

YORLMC News

For practices in North Yorkshire & York and Bradford & Airedale

Message from Dr Brian McGregor

Dear colleagues

Vaccination as a condition of deployment (VCOD) for all healthcare workers

The planned introduction of mandatory vaccination for healthcare workers, which was due to come into effect from 1 April, has been paused whilst a consultation on the policy takes place. It is now the expectation that the policy will be dropped. NHSE has sent a [letter](#) with more details, including a request that employers **do not** serve notice of termination to employees affected by the VCOD regulations. The BMA has issued a [press release](#) welcoming the news that the policy is to be scrapped.

Invitation to next Q&A—24 February, 7pm-8pm

Thanks to everyone who has joined me at one of my regular Q&A sessions on Zoom. All GPs and practice staff across the YORLMC area are invited and it's a chance for discussion, questions and an update from me on local and national news. Please do come along – the next session takes place on the evening of Thursday 24 February and you can book your place [here](#).

With best wishes
Brian

Dr Brian McGregor, YORLMC Medical Secretary



YORLMC services Spotlight on... Legal and HR

Practices in the YORLMC area can access a range of legal support provided by LMC Law.

Many of these services are funded by YORLMC levy and are available free of charge to practices, others are available at competitive rates.

More details about the YORLMC Law service are available [here](#).

YORLMC offers an HR and Employment Support Package which is available to practices and federations at very competitive rates and under a contract which can be renewed annually.

As outlined in the flyer, this package is subject to the LMC Law terms and conditions of service.

Please see the [flyer for practices and federations](#) for more information.



Face coverings in practice premises

As of 27 January, [face masks are no longer a legal requirement](#), but people are still advised to wear coverings in enclosed or crowded spaces, and the [IPC guidance for health settings](#) states that face masks should continue be worn by staff and patients in health care settings.

[Practices should carry out risk assessments](#) and assess what level of respiratory protective equipment should be worn by different groups in various settings. Health and Safety law makes it your responsibility to protect staff and other patients based upon these risk assessments, thus making mask wearing a legal requirement if your risk assessment suggests masks should be worn.

If challenged by patients not wanting to wear a mask you can refer to the [IPC guidance](#) and your risk assessments and inform the patient that "the law imposes on me the duty to expect you to wear a mask, and on you the duty to wear one in these premises."

Download the BMA's [poster about using face coverings in practices](#) and access all the BMA's patient resources for practices on the [Support Your Surgery](#) page

Guidance on COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control for GP practices

The BMA has recently published [guidance for GP practices on COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control](#), to help practices reduce the risk and pressures on their staff.

The BMA Occupational Medicine Committee is also 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.



2 February 2022

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Fit testing of FFP2 and FFP3 respirators

Current [IPC \(Infection Prevention and Control\) guidance](#) advises that clinicians seeing patients with any known or suspected respiratory infections should wear FFP3 respirators to prevent nosocomial transfer. It is also a requirement of the [Health and Safety Executive \(HSE\)](#) that FFP2 masks are fit-tested in the same way as FFP3 masks. HSE advises against the use of FFP2 unless we are in contingency measures as these provide a lesser filtration rate than FFP3.

GPC England (GPCE) has persistently made the case that COVID-19 is transmitted by airborne means and that effective respiratory protective equipment (RPE) is of vital importance to protect healthcare staff and our patients. GPC England has worked hard with NHSE/I in order to protect colleagues and patients. This latest guidance acknowledges these facts and provides a framework by which practices can access appropriate RPE.

Practices can access FFP respirators, including FFP3s, via the [PPE portal](#) if they have risk assessed their environments and require these. In addition, practices can access fit-testing for their FFP respirators through their local commissioners, and CCGs have been informed that where risk assessments have shown it to be necessary, fit-testing should be provided by the CCG.

NHSE/I have asked CCG/Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) to identify fit testing capacity that may be available in their system, to consider the need across the whole system and ensure demand is prioritized according to clinical need and the type of procedures that local providers are carrying out in line with IPC guidance.

