

YORLMC News

For practices in North Yorkshire & York and Bradford & Airedale

YORLMC services

Message from Dr Brian McGregor



Dear colleagues

As we start a new year, General Practice remains under huge pressure. We continue to deliver the vaccine programme, alongside looking after our patients at the same time as we face workload challenges with staff members having to isolate. Thank you for all that you are doing.

YORLMC offers a range of services to help GPs and practices during this period of challenges and at all time. These include:

Pastoral support

My clinical colleagues and I are able to provide personal and confidential support for individual GPs and practices in difficulty or experiencing major change. Click [here](#) for more information.

Legal services

YORLMC funds services offered under the banner of YORLMC LAW - in conjunction with LMC Law Limited - and are designed to assist and facilitate legal advice and services to practices, primary care networks and federations. There is more details about what is available [here](#).

Practice Managers

A range of [resources to support practice managers](#), including the the [‘Time for Us’ health and wellbeing review process](#) (Fourteen Fish log in required) - developed for GP partners as a way to review the health and wellbeing of their Practice Manager or Managing Partner.

There’s much more available too – please visit the [YORLMC website](#) for full details and get in touch any time if we can be of help.

Brian

Dr Brian McGregor, YORLMC Medical Secretary

Wellbeing services

YORLMC’s Wellbeing programme brings together a range of services, schemes and events that will support wellbeing and enable individuals to look after their own health and know when to seek help before difficulties arise. This programme is available to all GPs and practice managers as well as the wider practice team. Services include:

- **GPMplus mentoring** - available for GPs and practice nurses as well as non-clinical staff with leadership responsibilities.
- **Wellbeing education events** - book your place [here](#).
- Visit the [YORLMC website](#) for more information about the **range of wellbeing services** available.

What people say about our education events...

“The facilitators were great and kept me engaged throughout the day.”

“It was really nice to meet other GPs interested in GP wellbeing.”

“Incredibly supportive presenters, made me feel safe despite being in a virtual meeting room with participants I have never met.”

Requirement for COVID-19 vaccination as a condition of employment

19 January 2022

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In November, the Department of Health and Social Care [announced](#) the requirement for [COVID vaccinations as a condition of employment](#) in the health and social care sector. Health and social care workers who have face-to-face contact with patients, will need to provide evidence they have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19 in order to be deployed unless they are exempt. Unvaccinated individuals will need to have had their first dose by 3 February, in order to have had their second dose by the 1 April 2022 deadline.

This will have implications for general practice above those felt in other branches of practice. General practices are both contractor and provider which complicates the issue. Practices typically do not have the physical space to separate unvaccinated workforce into non-clinical areas.

NHSE/I has published [guidance](#) to support providers in preparing and planning for when the regulations (which are still subject to parliamentary passage) are introduced. Note that this is not a NHSE/I-led commissioning requirement but a legal one related to CQC registration and the regulations.

Practices are already straining with workforce shortages and enforcing this is going to an added burden. Practices will need to identify who has not received the vaccination and have discussions regarding their ongoing role. NHSE/I guidance advises, *“as independent employers, primary care providers may wish to seek individual legal advice.”*

The BMA is developing a set of [FAQs](#) which will address redeployment, termination and implications for practices, including answers to:

- What does mandatory vaccination mean in reality for employed staff, partners as workers, and practices as employers?
- Who decides whether unvaccinated individuals are redeployed or terminated and how (for both employees and partners)?
- Are there legal obligations when going through redeployment (eg pay protection, changing terms and conditions)?
- Are there protections against termination for both salaried staff and partners?
- What happens if there are several staff in the practice who are vaccine hesitant – viability of practice, impact of service provision, impact on remaining workforce etc?

The BMA is hoping to release the guidance before the end of the month, but much of it will depend on the wording of the legislation itself. The guidance will be added to as more questions are asked and more information becomes available.

The Royal College of Nursing has also produced a [COVID-19 workplace risk assessment toolkit](#) which may also be helpful.

