The overarching aim of this QI module is to evidence support for improvements in wellbeing, resilience, and minimising the risk of workforce burnout.

The 2 programmes we are offering to practices are:

Manage Your Mind programme: these are in person, 1 day events, on the dates and locations found below. These are available to **GPs and all practice and PCN staff**. Sessions will focus on improving mental and emotional health using powerful breathing exercises and mindfulness techniques. The cost of attendance is £80 but the LMC will share the costs with practices, reducing the **cost per participant to £40**, this includes a delicious lunch at the venue and refreshments throughout the day.

Manage Your Mind offers individuals an opportunity to invest in themselves, to rest, to re-centre, to re-focus and to re-energise. Participants are likely to benefit from learning new skills, breathing techniques, guided meditations and processes that help calm the mind. Studies have shown that when practiced regularly, they help improve sleep, reduce stress, depression and anxiety and improve the quality of life. This is a great opportunity to connect with colleagues. There are no limits to numbers of staff registering per practice, but please be aware each event has a limit of 45 participants, and you can register to attend at the most convenient location to you.

Click on the required date to take you to the booking page:

Friday 20 October. Riverside Church, Thanet Way, Whitstable

Friday 17 November. Aylesford Priory, The Friars, Aylesford

Please note you can attend an event in area and not restricted to the event in your HCP area. If you have any questions about the programme then please email: Manage.yourmind@nhs.net
Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) – is a national training programme, which teaches people how to identify, understand and help someone who may be experiencing a mental health issue. MHFA won't teach you to be a therapist, but it will teach you to listen, reassure and respond, even in a crisis – and even potentially stop a crisis from happening.

You'll learn to recognise warning signs of mental ill health and develop the skills and confidence to approach and support someone while keeping yourself safe. You'll also learn how to empower someone to access the support they might need for recovery or successful management of symptoms. This could include self-help books or websites, accessing therapy services through routes such as their school or place of work, online self-referral, support groups, and more. By becoming an MHFAider® you'll have access to continuous support – well beyond your initial certification – so you are confident, empowered and motivated to carry out your role. You will get three years' access to MHFAider® support and benefits which includes 24/7 digital support through the MHFAider Support App®. From there, you will find exclusive resources, ongoing learning opportunities and the benefit of joining England's largest community of trained MHFAiders®. The qualification is endorsed by the Royal Society For Public Health.

Our ambition is to have one Mental Health First Aider per practice, ideally this would not be a GP or staff member who has a HR role, but another approachable member of the team (clinical or non clinical) who is interested. We can then form a local peer network to share learning.

This offer is fully funded. To book a free place please follow the link:

<https://invictahealth.learningpool.com/course/view.php?id=1074>

Course dates – 6th November and 10th November, whole days 9-5pm, virtually delivered.

A course manual will be sent to participants prior. Each cohort has 8-16 participants, further dates will be rolled out as we fill up the course.

As you can see the courses offer separate benefits and we hope that you find them useful.

Diabetic Eye Screening Programme correspondence

As a service dedicated to eyes and sight, we know that many patients may struggle to read our standard issue appointment letters if their vision is failing. Patients who require a large font letter are able to request this from the KMDESP bookings team. Contact 01233 880000 or email bookingsyellowteam@health-intelligence.com to arrange a new appointment letter to be sent in size 16 font which should look like this instead. These letters are sent in lieu of standard letters upon request.

Kent and Medway Mid-Career GP Support - Spaces still available

Kent & Medway Primary Care Training Hub have asked us to share the following message:

Dear Colleagues,

Last month we released the dates for our Kent and Medway Mid-Career GP Support. With 4 weeks to go till our first session; spaces are filling up fast, so if you are interested, take advantage of this opportunity, and book your place.

The focus was specifically on mid-career GPs, who comprise a critical part of the General Practice workforce, shouldering an ever-increasing burden of clinical and managerial responsibility within practices. For the purpose of this programme of work, mid-career GPs include those 5 years post qualifying but before the last 5 years of their career.

In response to our request, a number of you kindly came forward to offer to meet virtually with Philippa Robinson, Coach and Leadership Development Facilitator in order to help us with understanding what would best support you personally and professionally.

Following these conversations, we have gained a deeper understanding of your pressures and needs. This has led to a number of practical support options that we are keen to make available to you over the coming months. This support includes the following:

1:1 coaching to individuals available on request. Mid-career GPs will be offered a choice of coaches to access, on a flexible draw down basis. A number of the GPs who took part in the need's calls expressed an interest to take up this offer, in order to gain insight into useful approaches to deal with the daily pressures arising at the practice and in their role.

Establish GP Peer Learning Networks

1. Meet 3 times per year for a half-day session per locality. Certificates will be provided to enable you to use this time as continuing professional development. Refreshments will be provided.
2. Semi structured facilitated sessions.
3. Allowing for peer connection time, support and problem solving
4. These sessions will include mini masterclass input (keynote session up to 60 minutes per session based on needs of the group)

Topic based sessions such as preparing for CQC visits, help with pensions and hot topic events will be advertised throughout the year, topics will be based on feedback from this cohort.

Next steps:

The coaching sessions are available now, if you would like to access these, please email Liz Ward directly. Liz, who is part of the Rebekah Giffney Consulting team will be able to connect you directly with a coach for an initial discussion to get going liz@mcandrewward.com.

The first GP Peer Learning networks are now scheduled for November 2023 - 3 dates available and GPs can attend which ever date/location best suits them. Please book your place to attend one of these sessions via the below Eventbrite link.

1. 9th November 2023, 1pm-5pm, The Village Hotel Maidstone. [Book your place](#)
2. 21st November 2023, 1pm-5pm, Riverside Church, Whitstable. [Book your place](#)
3. 28th November 2023, 1pm-5pm, The Village Hotel Maidstone. [Book your place](#)

Please do not hesitate to contact the Training Hub if you have any questions regarding this support.

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 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.

East Kent GP Board – Thursday 9 November
K&M GP Staff Training Oversight Board – Thursday 9 November
K&M ICB Interface Meeting – Thursday 9 November

Kind regards
Kent Local Medical Committee