



**'REPRESENTING AND
SUPPORTING GPs'**

**A GUIDE TO YOUR
LOCAL MEDICAL COMMITTEE**

INFORMATION ABOUT LMCs

What are Local Medical Committees?

Local Medical Committees (LMCs) are statutory bodies, recognised by successive NHS Acts as the professional organisation representing individual GPs. The 1999 NHS Act extended the role of LMCs to include representation of all GPs, whatever their contractual status. LMCs represent the views of GPs to Strategic Health Authorities (SHAs) and Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) and to any other appropriate organisations or agencies.

History

Local Panel Committees were established by David Lloyd George in 1911 to represent local doctors who took patients on to their panel. Local Panel Committees were re-named Local Medical Committees (LMCs) in 1913. The statutory recognition and functions of LMCs were expanded and reinforced by the NHS Act of 1977, and expanded again by the NHS Act of 1984.

Independence

LMCs are independent, self-financing bodies with statutory functions to represent the interests of general practice alone and act as its advocate. They are not trade unions.

National Representation and Negotiation

LMCs represent local GPs' views nationally through professional representative mechanisms outlined below:

Local voices: GPs can submit proposals to their LMC at any time. Proposals are distilled from debate at the LMC over the course of the year for submission to the Annual Conference of LMCs.

National voices: The 'parliament' for GPs is the General Practitioners Committee (GPC) which meets regularly throughout the year. The GPC is the standing committee of the British Medical Association (BMA), with authority to deal with matters affecting NHS GPs, whether or not they are BMA members. Every part of the country has at least one spokesperson on the GPC to present its views and debate key issues. Throughout the year papers are produced for discussion at LMCs and, from time to time, the GPC consults all GPs directly through surveys and questionnaires.

National debate and policy setting: GPC representatives and LMC representatives meet at the Annual Conference of LMCs. Proposals from individual LMCs across the country are debated alongside those from the GPC. The outcome of the debate determines the framework for the profession's negotiations at both national and local levels.

National negotiation: This takes place continually between the Secretary of State and his/her team of negotiators and the GPC's negotiating team. The Secretary of State's team is supported by the senior civil service and the resources of the NHS. The GPC's national negotiating team is elected annually by members of the GPC, and is supported by other professionals including public affairs and relations staff. The issues negotiated nationally mirror those at local level.

SHEFFIELD LMC: INTRODUCTION

Sheffield LMC has written records dating back to September 1948.

Core Values

We are committed to the values of equity, fairness, openness and equal opportunities.

Our aim is to represent and support GPs, ensuring that they are valued and their skills are properly utilised, and to facilitate the smooth running of general practice.

Elections

Sheffield LMC consists of up to 24 GPs elected on a citywide basis. Elections take place every 4 years according to the approved constitution. *Any GP represented by Sheffield LMC and on the Sheffield Medical Performers List can be nominated for election.*

Our constitution allows for the election of doctors working under a variety of contractual arrangements, eg GMS, PMS, APMS, partners, salaried doctors, locums etc. In addition, the constitution allows for the co-option of doctors offering expertise not represented elsewhere on the committee, eg representatives from secondary care, public health, GP trainees etc. This encourages open and lively discussion and allows the LMC to be representative of differing GP opinions.

Any GP wishing to be involved with the LMC can register this interest and obtain more information by emailing the LMC Manager via manager@sheffieldlmc.org.uk.

Funding

Sheffield LMC is funded by statutory contributions from practices in a contract with the NHS to provide General or Personal Medical Services and by practitioners registered with the LMC as sessional GPs. This is the primary source of income for the LMC and is used to pay for office space, Secretariat and Executive salaries, citywide meetings etc.

In addition, GPs are asked to contribute to a voluntary levy, which is used to finance the LMC's contribution to the national General Practitioners Defence Fund (GPDF). This is a limited company whose shareholders are the voting members of the GPC. It has 8 directors who are elected by the shareholders. The purpose of the GPDF is to fund the activities of the GPC, its negotiating team, subcommittees and the Annual Conference of Representatives of LMCs, in addition to campaigns and legal actions in defence of NHS GPs.

An Accountable Finance Officer (AFO) is elected from within the LMC Executive. The AFO produces an annual report of the accounts, detailing the income and expenditure for each financial year, and highlighting any points of interest or unusual spend. The accounts and report are circulated to all represented GPs and comments are welcomed.

Representation

We currently represent all principal and salaried doctors working in GMS, PMS or APMS practices in Sheffield. In addition, we represent all sessional GPs working in a levy paying Sheffield practice, or who contribute to the LMC's statutory levy.

We are keen to ensure that we are as inclusive as possible of all GPs, regardless of their contractual status, working arrangements etc. To this end, GP trainees are now represented throughout their training, rather than just during general practice rotations and are not asked to contribute to the LMC's levy.

Any comments or suggestions regarding the LMC's representation of GPs would be welcome, particularly in relation to ensuring adequate representation of sessional GPs. Please email the LMC Manager via manager@sheffieldlmc.org.uk.

LMC Executive

The Executive is comprised of up to 4 members of the LMC. They are elected by the committee at the start of each term to the positions of Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Executive Officer.

The Executive conduct the main business of the LMC which involves attending meetings, negotiating with different organisations, responding to practice queries, producing guidance for Sheffield GPs etc. Advice is taken from the full committee to guide discussions and the results of meetings are fed back to the committee.