COVID vaccinations

Amendments to the Enhanced Service Specification

The updated [Enhanced Service Specifications for Phase 3 of coronavirus vaccinations](#) have now been published. The amendments include:

- Extension of eligible cohort to include those aged 16 and over
- Clarification that where there may be conflicting guidance by JCVI, NHSE, MHRA and UKHSA, NHS England will confirm which guidance shall be adopted
- Financial supplements and extension of enhanced Item of Service fee to support practices during the national priority booster phase of the ongoing COVID-19 vaccination campaign

The GPC had also suggested that NHSE/I made available a reference guide to summarise which vaccines can be given to which groups, and when patients become eligible for a second, third dose or booster, and NHSE/I has shared this [chart](#) (available on [FutureNHS](#)), which is updated weekly.

Second dose for 12-15 year olds

As part of the national mission to get people protected against the new Omicron variant, [12-15 year-olds are now eligible for their second COVID-19 vaccinations dose](#), if they had their first dose more than twelve weeks ago, in line with [updated guidance from the JCVI](#) published on 29 November.

Responding to vaccination data queries

The Vaccine Data Resolution Service (VDRS) aims to resolve missing or incorrect vaccination records for people vaccinated in England, Scotland or Wales who have a current NHS number and are registered with a GP practice in England. You can raise data quality issues directly with the VDRS team and you can direct your patients to access the service via 119. More information is available on [FutureNHS](#).

Recording overseas vaccinations in the National Booking Service

Eligible people can now book a face-to-face appointment via the [National Booking system](#) at a selected vaccination centre to show evidence of MHRA-approved COVID-19 vaccinations administered abroad and have them recorded in the National Immunisation Management System (NIMS). Support is also provided through 119 to signpost the service, or to make bookings on behalf of users. More information is provided when the user books an appointment.

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Reporting COVID-19 outbreaks and staffing pressures in general practice

Whilst the GPC does not have real time data from GP practices staffing has been really challenging for quite a while now and the recent surge in Omicron has meant staff absences have rocketed due to isolation or active infection. In reality this is having devastating impact on GPs, their teams and [patient care](#).

Please report any COVID-19 outbreaks to your commissioner if you feel that services may be compromised by staff absence due to the outbreak, as they have a duty to provide timely support to their contractors and should be working with you to put business continuity arrangements in place. The commissioner must inform the Regional Incident Coordination Centre without delay, and the Regional Team must notify the National Incident Coordination Centre. It is important that General Practice receives the attention and support it is due.

Please contact YORLMC on info@yorlmcld.co.uk and also keep the GPC informed where practices are being treated unfairly or being put under any pressure via info.gpc@bma.org.uk

COVID-19 vaccine has been approved for use by children aged 5 to 11

The Pfizer BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine has been [approved for use by children aged 5 to 11 by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency \(MHRA\)](#), after finding it safe and effective.



Access to PCR and lateral flow tests

There continue to be reports of lack of access to PCR and lateral flow tests, which is likely to be due to the rapid spread of the Omicron variant. It is crucial that the promised new supply of kits are offered to key workers such as health and social care staff as a priority. The [Health Security Agency announced](#) that from 11 January, people who receive positive lateral flow device test results for COVID-19 will be required to self-isolate immediately but won't be required to take a confirmatory PCR test. Here is also a helpful [link and flowchart](#) that is being kept up-to-date.

Although the UK Health Security Agency has provided a contingency supply of LFTs from its prioritised stock for NHS health or social care staff, they are aware of the current supply issues and will provide additional contingency over the coming days.

For employing organisations to access LFT contingency supply for priority testing, if unable to access testing through other routes, please see the regional contact points in the [attached document](#). Read the BMA statement [here](#)

New COVID-19 treatments

New treatments are available for highest-risk patients infected with COVID. These drugs have been shown to reduce hospitalisation and may reduce death and will be available for the highest risk patients.

The role of GPs in this is to get eligible patients in contact with a covid medicines delivery unit (CMDU) when they are positive for COVID if this has not already been done by another service. Access to medicines could be lifesaving for this cohort of patients and time is of the essence. Read more [here](#)

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Respiratory Protective Equipment, risk assessments, and provision of respirators

Omicron is more transmissible than previous variants of COVID-19 which increase the risk of general practice workforce contracting the disease. To reduce this risk BMA Occupational Medicine Committee is drafting guidance for workplaces to advise that employers should carry out risk assessments and provide mitigations to reduce risk of contracting COVID. This guidance will be published in full shortly.

