

*Dear Colleagues*

**Wessex LMCs News Update From The Team. . .**

## **BMA Survey – GP Workload Pressures**

The BMA has published its 13<sup>th</sup> COVID-19 [survey](#), which clearly demonstrates how the pandemic has had a great impact on GPs and practice staff in terms of workload, lack of breaks and leave, and an increasing number of staff leaving the NHS.

More than half of GPs (62.5%) surveyed say they are 'very concerned' their patients' health will suffer due to the growing backlog of non-COVID care. The survey also reveals that 68% are either not very or not at all confident that their practice will be able to manage patient demand. GPs especially report that their non-COVID workload is higher than before the pandemic, and are less confident than their hospital colleagues that their practice and local health economy can manage this and actually clear the backlog within a year.

General practice, like much of the NHS, is currently facing unprecedented pressures as we battle to keep patients safe during the pandemic on top of a growing backlog of care.

The survey also shows that an increasing number of staff leaving the NHS, with:

- 36% of respondents from a primary care setting said they are more likely take early retirement in the next year while 22% of respondents from a primary care setting said they are more likely to leave the NHS for another career in the next year
- 55% of respondents from a primary care setting said they have changed their career plans because of workload, including the ability to take breaks/leave

No GP is a stranger to working long hours or seeing colleagues break down with stress, and as a result, many are now considering leaving the profession altogether in order to get the respite they so desperately need. Not only does this deprive the NHS of talented doctors, but it also hinders patient care, drives up waiting lists, and places extra pressure on those who decide to stay.

The BMA's findings must act as a wake-up call to UK Government and treated with the upmost urgency. Without a functioning general practice system – the gatekeepers of the NHS – the entire health service teeters on a cliff edge.

Dr Richard Vautrey has written to Health Minister, Jo Churchill MP, to highlight the pressures GPs and their practice teams are under, and that despite this huge and growing workload, recent media focus has again

misleadingly suggested that GP practices are not open to see patients. This is clearly not the case, as evidenced in the national appointment data published last week showing that there were 3 million more appointments (up 11%) in March this year, than the same time in 2019 prior to the pandemic.

Read the full results from the survey [here](#)

## Media

Following interviews for regional BBC last week on GP workload pressures this week Dr Richard Vautrey appeared on [ITV's Calendar news](#) (18.05) in their lead piece, which focused on the workload pressures in general practice and the looming workforce crisis, and referenced the latest BMA's tracker survey. He said that workforce problems long predated the pandemic: *"The difficulty is replacing GPs who have left. That situation hasn't changed. We've been through the pandemic, we've done our best with the staff we've got and we're now hopefully coming out the other side, but we still have the same workforce issues as two years ago."*

[Pulse](#) also reported on the BMA survey, and Dr Richard Vautrey commented that these findings *'must act as a wake-up call to the UK Government and be treated with 'the utmost urgency'.* *"General practice, like much of the NHS, is currently facing unprecedented pressures as we battle to keep patients safe during the pandemic on top of a growing backlog of care. Our calls must be listened to, and our workforce truly valued. This means giving GPs the respite they need and access to proper breaks to ensure no more feel forced to leave a career they've worked so hard to achieve."*

The [BMJ](#) reported on the workload pressures, [GP Online](#), [Healthcare Leader](#) and [Pulse](#) reported on the finding that more than a third of GPs said they were now planning on retiring early, while [Medscape](#) and [Personnel Today](#) also carried articles on the survey.

## Workforce Data and GP Pressures

The latest [GP workforce data report](#) has been published, which shows that the overall number of FTE GPs has seen little growth since 2015, with the number of GP partners significantly decreasing in that time.

Between March 2020 to March 2021, the number of older, more experienced GP partners reduced by 546 doctors. Factoring in this decrease, the number of qualified GPs increased by 1541 (salaried and locum GPs only) in that time. Looking at this on a FTE basis (37.5 hours per week), the number of fully qualified FTE GPs only increased by 110.7 (to 28,096) over the past year.

The number of patients per practice is 22% higher than it was in 2015, but the GP workforce has not grown with this demand. As a result of this stasis, there are now just 0.46 fully qualified GPs per 1000 patients in England - down from 0.52 in 2015. This is significantly below the average number of physicians per 1000 patients in comparable OECD nations (3.5).

These figures clearly illustrate that in addition to the workload pressures practices are under, the GP workforce is decreasing steadily, while the patient numbers are increasing.