A list of fit testing training providers is available [here](#) and there is also additional support via two dedicated *Fit Test Helplines* for NHS / healthcare providers, which can be contacted on: 07376 304545 or 07376 304546. The legal duty is to take all reasonably practicable actions. If there is no availability of fit testing or there will be delay, risk is still reduced by moving from surgical masks to either FFP2 or FFP3 respirators.

BMA guidance about making risk assessments and on infection control protocols is available [here](#).

Extension of free PPE to the health and care sector

The [government has extended](#) the central, free provision of all items of COVID-19 PPE to the health and care sector, including primary care, by up to one year to March 2023 or until the infection prevention and control (IPC) guidance on PPE usage for COVID-19 is either withdrawn or significantly amended.

COVID-19 self-isolation can end after 5 full days following 2 negative LFD tests

From [Monday 17 January](#), people with COVID-19 in England can end their self-isolation after 5 days, as long as they test negative on day 5 and day 6 with LFD tests. The health service is experiencing disruption from widespread absences due to the rapid spread of Omicron but healthcare workers do not want to risk infecting colleagues and patients - many of whom are clinically vulnerable. So they can only return to work safely after a shorter period of isolation and two negative lateral flow tests if they have [access to high-grade masks](#), and many are finding that this is still not the case.

Read the [BMA statement](#) and the [NHSE/I guidance](#) on isolation for NHS staff



COVID vaccinations

Vaccinating 12-17 year olds at risk

NHSE/I has published [operational guidance following JCVI advice on booster vaccination of eligible 12 - 17 year olds](#) and household contacts of immunosuppressed people. Vaccinations sites can now begin to invite eligible 12-17 year olds for their booster vaccinations.

Extending the post-thaw expiry date of specific batches of Comirnaty® (30 microgram/dose)

After discussions with Pfizer Inc. and the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), certain post-thaw expiry dates of unpunctured and undamaged Comirnaty (30mcg/dose) vials in batches detailed in this [NHSE/I letter](#) may be extended from 31 days to 45 days.

Updated PGD and National Protocol for Spikevax (Moderna)

An updated [PGD and National Protocol for Spikevax](#) (formerly COVID-19 Vaccine Moderna) V05.00 have now been published.

National Standards of Healthcare Cleanliness 2021

Practices nationally have asked if the implementation of the [National Standard of Healthcare Cleanliness](#) is mandatory in Primary Care. NHSEI have confirmed that, while contractors must have regard to NHSEI guidance, it is not a mandatory requirement.

CQC acknowledge in their advice on [Infection prevention and control in General Practice](#) that it will continue to regulate in line with its own regulations and the existing Code of Practice.



Global vaccine equity

The BMA is a leading voice calling for urgent action to ensure an equitable distribution of vaccines globally. This is not only a moral imperative – as we have seen all too clearly with the emergence of the Omicron variant, failure to achieve high levels of vaccine coverage anywhere puts lives at risk everywhere.

The BMA has twice written to the Prime Minister urging the UK to lead by example and do more to help poorer countries vaccinate their populations and has published a [joint statement](#) with other unions and royal colleges in December expressing deep concern at the ongoing inequity in access to COVID-19 vaccines globally.

The BMA is also supporting the [#VaccinateTheWorld](#) campaign launched by a group of grassroots health care professionals, including BMA member Dr David Attwood and senior leaders as a New Year's resolution for the UK. The campaign calls on doctors and the public to sign a [petition](#) and write a [letter](#) to their MPs (template provided).

Health and Social Care Bill #WrongBillWrongTime

The BMA, as a core member of a [coalition of almost 90 healthcare organisations, called on peers debating workforce elements of the Health and Social Care Bill](#) to support [Amendment 170](#), which would place a duty on the Secretary of State to publish regular, independently verified assessments of the workforce numbers needed, now and in the future, to meet the growing needs of the population.

The BMA's wider briefing warns that the NHS is still under huge pressure from the pandemic and it is [not the right time](#) to be reorganising the NHS. Read more about BMA concerns with the Bill [here](#).