In the meantime an [abbreviated guideline](#) has been developed by GPC England for GP practices to use, which includes a template letter to CCGs requesting support with getting RPE supply.

The GPC continues to call for GPs to either have access to or reimbursement of associated costs of appropriate RPE and have urged NHSE/I to provide FFP2 masks as a default for all practices, and for availability for FFP3 and fit testing where appropriate.

Read the national COVID-19 [IPC \(infection prevention and control\) guidance](#) which has been updated in light of the rapid spread of the Omicron variant. A useful thread explaining masks in more detail can be accessed [here](#).

2022/23 priorities and operational planning guidance

NHSE/I has also published [guidance on priorities and operational planning for 2022/23](#), based on a scenario where COVID-19 returns to a low level and the NHS make significant progress in restoring services and reducing the COVID backlogs in the first part of the year.

The guidance includes future funding arrangements.



Confirmatory PCR tests temporarily suspended for positive lateral flow test results

Following the announcement by the [Health Security Agency](#) that asymptomatic people who receive positive lateral flow device test results for COVID-19 now won't be required to take a confirmatory PCR test, NHSE/I has published [guidance on the implications for the NHS](#) and advice for practices for actions to take:

- 1:1 conversations with staff who has not had both doses of the vaccine
- robust local monitoring processes are in place for regular staff LFD testing staff (even if vaccinated) to carry out asymptomatic twice weekly LFD and [report](#) results
- COVID-related sickness absence recorded in ESR where that is available
- staff offered continuous learning regarding [UKHSA's IPC guidance](#)

Note that anyone who develops one of the three main COVID-19 symptoms are still required to take a PCR test, and self-isolate if they get a positive test result.

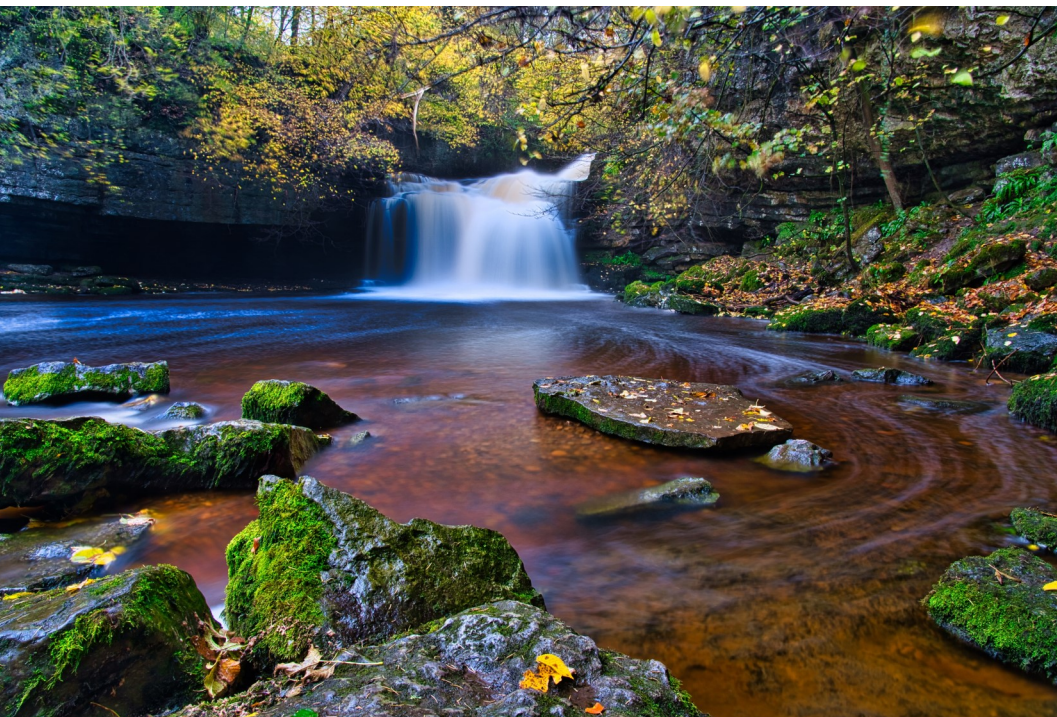
Read the BMA's simple [flowchart](#) about whether staff need to self isolate

GP contracts and variation notices

The [model contracts and contract variation notices have now been published](#), including the general practice pay transparency obligations. But as previously communicated, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care has confirmed the implementation of general practice pay transparency will be delayed until at least Spring 2022.