Read the BMA's full analysis of the figures on the [GP pressures page](#) which has clear graphical analysis, with the chart resource pack [here](#) which can be posted as individual images as part of social media interactions.

You can read the [statement](#) about it by the GPC Workforce lead and GPC England Executive team member, Krishna Kasaraneni.

The BMA's statement was covered by [Pulse](#), [Healthcare Leader](#) and [GP Online](#).

## BMA and Royal College of Nursing raise concerns about exhausted NHS staff feeling pressured to work overtime

*"Results from the latest BMA 'tracker' survey showed 60% of UK doctors are currently experiencing a higher than normal level of fatigue or exhaustion. . . ."*

Full article available [here](#).

## COVID-19 Vaccination Programme

### JCVI announcement regarding AstraZeneca Vaccine for people under 40

JCVI have today updated their advice for vaccination of those under 40. They have said: *'JCVI's advice is based on the available data on the current epidemiology, benefit-risk profile by age, modelling predictions on future disease trends and the current forecast on vaccine supply. Given the risk (albeit extremely rare) of these adverse events associated with the AstraZeneca vaccine, the current control of COVID-19 in the UK, model predictions of the potential scale and timing of a future wave, and promising forecasts for the availability of vaccines in the UK, JCVI agreed its advice should be updated.'*

*JCVI advises that, in addition to those aged under 30, unvaccinated adults aged 30 to 39 years who are not in a clinical priority group at higher risk of severe COVID-19 disease, should be preferentially offered an alternative to the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine, where possible and only where no substantial delay or barrier in access to vaccination would arise. For those under 40 years who are of older age, male, obese (BMI above 30), from certain ethnic minority backgrounds or experiencing socio-economic deprivation, the risks of acquiring and/or suffering complications of COVID-19 are higher. Every effort should be made to remove barriers to accessing vaccination in those individuals.*

*For those aged 18 to 29 years the precautionary advice for a vaccine preference is stronger, reflecting a gradient in the benefit-risk balance with age.'*

NHSE/I have issued [guidance](#) to GP practices relating to this change.

People aged over 40s are now eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccination. Practice groups can invite these patients for their first vaccination if they have sufficient supplies alongside continuing with second vaccinations to those patients who are due to receive it.

NHSE/I will also be sending out text messages to remind people about the second dose if they haven't received it or do not yet have an appointment at 91 days after the first dose. Patients can book at [www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination](http://www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination), by calling 119 or by contacting their GP practice, if that is how they booked their first dose.

### Patients bringing babies or children to vaccination appointments

Following some reports of patients with young children being refused entry to vaccination centres, we raised this issue with NHSE/I who have confirmed that there should be equity of access to all patients. They have advised that reasonable adjustments can be made for parents with young babies or children, and should not be turned away, unless following a risk assessment by the senior clinician at the vaccination centre. Every effort should be made to ensure that individuals can receive their vaccine at their stated appointment time.

Following our intervention, they will ensure that all vaccination sites are aware of the guidance relating to patients bringing babies or children to their vaccination appointment, and that vaccination sites take a reasonable approach.

## Oversupply of PPE to vaccination centres

NHSE/I originally sent replenishment PPE and non-vaccine specific consumables out to all vaccination sites on a weekly basis. However, after feedback from a number of regions they have now reduced the size of this replenishment, and each site has been given guidance around how they can pause or cancel non-vaccine deliveries if not required. In addition, they are also developing a methodology and system for all sites to become more in control of their supply of PPE and consumables.

Over [50 million doses of COVID vaccines](#) have now been delivered in the UK, and 16 million have also received their second dose.

Read our [guidance about the COVID-19 vaccination programme](#).

## Weekly COVID-19 Data

The BMA weekly COVID-19 data summary is attached.

## Microsoft N365 Licences will be allocated for Locum GPs

As a result of work the BMA have been doing across the BMA, the Royal College of GPs, and NHSX, the "apps for enterprise" Microsoft N365 licences will now be allocated for Locum GPs who are currently a member of the nationally managed NHS Mail Locum group for a period of 12 months. During this time, work will continue within NHSX and NHS Digital to find a sustainable long term solution. We expect the licences to be live over the coming weeks.

