



Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> November 2018

Re: Christmas & New Year Contractual Obligations

To all Buckinghamshire Practices,

The LMC is aware of a letter sent by Buckinghamshire CCG informing practices that there is an expectation that “practices will be open at full capacity” on Christmas Eve and New Year’s Eve. The letter also suggests an expectation that practices “ensure there is capacity and availability to deal with same day repeat prescriptions.”

Following several complaints to the LMC from practices regarding this letter, we are circulating this clarification so that practices are aware of their contractual obligations and freedoms.

The GMS Regulations require practices to meet the “reasonable needs” of the practice population “in the manner determined by the practice in discussion with the patient.” The GMS contract places no obligation on practices to deliver core services in a prescribed way – It is up to each practice to deliver its core services in whatever way it sees fit in order to meet the reasonable needs of its patients.

The LMC supports practices in exercising their contractual freedom to determine how they will deliver services to reflect fluctuations in patient demand. This is in line with national guidance from the General Practitioners Committee of the BMA, which can be found here:

<https://www.bma.org.uk/advice/employment/gp-practices/service-provision/access-to-gps-for-patients>

Specifically, this guidance says the following:

**“GMS Regulations do not require practices to:**

- **Be open at all times during core hours**
- **Deliver all services at times when they are open”**

The LMC hopes this reassures practices of what is expected of them at this time of year.

With warmest seasonal wishes,



Dr. Matt Mayer  
Chief Executive Officer