



6th November 2023

Dear Colleague

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

- IT Failure
- Oliver McGowan Training
- GPC Emergency Motion
- GP Appointments in Kent & Medway September 2023
- Wound Care
- General Practice Alert State (GPAS) National Reporting Dashboard
- NHS Pension Seminars - For GPs (practitioner status) and all other primary care staff (Officer status)
- Reminder: Workforce and Wellbeing Programmes
- Useful Links
- Upcoming LMC Interface Meetings

IT Failure

We were contacted by a number of practices early on Friday morning about the complete IT outage that they were dealing with. We raised this with the ICB and CSU who confirmed that they were aware and investigating as Major Incident.

Whilst we are happy to be made aware of major IT issues so we can liaise with the CSU and ICB if required, please can practices also ensure they report all IT issues directly to the CSU so that they have a complete picture of the impact of any outage.

In response to request from practices, we asked the ICB, early on Friday morning, to switch off eConsult for those practices impacted by the outage. Unfortunately, this request was rejected with practices instead being invited in the 12.30pm comms, to individually request that eConsult be turned off. We would be grateful if practices impacted by the HSCN failure on Friday morning could email the LMC to advise us at info@kentlmc.org, or provide feedback in GPAS comments, if it would have been helpful to have eConsult turned off early on Friday morning, as soon as the problem was identified as a major incident, or if in fact it was preferable to still have eConsult available to patients.

Separate to this, we have begun discussions with the ICB about developing a response to GPAS alerts, when either a practice, or group of practices, declare an amber, red or black state, similar to the Opel response generated by other parts of the system. This will be an ongoing project over the next few months and we will keep practices updated with progress.

Oliver McGowan Training

Although the Oliver McGowan Tier 1 eLearning is the recommended Learning Disability & Autism training, it is not mandatory for staff to complete the Oliver McGowan training if they have already undertaken equivalent Learning Disability & Autism eLearning, although it is advised that as staff need to update their training, or as new staff join, they complete the Oliver McGowan training which is as part of your passport of learning on Invicta Learning Pool

The CQC guidance can be found at [GP mythbuster 53: Care of people with a learning disability in GP practices - Care Quality Commission \(cqc.org.uk\)](#) and states:

From 1 July 2022, all health and social care providers registered with CQC must ensure that their staff receive [training in learning disability and autism](#), including how to interact appropriately with people with a learning disability and autistic people. This should be at a level appropriate to their role.

This new legal requirement was introduced by the [Health and Care Act 2022](#). You still need to meet the requirements of [Regulation 18](#), which requires you to provide employees with appropriate support, training, professional development, supervision and appraisal to enable them to carry out their duties. We do not tell you specifically how to meet your legal requirements in relation to training. You are responsible for ensuring your staff are appropriately trained to meet the requirements of the regulations. See our [statutory guidance on Regulation 18: Staffing](#) and our update on the new requirement for [training in learning disability and autism](#). This explains how it affects a GP practice and our approach to training staff to support autistic people and people with a learning disability.

The new requirement does not specify a training package or course for staff. However, in conjunction with partners such as Health Education England, Skills for Care and NHS England and NHS Improvement, the government has developed and trialled a training programme, which it is calling the [Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training on Learning Disability and Autism](#), as its preferred training programme.

GPC Emergency Motion

The GPC met on Thursday and passed an emergency motion as below. Chair of the GPC England Dr Katie Bramall-Stainer made the following statement regarding the motion.

"Today's motion is about finding ways to protect patients by ensuring appropriate processes and regulations are in place. The BMA recognises the vital role that multidisciplinary teams play in the NHS. In General Practice, patients have long benefited from having access to a wide variety of healthcare professionals that can input into their care, from physiotherapists to diabetes nurses.

Patients need to know and understand what each healthcare professional can and cannot do, and where their expertise is relevant. This is crucial in helping patients understand the care they're being given. Recently, we have seen some examples in the media that suggest there is a potential blurring of the line between doctors and non-medically qualified professionals, leading patients to think they've seen a GP or other medically-qualified team member - when they haven't.