## Central Procurement for Pneumovax®23 from 1 June 2021

From 1 June 2021 the Pneumococcal Polysaccharide Vaccine (PPV 23) will be centrally procured. In line with other national immunisation programmes, Public Health England will supply this vaccine for the routine immunisation programme and immunisation of those with underlying medical conditions, rather than providers locally procuring the vaccine. The vaccine will be available to order from [PHE's ImmForm website](#). Read more [here](#).

## GP Trainees Committee Regional Elections 2021

Nominations for the BMA's GP Trainees Committee in the below regions are **now open** until **12pm, 19 May**. Seats are for a two-session term, 2021-23.

- Eastern
- East Midlands
- Kent, Surrey & Sussex
- London North West
- Mersey
- North East
- Northern Ireland
- Peninsula
- Scotland, North
- Thames Valley
- Wales
- West Midlands
- Lancashire\*
- Scotland, West\*
- Severn\*

*\* these seats are a by-election and are for a one-session term*

To submit your nomination, please login to the BMA's [election system](#). You need a [BMA website account](#) to take part in these elections. For more information about the GP Trainees Committee please visit their [webpage](#).

If you have any queries regarding the election process, please contact [elections@bma.org.uk](mailto:elections@bma.org.uk)

## Your chance to inform Staff Training in Primary Care

Health Education England and NHSE/I would like to hear from GPs, practice nurses, practice pharmacists, practice managers and administrative staff about their experiences of delivering remote triage (navigating patients to the right person at the right time), online, telephone and video consultations in general practice. Your input will be crucial in designing effective training to support all primary care staff and trainees to confidently work with these approaches. Virtual focus groups will be run in May-June 2021. If you would like to participate, or find out more about the study visit <https://bit.ly/3dyYp19>

## Active Lifestyle

Active Lifestyle is targeted at GP staff as well as patients. Some useful tips on raising the question around activity levels in consultations etc and some information specific to certain patient groups.

The movingmedicine video is quite fun. <https://movingmedicine.ac.uk/>

The RCGP toolkit has been designed by the RCGP in partnership with Sport England, to be used by primary care professionals in the UK. Any health professional concerned about their own activity levels may find the toolkit useful. The toolkit is designed to have something for all clinicians:

<https://www.rcgp.org.uk/clinical-and-research/resources/toolkits/physical-activity-and-lifestyle.aspx>

There are plenty of other resources out there and you have probably got information overload, but this might be helpful: [Wessex LMCs: Covid-19 - Support for Practice](#)

## Travel Vaccinations & Patients Travelling Abroad

Please see the updated [travel](#) section on the LMC website to keep abreast with national developments around the Covid vaccine and the NHS App.

Patient Frequently Asked Questions can be accessed via this [link](#).







The "Vaccination Status Document" is a useful handout for your patients (copy attached).

There has been no official announcements yet as to whether travellers will need to provide evidence that they have had both doses of the Covid vaccine, though it has been suggested that the NHS app could be used as a Covid passport for travel.

The first decision on international travel was made last week when the government announced a 'traffic light' system for travel to different destinations. The advice also includes which countries UK residents can travel to without needing to quarantine though it is likely that they will still be required for some countries to undergo a Covid test prior to departure and possibly on return to the UK. You are advised to access the GOV.UK [website](#) for up to date travel advice.

We need to avoid the expectation that people can secure evidence of vaccination or testing by obtaining a letter from their GP practice. The following information for patients will hopefully alleviate the need for them to contact the practice.

Are you travelling abroad and need proof of covid-19 vaccination status ?  
[Gov.uk](#) says GPs cannot provide letters showing your Covid-19 vaccination status.  
These are the current options

Do you have a smartphone or iPad/Tablet ?   You can download the NHS App. Get started here <a href="#">NHS App</a> There also a <a href="#">YouTube Quick Guide</a> to getting started.	No smartphone or smart device ? No problem...   You can use the NHS App via a computer or laptop. Get Started Here at <a href="#">NHS App Online</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No devices ?</li><li>• No Internet ?</li><li>No problem....</li></ul>   From 17 <sup>th</sup> May Call NHS 119 and they will be able to post a letter to you. You will need to provide details of the country you are travelling to for this. See <a href="#">Gov.uk Demonstrating your Covid-19 Status when travelling abroad</a>
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## Travel Advice During Covid

The GOV.UK web [site](#) provides up to date travel advice including:

- Foreign travel advice for each [country](#) (people can sign up for email alerts)
- Travel health advice for travellers [NaTHNaC](#)
- Current GOV.UK “traffic light” [list](#) for travel

## European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)

By law, the NHS ceases to have responsibility for the medical care of patients when they leave the UK. People traveling within Europe (including Switzerland, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein) are advised to always carry an authorised European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) and this gives entitlement to reduced cost (and sometimes free) medical treatment.

