

# YOUR News Update



Issue: 23 December 2022

*Dear Colleagues*

**Wessex LMCs News Update from the Team. . .**

## Wessex LMCs Intro...



*Laura Edwards      Andy Purbrick*  
Joint CEOs, Wessex LMCs



As we move towards Christmas, we can reflect on a year that has been as challenging for general practice as any of us can remember. The workload volume in the last few weeks has felt particularly overwhelming. Despite this, you and your teams continue to deliver exceptional care for your patients, routinely going above and beyond your contractual requirements.

We appreciate the burden of high need from our patients has fallen across the whole practice team.

We see you all. We value the work you all do.

We are working hard to get as much meaningful support as we can from ICBs in terms of relaxation of contractual requirements and protection of practice income. The ICBs in Wessex are generally supportive and keen to help but it would appear that support from NHSEI is less forthcoming. We have encouraged our ICBs to work collectively at a regional level to ensure that NHSEI hear the message that action is needed NOW to enable them to support Practices to continue to be able to deliver safe care to our patients.

We have also been engaging with media to better explain what pressure general practice is facing currently and the factors contributing to this. We have been out there with the simple message that there is huge mismatch between need and workforce but do not blame the workforce.

Thank you for your hard work and dedication. With the long bank holiday weekend approaching we would like to say a special thankyou to colleagues working to provide out of hours and urgent care cover.

We wish you all a very Happy Christmas and hope that you get time to relax and spend some time with loved ones.

## GP Pressures

General practice continues to face monumental pressures and demand, which are beyond our capacity and compromises our ability to offer safe and high-quality care for our patients. The workload for practices has escalated further with the highest level of [GP appointments](#) on record combined with an ever decreasing [GP workforce](#). There's a limit to what general practice can safely deliver.

At a time like this it also is demoralising to hear about the Labour Party's assertion that five million patients were 'denied' an appointment in October 2022, when in fact, GPs and their teams are working under exceptional circumstances, with limited resource and support. [Read the BMA statement in response](#), urgently seeking a meaningful dialogue with the Labour Party.

The BMA have also written to Steve Barclay MP, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, highlighting the current pressures in general practice, requesting a meeting to discuss how the Government can provide urgent support to general practice and to prioritise contract negotiations.

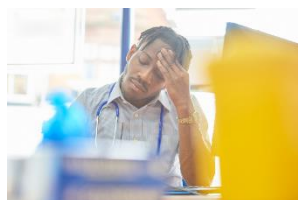
For those areas that have not yet made moves to protect QOF or IIF [this template letter](#) to ICBs (Integrated Care Boards) asks for QOF and IIF be protected for the remainder of 22/23 within the local ICB area, so that practices can focus on delivering care for those patients who are contacting practices desperate for our care. NHS England have indicated that at this time they will not be issuing a national pause on these areas of work, although ICBs are able to institute additional support for practices to help bolster them during such an unprecedentedly busy time.

As your LMC we have been working with our local ICBs to move these discussions forward. HIOW ICB have protected QOF, BSW are describing their intention around Q4 protection which we are seeking clarification around and Dorset have risk rated theirs with elements of protection. We have not yet heard of this move from Frimley. Many other areas nationally have also not yet offered these protections to their practices, and we would like to thank our ICBs that have done so for their support in these areas. This will not have been politically easy.

We would encourage practices to continue to review their working practices in reference to the [Safe working in general practice guidance](#). Practices must prioritise what care they provide for patients in order to manage the finite workforce and resources available to them.

The BMA have also written to the CQC requesting that all routine and non-urgent CQC inspections of general practices in England be paused with immediate effect, and we await their response.

The BMA are considering what further actions may be necessary in order to protect our patients and GPs this winter and beyond. We also ask that practices, and individuals consider what action they would be willing to take in future if support for general practice is not forthcoming in negotiations. Read more about the pressures in general practice [here](#)



Dr Richard Van Mellaerts, London based GP and British Medical Association Deputy Chair of the GP Committee (England) joined Wessex LMCs Practice Manager Update webinar this week to discuss current pressures in general practice.

Listen to the podcast [here](#)

## Why are Patients Struggling to See a GP?

We have heard from our members that increased explanations of the current situation of General Practice, and our viewpoint being heard in the media is important.