Read the BMA [guidance on declaring earnings](#)

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COVID-19 vaccination programme

A [Patient Group Direction \(PGD\)](#) and [national protocol](#) have now been published for Comirnaty 30mcg/dose COVID-19 mRNA vaccine V06.00

Medicines Supply Tool

The Department of Health and Social Care and NHSE/I have now launched an online [Medicines Supply Tool](#), which provides up to date information about medicine supply issues. To access the Medicines Supply Tool you will need to register with the [SPS \(Specialist Pharmacy Service\) website](#).

GP practice sponsorship process

The BMA has partnered with legal firm Magrath Sheldrick, who oversee our [immigration advice service](#), to develop a webinar on navigating the GP sponsorship process. The webinar is aimed at GP employers and offers practical tips on how to navigate the current sponsorship process to recruit non-UK nationals and addresses frequently asked questions on the process itself. Access the [webinar](#)

If you have any questions, or would like to share your experiences of navigating the sponsorship process, please contact Caroline Strickland, Senior Policy Advisor, International Affairs (cstrickland@bma.org.uk).

Assessment of COVID patients

With high numbers of symptomatic COVID patients, NHSEI has now released some guidance on assessment, monitoring and treatment of symptomatic patients in General Practice and 111, which you can find [here](#).

Hospital discharge and support for general practice & community care

The GPC has raised repeatedly concerns about capacity constraints impacting patient safety in the community, and was disappointed to read the letter issued by NHSE/I on [Preparing the NHS for the potential impact of the Omicron variant and other winter pressures](#). Disappointed because their priority to 'maximise capacity across acute and community settings, enabling the maximum number of people to be discharged safely and quickly and supporting people in their own homes' didn't seem to provide any credible details on how additional capacity in the community was being created to cater for this new activity.

The GPC has since [written to NHSE/I](#) formally to highlight concerns about lacking capacity in the community. The GPC is particularly anxious about the wider impact on patients being discharged early into the community, given significant capacity constraints in all parts of the system and wholly inadequate support across both general practice and community care teams, to meet the ongoing care and treatment needs of patients.

FREE HEE training for doctors in Yorkshire and Humber

Please see below information from the HEE SupportTT team:

*The HEE SupportTT team have commissioned a **new, free** course designed to improve self-awareness, exploring conditioning, life experiences, aspects of the psyche and how these impact on our responses in all situations.*

Delegates will master the core skills to observe their current behaviour which is essential to responding in a conscious way and teach practical tools and techniques to weave into their day

The course is perfect for those currently out of post to prepare for returning to work, and those who have just returned eg after maternity leave or a period of illness. It is also an excellent course for those feeling burnt out.

Below is a summary of the course and the booking links.

Join the 'Resilient Practice' team for 3 interactive workshops designed to equip you with all the tools you need to return to work with confidence, enhanced skills, and a resilient mindset.

We will show you how to:

- Measure your current resilience
 - Take a deep dive into the psychology that supports improved mental wellbeing
 - Master the core skills required for resilience
- Develop a bespoke toolkit to foster wellbeing and resilience for the rest of your career.*

*Follow the links below to book your **FREE** place*

February 2nd, 9th & 16th - <https://www.maxcourse.co.uk/HEEYHME/userCourseMatchListCourseDetails.asp?cKey=19131>

March 4th, 11th & 18th - <https://www.maxcourse.co.uk/HEEYHME/userCourseMatchListCourseDetails.asp?cKey=19132>

Pulse Oximetry @ Home

The COVID Oximetry @home pathway is a commissioned service and there is good evidence to support this model. The latest version of the National Standard Operating Procedure can be found [here](#).

Virtual Wards and Hospital @ Home

The GPC has written to NHSE/I highlighting concerns about the lack of capacity and support in the community to provide safe care for patients being discharged early or not being admitted.

NHSE/I has published reference guidance on [Supporting patients and bed capacity through virtual wards and COVID Oximetry @home](#) and the GPC is contributing to national discussions where possible.