- The same applies to EU citizens who are in the UK.
- The cards cover pre-existing medical conditions and routine maternity care, as well as emergency care.
- As part of [Brexit](#) the UK and the EU agreed that the EHIC cards can still be used until their expiry dates.

It is anticipated that the government will issue a new Global Health Insurance Card ([GHIC](#)) which will replace the EHIC for the majority of UK citizens. [Healthcare in the EU, Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

## DBS Enhanced Checks – Please note. . .

Published by DBS.gov.uk on 4<sup>th</sup> May, 2021

**As of 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2021 please note the following processing changes relating to an applicant’s personal information re: Enhanced DBS applications:-**

As of the above date any changes to an applicant’s current name, previous names, current address and/or their 5 year address history will no longer be able to be amended once submitted to the LMC / DBS.

Any Enhanced checks that are submitted with omitted or incorrect information regarding the above will be withdrawn and a new application will need to be submitted.

If an application is withdrawn due to an omission or error in the personal information provided, the LMC are unable to provide a refund or complete another application and further payment will need to be provided in order to complete and submit another application.

## “Nursing the World Back to Health” - International Nurses Day May 12<sup>th</sup>



This is celebrated on 12th May every year, which is also the anniversary of the birth of Florence Nightingale.

The International Council of Nurses (ICN) has set the theme for this year's International Nurses Day as '*nursing the world back to health*', with a focus on the 'true value of nurses to the people of the world.'

This year May 12th has additional meaning as Covid has had a massive impact on all our lives. What it has done is raised the profile of the nurse's role and the important part they play in providing excellent care, the ability to adopt to change and take on

new skills and areas of responsibility. For the last 12-18 months nurses have been at the forefront of face-to-face patient care some exposing themselves to possible risk and still providing care for patients, their families and colleagues balanced against looking after their own family and friends. Nurses are highly skilled and educated professionals, yet many people underestimate their value and the contribution they make in the delivery of health care and prevention.

"Nursing staff working through the pandemic have shattered the stereotypes of nursing. The world has seen first-hand the fundamental role nursing plays in patient safety." (RCN 2021)

***Take the time on May 12th, and in fact every day,  
to reflect on the important role of the nurse!***

## Upcoming Education

### Practice Manager Conference 10<sup>th</sup> June

Join us virtually for:

- John Perry - regaining control of how you are feeling
- Lucy Hadley - how we judge ourselves - not always fairly.
- How a Dorset practice have introduced a new member of the nursing team
- Balancing work/life and office/home for everyone with an HR specialist
- Is it a good idea to be a partner if you are a PM? We will talk to two of our PMs who have done this.
- John Volanthen is joining us as our motivational speaker. He will tell us his story when in 2018 he went to Thailand to try to help rescue the young footballers who were trapped in a cave, unlikely to survive. It is difficult to even begin to think about what emotions he went through during that time - and he will be fascinating to listen to.

The delegate fee is £30 and do click [here](#) to book.

### E-consultations – how to utilise these to the practice's advantage 26<sup>th</sup> May 7-8pm

**Dr Hannah Yates, GP Partner Hedge End Medical Centre, Southampton.**

Hannah's practice was one of the early adapters of e consultation and they now utilise e consults to streamline their workflow effectively. They strongly promote e consultations. Hannah will showcase how they have made them work to their advantage covering

- how to maximise e-consult efficiency and use this to benefit practice working and workload
- snapshot of current working model in a practice size of 17,000 receiving around 100-150 e-consults daily
- the future of how e-consult can fit into your PCN and become an effective means of patient communication

**Dr Chris Castle, GP Partner Westlands Medical Centre, Vice-Chair Hants & IOW LMC, Locality Research Lead Fareham, Gosport & Portsmouth**

Chris's practice now pre-consults everything through their own online access forms, this enables them to information gather to assist in triaging and stratifying patients to the right member of the team. They work in Pods which enables better continuity of care.

- What is the concept of pre-consult?
- What is the concept of "Pod working"?
- How does it fit with e consultations?

- How can you make e consultations work for you to improve patient feedback and workload sustainability?

The delegate fee is £12.50 and do click [here](#) to book.

*Regards*

*The LMC Team*

Twitter: @WessexLMCs