Following on from Wessex LMCs press release of last week; ['Help us treat the sickest patients the quickest' – GPs offer advice to parents amid surge in Strep A cases](#)

The LMC were featured in the following articles:

- [Basingstoke GPs cancelling appointments because of Strep A demands – Basingstoke Gazette 13th December](#)
- [Plea from GPs across Dorset as doctors 'inundated' by parents – Bournemouth Echo 19th December](#)
- [Plea from GPs across Dorset as doctors 'inundated' by parents – Dorset Echo 20th December](#)



Joint CEO, Dr Laura Edwards, spoke to ITV Meridian news about why patients are struggling to see their GP.

Watch the interview and share via <https://youtu.be/V-b07HjKxV8>

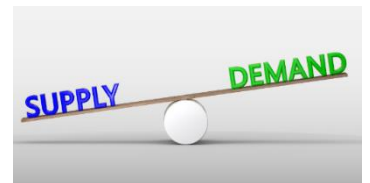
➤ [Share via Twitter](#)

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## Supply vs Demand in General Practice

Following Laura's Meridian interview, she talks with Dr Edd Rendell about the huge mismatch in patient demand vs staffing levels in General Practice.

Listen to the podcast [here](#)



## Streptococcus A

With parents and colleagues across the country understandably worried about the Strep A situation, the reported shortages of the supply of antibiotics will likely be even further cause for concern. As well as the anxiety caused, medicine shortages, particularly at a time when demand for them is higher, can cause increased workload and disruption for GPs and their teams as they have to find alternative treatment options.

While the Government have insisted there are sufficient supplies of antibiotics nationally, this will be little comfort to pharmacists, GPs and patients who are experiencing shortages locally, and therefore those responsible for supply chains must double down on efforts to ensure there are enough medicines to meet demand. We have raised the issue of supply with the Department of Health and Social Care, who has assured us that there is sufficient supplies but that the increased demand means some pharmacies have difficulties in obtaining certain antibiotics.

The Chief Medical Officer for England has [written to the profession](#) and in his letter he emphasised the importance of *prescribers and local pharmacy teams working together to understand availability of antibiotics locally and ordering antibiotic stocks sensibly, in line with patient demand, ensuring that excessive quantities are not ordered and avoiding more pressure on the supply chain*. The DHSC Medicine Supply Notification (MSN) also provides advice on the management of the current supply issues, including direction to use alternatives.

The BMA have been calling for clear and effective public health messaging on Strep A to ensure that it is clear where to go for help and to reassure the vast majority of people that they will not go on to become seriously unwell, and NHS England, the UK Health Security Agency, and others have now published [joint interim guidance for clinicians](#).

## Pharmacy Opening Times: Christmas and New Year 2022/2023

Patients are advised to contact the pharmacy before attending to ensure they are open and have the medication required.

BSW & Dorset (South West) [NHS England — South West » Pharmacy opening hours](#)  
Hampshire & IOW (South East) [NHS England — South East » Pharmacy information](#)

## Recommendations for TB Testing in Children Arriving from Ukraine

UKHSA has updated their [recommendations for TB testing in children arriving from Ukraine](#). UKHSA are working with partners to address wider disparities and complexities relating to TB testing in migrant groups. GP teams are advised to review the guidance when caring for children that have arrived from Ukraine in recent months.

## NHS App Messaging Service Roll Out Begins

NHS Digital is working with suppliers to introduce NHS App messaging in general practice, so that patients can start receiving messages from their practice through their NHS App instead of traditional, costly routes like SMS text. [Find out when this NHS App feature will be switched on for your practice](#).

We recognise when introducing new digital technology, it's important that staff and patients understand the benefits, and patients know what they need to do (such as enabling NHS App notifications on their device). There are promotional materials and SMS text templates to [help you promote this service to your patients if you decide to use it](#). [Find out more about NHS App messaging](#) and the many benefits. Please note this is not a mandatory requirement.

## ARRS Roles (Digital & Transformation Lead and GP Assistant)

The Digital and Transformation Lead role [was introduced as a reimbursable role via the ARRS in October 2022](#). The key objective of the role is to support PCNs and their practices to deliver ongoing improvement to services utilising data to improve quality, efficiency, to support population health management, workforce or estate planning. [New guidance on this role, alongside an example Job Description and an FAQ section](#) have now been published on FutureNHS (log in required) to support PCNs in implementing this role. NHS England has updated the [Network Contract DES](#) to include the pay codes for the two new ARRS roles, digital and transformation lead and GP assistant, that were brought into the Network Contract DES in October (in blue, at the bottom of page 45).

## Junior Doctors' Guide to Strike Action - Guidance for GP Trainees

New guidance for GP trainees has been added to the [junior doctors' guide to strike action](#). Legally, a GP trainee must picket at or near their place of work. They are not able to picket at a place that is not considered their place of work. However, a GP trainee is not barred from taking part in a protest that takes place near to a hospital or other NHS building. If they are not part of a picket line, they are free to join any organised protest. The BMA are in the process of preparing more GP specific advice for trainees and practices which they will share in due course.