GPs are expert medical generalists with the experience and medical knowledge to diagnose, treat, and manage multiple and complex conditions. PAs are not doctors; they are not regulated; and they cannot prescribe. At best, this is confusing - at worst, it can threaten patient safety. This distinction must be protected: PAs cannot be used as a substitute for GPs, or in place of a GP when supervising GPs in training.

The GP workforce crisis is a result of the failure of Government to plan for the recruitment and retention of GPs. Only by valuing and investing in the recruitment and retention of GPs will the experience and care of patients improve. While PAs may help reduce general practice workload in some cases, it should not come at the expense of patient safety".

Emergency motion passed in all parts

That GPC England fully endorses the recent statement by UEMO expressing concern over the increasing trend of "Physician Assistants/Associates" (PAs) being used to substitute GPs in English General Practice, and:

- i) asserts that PAs are neither a safe nor an appropriate substitute for a GP*
- ii) calls for an immediate pause on all recruitment of PAs across PCNs and General Practice until appropriately safe regulatory processes and structures are in place*
- iii) reminds GPs that they may refuse to automatically sign prescriptions or request investigations including ionising radiation on behalf of a PA*
- iv) asserts that it is entirely inappropriate and unsafe for GP Registrars to be supervised or*

debriefed by PAs

v) demands that PAs be appropriately and safely regulated by a body other than the GMC.

GP Appointments in Kent & Medway September 2023

The LMC has updated the 'GP Appointments in Kent & Medway' poster to help practices evidence to patients the amount of work being carried out, and the pressures faced, by general practice, and the steps patients can take to help themselves manage their care. Practices may wish to display this in their waiting rooms or add to their websites and social media sites. The data is sourced from NHS digital. The next update will be published soon after the next release of GP appointments data.

Wound Care

Kent LMC have received a number of recent queries regarding wound care, both to the office and via GPAS comments, and have raised these issues on practices behalf, both as part of ongoing PCQS discussions and with the community teams. We are currently assisting in a review of PCQS treatment room and wound care specifications and hope this will improve the situation going forward. We have also met with KCHFT regarding specific issues raised, any feedback from practices would be very useful. Different services are commissioned across Kent and Medway due to historical CCG arrangements and it would be helpful for practices to feedback any issues in their areas to info@kentlmc.org

General Practice Alert State (GPAS) National Reporting Dashboard

The national GPAS reporting dashboard has been published and shows the pressure general practice is under. Last week Kent & Medway practices reported Opel 4, consistent with the county having the lowest level of GPs per head of population in England.

Thank you to practices that continue to provide input into GPAS on a weekly basis. The information you provide is invaluable in evidencing the pressure general practice is operating under. The GPAS information from the national dashboard will be used by the BMA and feed into contract negotiations.

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 also 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](#)

NHS Pension Seminars - For GPs (practitioner status) and all other primary care staff (Officer status)

Isio (NHS Pensions Specialists) are providing a series of workshops in the coming weeks that may be of interest to both GPs and other primary care colleagues. My understanding is that the

Practitioner sessions are specifically for GPs while the Officer sessions are suitable for all other staff who are members of the NHS Pension scheme.

Isio will be running a series of online webinars to help explain the NHS Pension Scheme. They'll be covering:

- An overview of the NHS Pension Scheme
- Flexible retirement options and how they work
- An overview of pensions tax
- An overview of McCloud

The sessions which seem to be available imminently are scheduled to run of various dates over the next few weeks are free of charge and will last 90 minutes. There should be plenty of time in the sessions for Q&A. You can check out the details of the sessions via the link below.

To book a session, visit: [The NHS Pension Scheme Seminar Portal \(isio.com\)](https://www.isio.com)

If you have any questions about the sessions, contact: nhs01@isio.com

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 date to take you to the booking page:

[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>

Remaining Course date – 10th November, whole day 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.

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.

DVH Interface Meeting – Thursday 16 November

Full LMC Committee – Thursday 16 November

LMC Sessional GP Sub-Committee – Thursday 16 November

Kind regards

Kent Local Medical Committee