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GPC meeting

The GPC met on 16 December 2010 and this newsletter provides a summary of the main items discussed.

Contract negotiations

The GPC's negotiations with NHS Employers are ongoing. We hope to be able to make an announcement about arrangements for 2011/12 in January.

NHS White Paper

The government has published its response to the consultation on the NHS White Paper, titled 'Liberating the NHS: Legislative Framework and Next Steps'.

Although the government is going to continue with a majority of the proposals made in the White Paper, there have been a number of changes including the following:

- Maternity services will in the future be commissioned by consortia, rather than the NHS Commissioning Board
- Consortia will be required to have a written constitution
- Strengthened role for health and wellbeing boards
- Scrutiny functions will not be removed from local authorities.

[The full response can be read on the Department of Health website.](#)

The government has also published the NHS Operating Framework 2011/12. This stated that PCTs would merge into cluster by June 2011 in response to the drive to reduce management costs. Clusters are to support the development of consortia by offering them a £2 per head development fund. This should be in addition to existing PBC DES funding. [The full Framework can be found online.](#)

More information will be published on the [BMA White Paper home page as it becomes available.](#)

Letter to all GPs

The [GPC chairman wrote to all GPs yesterday](#) updating them on White Paper issues. While we have distributed this letter using our databases, we would appreciate help from LMCs through cascading the link to GPs in their area to ensure all GPs have access to this important update.

Sessional GPs

The GPC has published a new guidance document in its series on the NHS White Paper. The guidance outlines to sessional GPs the changes proposed in the NHS White Paper, explains how and why they could become involved in these changes, and discusses other potential impacts on the working lives of sessional GPs.

[The document is available on the BMA website.](#) Please pass it on to sessional GP colleagues in your area.

We have heard several reports of sessional GPs not being included in discussions around the forming of shadow consortia. It is vitally important that sessional GPs are involved in these discussions, and that the rules around appointment or election to the leadership of shadow consortia are inclusive of all GPs within the consortium's boundaries.

Public health support for GP commissioning

A joint statement from GPC and the Public Health Medicine Committee has also been published entitled '[Public health support for GP commissioning](#)' and may be viewed on the BMA website. The paper details how both groups of clinicians can most effectively work together in the commissioning environment proposed in the White Paper.

PCT staff and consortia

LMCs should make sure that any groups of GPs that are beginning to form shadow consortia in their area consider positively the prospect of engaging PCT staff to provide management support to the shadow consortia. **It would be completely unacceptable not to consider PCT staff for such roles**, and in many cases it may be that highly skilled and experienced PCT managers are the best candidates for such roles. It is imperative that shadow consortia are able to draw on appropriate expertise as they begin to develop.

Seasonal flu vaccine uptake

The GPC has written to Professor David Salisbury, Director of Immunisation at the Department of Health to raise our concerns about the seasonal flu vaccination campaign. We have concerns that the uptake of the flu vaccination amongst at-risk patients is down this year and that the seasonal flu outbreak could prove more serious. The BMA has issued a press release outlining these issues. [This is available on the BMA website.](#)

Professor Salisbury wrote to Strategic Health Authority Immunisation Leads this week with data on vaccination uptake, encouraging SHAs to raise public awareness through the local media and work with practices to urge patients to get vaccinated. [For more information visit the Department of Health website.](#)

We have urged the Department of Health to step up the public awareness campaign for the vaccination to encourage eligible patients to visit their GP surgeries to be immunised as soon as possible and explain the risks of leaving themselves vulnerable to the virus. Patients concerned about the vaccination containing the H1N1 flu strain also need to be assured of the safety of the vaccine.

Care Quality Commission registration

We have had reports of some PCTs telling NHS GP practices that they must comply with Care Quality Commission standards. We would like to make clear that NHS GP practices do not yet need to do so. The registration window for CQC will open from October 2011 and NHS GP practices will need to be registered from 1 April 2012.

However, it is worth noting that PCTMS practices should be registered with CQC because PCTs needed to be registered from 1 April 2010. Also organisations that provide some NHS primary medical services but whose main purpose is to provide other services, such as private healthcare,

social care or NHS acute services need to have been registered for all of their services from 1 October 2010.

The GPC will be producing a guide on how to complete the application form for CQC registration and on how your practice can comply with each of the CQC standards. We aim to publish this guide in the spring of 2011. In the meantime we would advise GPs and practice staff to refer to the following key documents:

- [Guidance about compliance: essential standards of quality and safety](#)
- [A new system of registration: scope of registration](#)

CQC has also launched a consultation on proposed fees for all health care and adult social care (ASC) providers in England. The closing date for the consultation is **17 January 2011**. NHS GP practices will enter the CQC registration scheme on 1 April 2012 and will be included within the fees scheme from that date. In autumn 2011 there will be a further consultation on the fees scheme. The GPC will be responding to the current consultation as part of the BMA response. [The consultation can be viewed online.](#)

Medicines shortages

A Ministerial Summit on medicines shortages took place in March 2010 to discuss medicines supply problems and as a result of this, the Supply Chain Group was formed, on which the BMA and the Dispensing Doctors Association are represented. The group is due to issue best practice guidance for marketing authorisation holders, manufacturers, wholesalers, dispensing doctors, pharmacists and prescribers, and we will share this with LMCs as soon as it is published.

