



SHEFFIELD LOCAL MEDICAL COMMITTEE

A GUIDE TO YOUR LOCAL MEDICAL COMMITTEE

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 Health Authorities and Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) and to any other appropriate organisations or agencies.

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.

FUNDING

LMCs are 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. 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.

ELECTIONS

LMC elections take place regularly under terms stipulated in the LMC constitution. In Sheffield elections take place every four years according to the approved constitution. Any GP represented by Sheffield LMC and on the Medical Performers List in Sheffield can be nominated for election.

CORE VALUES

Sheffield LMC is committed to the values of equity, fairness, openness and equal opportunities. The LMC's 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.

REPRESENTATION

Wherever possible, Sheffield LMC works co-operatively with Sheffield Primary Care Trust, Yorkshire & Humber Strategic Health Authority and other 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 represents and advises on all matters concerning:

GPs as *professionals* including:

- Education and training – undergraduate, postgraduate and vocational training, continuing professional development
- Workforce planning
- Collaboration with the General Medical Council
- Collaboration with national professional bodies, eg British Medical Association, Royal College of General Practitioners
- Professionally led regulation and professional standards – ethical, conduct and performance, including clinical governance
- Liaison with consultant and hospital colleagues
- Occupational health issues, eg sick doctors
- Liaison with other professions allied to medicine

GPs as *commissioners* of services including:

- The LMC has the right to be consulted about the use of GMS resources by PCTs
- Relationships with Community and Acute Trusts

GPs as *providers* of NHS services including:

- GP contracts - both independent and salaried
- The NHS Directions – regulations
- Liaison with other agencies, including Social Services and voluntary services
- Local PCT and Health Authority policy
- The NHS complaints process and disciplinary procedures

LOCAL REPRESENTATION

Sheffield LMC consists of GPs elected on a city-wide basis. The LMC constitution allows for the inclusion of representatives of different types of doctor working in primary care. In addition, members are co-opted when appropriate. The LMC meets monthly in full session and between meetings in Executive. Members attend a variety of other meetings and the Executive meets with PCT representatives on a regular basis. Sheffield LMC works closely with the other LMCs in South Yorkshire to ensure that GPs are represented on a regional basis.

NATIONAL REPRESENTATION AND NEGOTIATION

LMCs represent local GPs' views nationally through the 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 monthly throughout the year. The GPC is the standing committee of the British Medical Association with full authority to deal with all matters affecting NHS GPs, whether or not they are BMA members. It is recognised by the Department of Health as NHS GPs' negotiating body. 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 profession's national negotiating team. The Secretary of State's team is supported by the senior civil service and the resources of the NHS. The profession'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.

LINKS WITH OTHER BODIES

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

- Sheffield Primary Care Trust
- South Yorkshire LMCs
- British Medical Association
- Local Government / MPs
- Sheffield Local Optometric Committee
- Yorkshire & Humber Strategic Health Authority
- General Practitioners Committee
- Royal College of General Practitioners
- Sheffield Local Pharmaceutical Committee
- Out of Hours Providers

HELPING INDIVIDUAL GPs

Sheffield LMC provides help and advice to assist GPs steer through the NHS. Such help is available on all matters relevant to general practice including:

- GPs' remuneration
- GPs' terms and conditions of service
- Complaints
- Any disputes which may occur between GPs and PCTs
- Partnership affairs
- Completion of medical reports / certification
- Prescribing issues
- Premises

COMMUNICATIONS

Sheffield LMC regards communication between representatives and constituent GPs as essential and is ever striving to improve this. The LMC communicates with GPs in many ways including:

- Newsletters – distributed to all represented GPs / practice managers
- LMC website – www.sheffield-lmc.org.uk
- Professional meetings / seminars
- The medical press
- Information bulletins on major issues and summaries of national guidance
- Surveys, ballots
- Consultation with specific GPs

CONTACT DETAILS:

Sheffield Local Medical Committee, Media House, 63 Wostenholm Road, Sheffield S7 1LE.
Telephone: (0114) 2588755. Fax: (0114) 2589060.

The LMC Executive comprises of: Chair chair@sheffieldlmc.org.uk
Vice Chair vicechair@sheffieldlmc.org.uk
Secretary secretary@sheffieldlmc.org.uk
Executive Officer execofficer@sheffieldlmc.org.uk

The LMC Secretariat comprises of: Manager manager@sheffieldlmc.org.uk
Administrator administrator@sheffieldlmc.org.uk
Administrative Assistant adminassistant@sheffieldlmc.org.uk.

For details of who currently occupies these posts please see the *Contact Us* section of Sheffield LMC's website - www.sheffield-lmc.org.uk.

If you would like to discuss any aspects of the work of Sheffield LMC or require any further information, please contact the LMC Manager.