How can GPs effectively care for patients with long-term conditions in the current climate?

Dr Matt Kearney (GP and UCLPartners Programme Director for CVD Prevention and Proactive Care) and Helen Williams (Consultant Pharmacist UCLPartners Clinical Adviser and National Specialty adviser for CVD Prevention, NHSE/I) highlight the importance of search and stratification tools to help primary care safely prioritise patients with long term-conditions, in this [blog](#).

This approach helps manage GP workflow at a time when there is so much pressure on staff and they have such limited capacity due to covid cases and the vaccination programme.

By starting with the patients at highest risk but still supporting proactive care for all patients, this method provides benefits for patients and practices.

Read the [blog](#).

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Pathway to Partnership

Please see below information from Qualitas about the Pathway to Partnership programme:

The Qualitas Pathway to Partnership programme looks to accelerate the professional development of new partners, providing the opportunity to learn new skills and knowledge, develop a network of colleagues across the country and learn from successful GPs and practices alongside business, accountancy, innovation and leadership experts. Accredited by the Institute of Leadership and Management, the programme allows you to accumulate 60 CPD points and is structured around three key pillars - Leadership, Strategy and Operations.

Starting on 4th May 2022, this is a 12-month hybrid programme spread over 6 full day face-to-face sessions, 8 peer-group virtual sessions and real exercises completed with your practice. Participants have the option of joining in person, virtually or a mix of both.

For those new to partnership, NHS England offers full reimbursement for training [here](#). There's more information about the programme [here](#).

FREE Live Webinar for Reception Teams working with General Practice - Challenging Patient Conversations

To support GP practice reception staff, Qualitas (an NHSE delivery partner on the Time for Care programme) are running FREE live webinars to share some top tips for GP practice reception teams to manage challenging patient interactions. The aims of these sessions are to support practices to:

- Reduce the number of challenging patient interactions.
- Increase the number of
- interactions with patients that end positively/amicably.
- Reduce the impact these interactions have on staff.

There's more information, including how to book, [here](#).



GPMplus wellbeing education programme

There are a range of wellbeing services available for GPs and practice teams working in the YORLMC area, delivered under the GPMplus banner.

These services, arranged by YORLMC and supported by grant funding, include a variety of wellbeing education events. The wellbeing education programme comprises a suite of training and resources which together contribute to the model we refer to as the Healthy Practice.

A Healthy Practice is one where it is:

- A good place to work
- A good place to be a patient

There more information on the GPMplus programme at [Appendix 1](#) and you can find out more on the [GPMplus website](#) and book your place on an event [here](#).

#We Are Primary Care

Humberside LMCs have launched a #We Are Primary Care campaign. This campaign provides practices with a variety of resources, including graphic and messaging to help inform patients about how to make sure they receive the right care at the right time.

There's more detail, including how to access these resources, on the Humberside LMCs' [website](#).

Supporting NHS colleagues to handle difficult situations with compassion

Supporting NHS colleagues to handle difficult situations with compassion" is a newly-developed training course to upskill colleagues with appropriate techniques and skills that will support them in handling difficult situations with compassion, whilst highlighting the importance of looking after your own health and wellbeing at this critical time. It is an NHSE/I NE & Yorkshire wide offer

This pilot is primarily targeted at people working in patient facing, frontline roles - in particular those in non-clinical roles who are often the first point of contact for patients.

There's more information, including how to book, at [Appendix 2](#).

The Cameron Fund

The [Cameron Fund](#) is the medical benevolent charity that provides support solely to GPs in the UK. This includes GP Trainees, working GPs, retired GPs, as well as dependents of GPs. The Fund helps GPs and their families who are suffering financial hardship, whether through physical or mental ill-health, disability, bereavement or loss of employment.

The latest video from the Cameron Fund, available [here](#), explain more about the charity and why its members are so important.

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](#).



Buying Group

Members of the LMC Buying Group can access discounts with any of the suppliers on the attached list at [Appendix 3](#). 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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