Combined paediatric and adult respiratory clinical assessment services hubs (RCAS)

Due to reduced mixing last winter, it is likely that population immunity to respiratory infections will have waned, and as a result this winter rates of respiratory infections will be higher than usual, with the very young, very old and those with pre-existing long-term conditions at greater risk of severe disease. This could impact on both primary care and hospital admissions, and could be affected by current and future outbreaks of COVID-19; [NHSE/I has released guidance on setting up RCAS / COVID Hubs](#)

The GPC has to NHSE/I asking for clarification of timeframes and support for the establishment of these services. It is unclear how such hubs will be staffed. Additionally, the GPC recommends urgent risk assessments and access to fit testing to ensure appropriate protective equipment is in place.

PCSE patient list validation requirements

The GPC has asked NHSE/I to pause PCSE emails to practices requesting full patient list validation exercises. NHSE/I agreed to this and have instructed PCSE to stop sending them until the beginning of February, when the decision will be reviewed.

Further to this, the GPC challenged the mention in these PCSE requests of a requirement to respond to the requests within five working days. NHSE/I agreed with the GPC that the contractual requirement is actually 30 days. They will raise this with PCSE but, should the wording remain unchanged when these requests are resumed, the GPC would advise practices that they can actually use the full 30 days.

Application window for 2019/20 Pensions Annual Allowance Charge Compensation Policy

The third GP application window for 2019/20 Pensions Annual Allowance Charge Compensation Policy applications is now open on the PCSE website [2019/20 Pensions Annual Allowance Charge Compensation Policy - Primary Care Support England](#). It closes on Friday 11 February 2022.

Updates to the Network Contract DES

Following the [letter](#) of 3 December announcing changes to QOF and IIF and the temporary [GP contract changes](#) to support COVID-19 vaccination programme, NHSE/I has now updated the [Network Contract DES](#)

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Q&A with Dr Brian McGregor - book your place

All GPs and practice staff across the YORLMC area are invited to join a Q&A session on Friday 28 January January 7:00pm - 8:00pm, held on Zoom. The session is hosted by YORLMC Medical Secretary Dr Brian McGregor. Brian serves on the national GPC as the representative for North Yorkshire & York and Bradford & Airedale. The session provides an opportunity for constituent GPs and PMs to meet and discuss issues with Brian. This is an interactive event so please bring any questions you would like to put to Brian. You can book your place at <https://www.yorlmcld.co.uk/events/13229>

New annual leave guidance for employers of salaried GPs

This newly published [guidance](#) produced by the sessional GP committee provides advice to the employers of salaried GPs to ensure that the process for processing and allocating annual leave is fair, transparent and flexible. Read more [here](#)

Asthma inhalers

The [AHSN Network](#) is hosting a series of sharing and learning events that aim to share best practice innovations and initiatives to support the delivery of a net zero NHS. A virtual event taking place on 8th February 10:30 - 12:00 will focus on reducing the environmental impact of asthma inhalers. Topics covered include clinical decision-making and encouraging patients, where appropriate, to adopt environmentally friendly inhaler use. Policy, education and training will also feature. This webinar is open to anyone working in the NHS with an interest in inhaler prescribing. Click [here](#) for further details



Buying Group

Members of the LMC Buying Group can access discounts with any of the suppliers on the attached list at [Appendix 1](#). To access these discounts, you can either login to the Buying Group website and request a quote or if you contact the supplier directly, you need to make sure you mention your practice is a member of the LMC Buying Group or state the discount code from the suppliers page of the Buying Group website. The latest update from the Buying Group is available [here](#).

If you were using an approved supplier before you became a Buying Group member or have been using a supplier for a long time and aren't sure if you are receiving the correct rates, you can email to check: info@lmcbuyinggroups.co.uk. For further information on LMC Buying Group member benefits or to speak to a member of the team, you can live chat via their website: <https://www.lmcbuyinggroups.co.uk/> or give them a call on: 0115 979 6910.

Jobs page

YORLMC has a job page on our website at <https://www.yorlmcld.co.uk/jobs>. Please visit this page to view current vacancies and details of GPs seeking work. NHS Practices in the YORLMC area seeking to fill GP and staff vacancies and GPs seeking work in the YORLMC area can place adverts on the job page free of charge. To place an advert please email info@yorlmcld.co.uk

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