All doctors should be aware that the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee publishes a list of medicines that pharmacies have reported having problems obtaining. [This list is regularly updated and is available at the following online.](#)

Practice registered patient lists

On 29 November, the Department of Health wrote to all SHAs regarding patient list cleansing exercises. SHAs have been asked to work with PCTs, who in turn will work with LMCs, to ensure that the process of list cleansing is sensitive to the many requirements being placed on practices at this time, and that due recognition is given to the many demands on individuals' time and expertise.

PCTs have also been asked to make sure that they recognise the most vulnerable in this process: that those without a fixed address or with communication issues arising from language or literacy needs are not disadvantaged in the list cleaning processes.

LMCs should be aware that PCTs will be conducting this exercise and should working with LMCs. Where this is not happening, LMCs should seek to engage with their PCTs on this issue.

Annual certificate of pensionable earnings

GPs and their accountants are reminded that, in accordance with the NHS Pension Scheme Regulations, they must provide their PCO with a completed certificate no later than one month from the date the HMRC tax return is due. The accumulated data are used to help confirm NHS information on GP earnings and it is important that this is as current as possible.

GP2GP - INPS Vision 3 Blank Attachment Problems

The GP2GP project has brought to our attention that there is a problem affecting practices engaged in GP2GP transfer using InPractice (InPS) System Vision 3. These practices appear to be sending blank attachments in the GP2GP transferred record.

The issue has been identified by InPS as one relating to the configuration with DocMan, which is not being set up on the practice eXML machine and the practice NACS code not being set up in the DocMan application.

[Further guidance on this can be found on the InPS website.](#)

InPractice is contacting all practices to assess if their system is configured correctly and correcting those systems where it is not. The GP2GP project is closely monitoring the current progress of this work, but would ask practices to:

1. Check if their system is configured correctly as per the guidance issued by InPractice in the link above;
2. Contact the supplier help desk for assistance if required;
3. If practices using *other GP systems* are receiving GP2GP transfers *from* InPractice Vision 3 practices, they are advised to check for any blank attachments. In the event that any blank attachments are found, they should await the attachments which should follow in the Lloyd George paper envelope. If information is required urgently the sending practice should be contacted directly.

If a practice has any concerns they would like to raise with the GP2GP project regarding this matter please e-mail these to GP2GP@nhs.net

Summary Care Record (SCR)

The BMA has been working productively with NHS Connecting for Health on the detail of implementing the recommendations of the review. We are not telling practices to stop SCR uploads, but advising that we are working with NHS Connecting for Health on guidance, which will support practices when considering implementing SCRs in accordance with the review recommendations. The position still remains that GP practices can consider their local circumstances and make their own decisions about whether to proceed or wait for guidance.

Partnership agreements

We strongly recommend that GPs in partnership enter into a written partnership agreement and seek legal and accountancy advice in doing so. Partnership agreements reduce both financial and non-financial risk and provide a detailed framework on which the ongoing management and administration of the partnership can be based.

The BMA offers a partnership agreement drafting service exclusively for general practitioners. The service is provided by Neal Hooper, a BMA lawyer, offering high-quality legal advice and drafting, and can be accessed by calling **020 7383 6128** or emailing info.pds@bma.org.uk. To take advantage of the service at least one of the partners in your practice must be a BMA member. BMA members are entitled to the service at a competitive price of £1,500 plus VAT. Members can also take advantage of a fee of just £25 per annum plus VAT for the BMA to hold and store a final signed version of their agreement on behalf of their practice.

Introduction to Negotiating Skills for LMCs courses 2011

Following the successful courses held in 2010, the British Medical Association and General Practitioners Defence Fund are organising further dates for the one day introduction to negotiating skills course for Local Medical Committees. This interactive course will provide an introduction to the negotiating process, including the four main phases of negotiation, showing the importance of preparation, effective communication and avoiding common mistakes.

The course is targeted particularly at the smaller LMCs and /or those who have no previous negotiating skills training.

Course Dates and Venues

Monday 14 March 2011	Aston University, Birmingham
Wednesday 4 May 2011	BMA House, London
Tuesday 4 October 2011	Weetwood Hall, Leeds

Cost to attend

There is no registration fee to attend the course but you will need to meet any travel, accommodation and locum costs that you incur in attending.

[For full details of eligibility criteria, the course programme and trainer and to download the registration form, please visit our website.](#)

GP employment law courses 2011

Managing change, managing performance, managing staff

Keeping track of employment legislation, best practice and other human resource issues can be a real headache. With the best will in the world, you know you cannot be an expert on everything: that is why you have the BMA right behind you to give expert advice and support. However, it is important to understand the principles of employment legislation and practical management of

people issues to ensure a good working environment and that you do not find yourselves facing a legal challenge.