## Creating Highly Usable and Accessible GP Websites for Patients

Research shows there are a small number of key tasks that patients come to their GP website to complete, including making, changing, or cancelling an appointment, requesting a repeat prescription, getting test results, registering with the practice and finding out practice information.

NHSE have published new guidance on [creating highly usable and accessible GP websites for patients](#); aimed at practice managers, PCNs, ICSs and anyone looking for guidance on improving general practice websites for patients.

By creating a highly accessible and usable GP website, practices will enable more patients to find what they need easily, which will improve patient satisfaction and ensure they are signposted to the correct place for their needs, reducing wasted time for both patients and practice staff.

The guidance has been put together based on user testing with 102 patients with moderate to low digital and written English confidence. [You can read the research in full on FutureNHS](#) (log in required).



## New 'Go To' Page for GPs and Practice Teams for Evidence and Knowledge

[NHS Knowledge and Library Services have pulled together useful information about all the products and services they offer specifically for GPs and practice teams onto one webpage.](#)

Content includes links to relevant e-books, journal articles, clinical decision support, guidelines and more. In addition, the team has also produced a summary as a [downloadable flyer](#). All the content is free to healthcare staff and learners.



[Why work with Librarians and Knowledge Specialists?](#)

## 2023 GP Patient Survey – Launching Soon



The 2023 GP Patient survey will be launching in early January, with fieldwork continuing for three months. Last year, more than 720,000 people gave feedback on around 6,500 GP practices across England.

The survey is a key source of information about general practice in England. It is important that we hear about patients' experiences, even if they haven't visited their GP practice recently, or if they have filled in a questionnaire before.

You can [help promote the survey](#) by displaying a poster on practice premises, talking about it on social media or posting about it on your website.

[Download the toolkit](#) designed to help with the promotion of the survey and encourage selected patients to participate.

## LMC England Conference 2022

The resolutions and election results from the Annual Conference of England LMCs 2022, which was held 24-25 November, have now been [published](#). Watch a recording of the event [here](#) and read more about the event here: [Local medical committees \(bma.org.uk\)](https://www.bma.org.uk/local-medical-committees)

## Autumn Statement 2022

The BMA has created a [briefing](#) analysing the impact of the Government's autumn fiscal statement on doctors. The statement details the UK government's plans for tax and public spending over the next five years. Read more about budget and fiscal events [here](#)

## Your views on workforce support

NHS England has a range of measures aimed at supporting people working in general practice, including GP recruitment and retention schemes, the introduction of new roles, and increasing staff access to health and wellbeing initiatives.

NHSE are keen to hear your views and understand the impact these measures have had, which will feed into future proposals of support for people working in general practice. This includes improving understanding of the experience of people with protected characteristics and underrepresented groups, so NHSE can identify any disparities in experience and any adjustments required to meet needs.

If you work in general practice as a GP, practice manager or any other clinical, administrative or managerial role, or are involved in the delivery of recruitment and retention schemes, you can [get involved now by completing a survey about GP recruitment and retention and/or signing up for focus groups due to be run in January on workforce retention](#).

## Long Covid Survey

We know that a proportion of the medical profession has suffered from the chronic health complications which continue after acute infection by COVID-19. This includes people who may have Long COVID and/or other complications. What is less well described is the impact such chronic health complications have continued to have on doctors' work, home, financial security, and overall quality of life. In partnership with [Long COVID Doctors for Action](#), which campaigns and advocates for doctors suffering the continuing effects of COVID, the BMA is undertaking a survey of doctors in the UK to:

- Increase understanding of the impact of post-acute COVID health complications
- Improve support at work for those who continue to experience post-acute COVID health complications
- Strengthen our call for COVID and chronic illness following COVID to be recognised as an occupational disease
- Enhance our call for an appropriate compensation scheme for affected doctors

If you have experienced any type of post-acute COVID ill health, we value you taking the time to [complete the survey](#).

The survey will close at **5pm, 6 January 2023**. We expect it will take most respondents up to 20 minutes to complete. Although it is not possible to save and resume the survey at another time, we encourage you to progress as far into the survey as possible.

## Mandatory Training on Learning Disability and Autism – Update

The CQC has now amended its guidance, which now clarifies that there is no specific training that is mandatory. CQC states that training 'provided to staff is appropriate and provides staff with knowledge about how to interact and support people with a learning disability'.