Information about the current Executive can be found in the *Contact Us* section of the LMC website at:

http://www.sheffield-lmc.org.uk/lmc_executive.htm

LMC Secretariat

The LMC Secretariat has been based at the offices on Wostenholm Road since December 1994 and currently comprises of a full time Manager, a full time Administrator and a part time Admin Assistant.

The Secretariat provides support to the LMC Executive, as well as being the first point of contact for GPs and practice staff.

Information about the current LMC Secretariat can be found in the *Contact Us* section of the LMC website at:

<http://www.sheffield-lmc.org.uk/secretariat.htm>.

Any represented GP or Practice Manager who would like to visit the LMC office would be very welcome to do so. Please email the LMC Manager via manager@sheffieldlmc.org.uk to arrange a convenient date/time.

SHEFFIELD LMC: OUR WORK ON BEHALF OF SHEFFIELD GPs

Links with other organisations

Sheffield LMC works co-operatively with many organisations to ensure patients receive services and care in accordance with the profession's local and national priorities. Wherever necessary, the LMC robustly defends the profession's views when those of others conflict with what GPs believe is in their patients' best interests.

Sheffield LMC maintains an extensive network of formal and informal contact on behalf of GPs with bodies such as:

- LMCs around the country via the LMC Listserv
- British Medical Association (BMA) Industrial Relations Officers
- General Practitioners Committee (GPC)
- HM Coroner
- Local Government / MPs
- NHS Sheffield
- Royal College of General Practitioners
- Sheffield City Council
- Sheffield Confederation of PBC Commissioners
- Sheffield Deanery
- Sheffield GP Collaborative
- Sheffield GP Specialty Training Programme
- Sheffield Health and Social Care Trust
- Sheffield Local Dental Committee
- Sheffield Local Pharmaceutical Committee
- Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- Yorkshire & Humber LMCs Alliance
- Yorkshire & Humber Strategic Health Authority

This contact may be in the form of regular meetings, such as monthly meetings with the NHS Sheffield (NHSS) Executive Team, or ad hoc meetings when particular issues of mutual interest or concern arise.

The LMC meets monthly in full session and members attend a variety of other meetings on the LMC's behalf.

Helping Individual GPs/Practices

Sheffield LMC provides help and advice to assist GPs steer through the NHS. As an independent body with no political constraints, the LMC can act as an advocate and can offer help on all matters relevant to general practice. The following list is not exhaustive, but demonstrates some of the areas in which the LMC can offer advice, negotiate, mediate etc, as appropriate:

- Professionally led regulation and professional standards – ethical, conduct and performance, including clinical governance;
- Occupational health issues, eg sick doctors;
- GP contracts, terms and conditions of service and remuneration;

- NHS regulations/legislation;
- NHS Sheffield policy;
- Yorkshire and Humber Strategic Health Authority policy;
- The NHS complaints process and disciplinary procedures;
- Disputes between GPs and other bodies, eg PCTs, schools, councils etc;
- Partnership affairs;
- Completion of medical reports / certification;
- Prescribing queries;
- Premises/estates issues;
- Education and training – undergraduate, postgraduate and vocational training, continuing professional development;
- Workforce planning.

If you are in any doubt as to whether the LMC can assist with a particular issue, please contact the LMC Secretariat, who will offer you assistance or direct you to a more appropriate source if the issue falls outside the LMC's remit.

Please note that Sheffield LMC cannot provide individual legal or financial advice but provides representation, guidance and support for GPs and practices in Sheffield. We will not accept liability for use made of our services in circumstances in which individuals or practices ought also to have obtained appropriate legal and or financial advice but have not sought to do so.

If you would like to discuss any aspects of the work of Sheffield LMC or require any further information, please contact the LMC Manager via manager@sheffieldlmc.org.uk.

Communication

We regard communication with constituent GPs as essential. This communication takes many forms, such as:

- Newsletters – distributed monthly to all represented GPs and their Practice Managers, which include information about important national guidance, local developments etc;
- Email updates to all GPs and Practice Managers about important citywide or national issues;
- Newsflashes – informing GPs and Practice Managers of essential urgent information;
- Production of citywide guidance, once negotiations on a particular subject have concluded;
- Organising professional meetings / seminars on a citywide basis;
- Information bulletins on major issues and summaries of national guidance;
- LMC website – www.sheffield-lmc.org.uk;
- Surveys, ballots, audits etc;
- Vacancy bulletins.

We are always looking to improve our communication with constituents. To this end, we would welcome any comments and suggestions via email to manager@sheffieldlmc.org.uk.

Contact Details:

Email: Chair: chair@sheffieldlmc.org.uk

Vice Chair: vicechair@sheffieldlmc.org.uk

Secretary secretary@sheffieldlmc.org.uk

Exec Officer execofficer@sheffieldlmc.org.uk

For details of who currently occupies these posts please see the *Contact Us* section of the LMC website at: http://www.sheffield-lmc.org.uk/lmc_executive.htm

Manager: manager@sheffieldlmc.org.uk

Administrator: administrator@sheffieldlmc.org.uk

Admin Assistant: adminassistant@sheffieldlmc.org.uk

For details of who currently occupies these posts please see the *Contact Us* section of the LMC website at: <http://www.sheffield-lmc.org.uk/secretariat.htm>

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