The BMA is offering three one day courses introducing GP practices to managing change, managing performance and managing staff.

Cost to attend

Registration is open to GP partners or their practice managers and the registration fees are as below:

BMA members: £130.00 including VAT

Non-members: £190.00 including VAT

Priority will be given to BMA members who wish to attend.

[For more information on dates and venues and the online booking form please visit our website.](#)

Sessional GP Conference - Please pass this on to sessional GPs in your area

The British Medical Association is holding a one day educational conference for sessional GPs on Friday 11 March 2011 at BMA House, London. This conference will provide salaried and locum GPs with expert advice, support and information on the key issues affecting their career, as well as offering the helpful opportunity to network with sessional GP colleagues from around the country and discuss shared issues and concerns.

Key themes at the conference will be:

- How to develop your career as a salaried or locum GP
- How to meet the challenges of appraisal and revalidation
- The different issues to consider when setting up and working as a locum GP
- The impact of the NHS White Paper on sessional GPs and the opportunities it provides
- Employment rights for sessional GPs
- How to get access to professional support and the differing roles of organisations that provide this
- Representation of sessional GPs.

The fee for attending the conference is £76.38 (inc VAT) for BMA members and £235 (inc VAT) for non-members. Further information, including the conference programme and information about how to register is [available on the BMA website](#).

Sessional GPs Subcommittee Executive Committee

The Sessional GPs Subcommittee held its first meeting of 2010-11 on 2 December, at which elections took place for the Subcommittee's Executive Committee. Vicky Weeks was re-elected as Chairman, Mark Selman was re-elected as Deputy Chairman and Jessica Harris and Stephen Bassett were elected to join them on the Executive Committee. Congratulations to them all.

GPC Regional Election

Herefordshire / Warwickshire / Worcestershire / Coventry constituency

Simon Parkinson has been elected as the regional GPC representative for Herefordshire, Warwickshire, Worcestershire and Coventry until 2012.

LMC Conference 2011

LMC secretaries are reminded to send in the names and addresses of the appointed representatives to the LMC conference to Karen day (kday@bma.org.uk) no later than **31 January 2011**. For those that wish to attend the ARM as an LMC representative, the final deadline is **7 January 2011**. Do not forget to indicate whether any representatives are BMA members and include their BMA membership number on the application form.

We also hope that there will be room for at least one observer per LMC, which will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. LMC may nominate up to two observers, whereby the second observer will be placed on a waiting list and places allocated accordingly if space allows it. The final deadline for observers to send the observer form to us is also **31 January 2011**.

BMJ Group Awards 2011

Primary Care Team of the Year

BMJ Group is calling on all primary healthcare professionals to submit their entries for the Primary Care Team of the Year award. This award recognises practices that demonstrate improved outcomes in patient care. Closing date for entries is 4 January 2011.

The annual BMJ Group Awards in association with MDDUS recognise individuals, organisations and initiatives that have demonstrated outstanding and measurable contributions to health care. Established in 2009, these are now some of the most highly sought after awards in the medical world, attracting high calibre entries from across the globe. If you know of, or are yourself an individual whose work has positively influenced these aspects of health care, please [submit your entry now](#).

GPC secretariat

A copy of our staffing structure to reflect staffing changes is attached at appendix 1. We would be grateful if LMCs would direct all enquiries to their liaison officer. A copy of the LMC regional structure is also attached at appendix 2.

Media coverage report

Please find attached (appendix 3) a GPC media coverage report prepared by the BMA's press office, detailing GPC media activity during the last few weeks.



Season's greetings

On behalf of the GPC secretariat, we wish you all a joyful and restful Christmas and a happy 2011.

The GPC next meets on 18 February 2011, and LMCs are invited to submit items for discussion. You may like to review these, beforehand, with the representatives in your area who serve on the GPC. The closing date for items is 9 February 2011. It would be helpful if items could be emailed to William Jones at wjones@bma.org.uk. You may also like to use the GPC's listservers to exchange views and ideas.

GPC News

GPC News is available via the Internet, via the BMA's web pages: www.bma.org.uk

LMCs are reminded that their regional representatives can provide more detailed information about the issues covered in GPC News, and other matters. Other members of the GPC would also be pleased to accept invitations to LMC meetings wherever possible. Their names and addresses are in the GPC Yearbook. The secretariat can also provide a written background brief if required, but it would be helpful to have such requests well in advance of your meetings.

Finally, if LMCs require assistance on local issues, they can also contact the BMA's local offices: addresses are on page 3 of the GPC's yearbook.

This newsletter has been sent to:

- Secretaries of LMCs and LMC offices
- Members of the GPC
- Members of the GP trainees subcommittee
- Members of the sessional GPs subcommittee