There may be GPs who have already had Autism and Learning Disability training or who may decide that it is appropriate that one person from a practice or PCN is best placed to do the Oliver McGowan or other similar training. This could then be disseminated to the wider team

## Cameron Fund Christmas Appeal 2022

[The Cameron Fund](#) is the GPs' own charity and it is the only medical benevolent fund that solely supports general practitioners and their dependents. The fund relies on donations from members and Local Medical Committees. Please read more about how to donate in the Cameron Fund [Christmas Appeal letter](#)

## Mental Health & Wellbeing

As we continue to face overwhelming pressures in general practice, we encourage practices to focus on their own team's wellbeing. A range of wellbeing and support services are available to doctors, from the BMA's confidential [counselling and peer support services](#) to networking, as well as the [NHS practitioner health service](#) and non-medical support services such as [Samaritans](#).

The organisation [Doctors in Distress](#) also provides mental health support for health workers in the UK, providing confidential peer support group sessions.

See the [BMA poster](#) with 10 tips to help maintain and support the wellbeing of you and your colleagues.

Please visit the BMA's dedicated [wellbeing support services page](#) for further information.

## Wessex Support Hubs for Practice Staff

BaNES, Swindon & Wiltshire: [BSW Wellbeing Matters service](#)

Dorset: [The ICS staff wellbeing service – Here For Each Other \(joinourdorset.nhs.uk\)](#)

Hants & IOW: [HIOW Staff Support Hub](#)

## Support for GPs Podcast



Dr Laura Edwards & Dr Andy Purbrick, joint CEOs at Wessex LMCs, are joined by Dr Sue Warren, Clinician at Practitioner Health, Appraiser & GP Partner. They explore what offers of support are available to help GPs including Wessex LMCs [GP Support & Development Scheme](#). This scheme offers professional support for practitioners who may be struggling with challenges or obstacles which are causing a negative impact on their performance in the workplace.

Listen to the podcast [here](#)

## The Job's Too Big (a podcast for PMs)



Louise Greenwood talks to Jenny Partridge, one of our PM Supporters to tackle the problem of the current PM role - 'the job's too big'.

Some practical solutions are offered including Wessex LMCs initiative for PMs to find a '[Space to Thrive](#)'.

Listen to the podcast [here](#)

## Wessex Education & Events

### E Consultations: How to utilise these to the practice's advantage

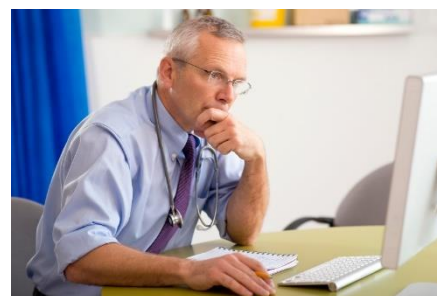
Wednesday 15 March 2023 09:30 – 10:30am

Wessex LMC Members £30pp

Book Online: <https://www.wessexlmcs.com/events/14496>

Aimed at GPs and Practices Managers, this interactive webinar will look at how to utilise e consultations to your practices advantage.

Dr Chris Castle joins us. 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. Chris is a GP Partner at Westlands Medical Centre, Vice-Chair of the Hants & IOW LMC and Joint PCN Clinical Director.



Chris will cover:

- 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?

We will also be joined by Jennie Dock. Jennie is Practice Manager at Hedge End Medical Centre near Southampton. Jennie's practice has used eConsult since 2015 and gone through many iterations of how it is embedded in their appointment system and working practices. Jennie will demonstrate how the practice is currently using eConsult to ensure safe triage of over 150 eConsults a day and is now using the eConsult Smart Inbox. The model concentrates on getting the best person to carry out each stage of the process and how the most important person in the workflow is an administrator.

*This session is being recorded and available to purchase afterwards [here](#)*

## HR Bite-Size Employment Law & Contracts

Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2023 09:30 – 10:30am

Wessex LMC Members £15pp

Book Online: <https://www.wessexlmcs.com/events/14694>

John Kraft & Liz Willett from Kraft HR Consulting Ltd will lead this first HR Bite Size for Practice Management on Employment Law & Contracts. John & Liz will be joined by Jane Dawes, one of our PM Supporters who will assist the session by making it practical and relevant to life on the ground in a GP Surgery.

During the session we will be looking at:

- Employment law – things to know and action
- Importance of good contracts
- Holiday pay worked example
- Difference between holiday entitlement and holiday pay (people are getting very mixed up on this)
- Setting up for success – what should and shouldn't be in an employment contract

*Please note this session is NOT being recorded*

Regards  
The LMC Team

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