

Newsletter

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Sheffield
LMC



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NEW CONTRACTUAL GUIDANCE AND READY RECKONER

Last week NHS England (NHSE) published further guidance about the new and amended GP contractual requirements for 2019/20 and related enhanced services, which can be accessed via:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/2019-20-general-medical-services-gms-contract-guidance-and-audit-requirements-for-gms-contract/>

In addition, NHSE, in partnership with the General Practitioners Committee (GPC) published a Ready Reckoner, which is intended to provide an indication of the changes in income streams that may affect General Medical Services (GMS) practices from 1 April 2019. The Ready Reckoner can be accessed via:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/gms-ready-reckoner/>

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HEALTH AND JUSTICE SYSTEM: SHARING OF PATIENT INFORMATION

A number of concerns have been raised with the LMC regarding obtaining patient information from the secure estate (prison records) and requests for GPs to release patient information to the secure estate.

Following negotiations, it has been confirmed that when patients move between provider organisations (either into or out of the secure estate) providers must ensure that the transfer is undertaken with appropriate clinical data sharing between the direct care team to facilitate the ongoing care and treatment of the individual. Any service provider must ensure that information exchange is proportionate, necessary and minimalised, but sufficient for continuity of care to be provided by the receiving organisation.

A briefing note authored by Peter Manser, NHS England (NHSE) is in the process of being circulated across all Prison healthcare providers and can be accessed via:

<https://www.sheffield-lmc.org.uk/website/IGP217/files/H&J%20Info%20Share%20Notes.pdf>

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**REQUEST FOR MEDICAL EVIDENCE IN SUPPORT OF
DEPARTMENT FOR WORK AND PENSIONS (DWP) CLAIMS AND APPEALS**

Following productive negotiations with Mark Allerton, Strategy Disability Employment and Support Directorate at the DWP, the LMC's guidance on requests for medical evidence in support of DWP claims and appeals has been amended. The guidance relates to:

- Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Personal Independence Payment (PIP)
- Attendance Allowance (AA)
- Universal Credit (UC)
- Disability Living Allowance (DLA)

For ESA and UC, GPs have a statutory obligation to provide statements of incapacity to patients on their list (Fit Note / Med3) and certain information to healthcare professionals working for the Centre for Health and Disability Assessments (CHDA) on behalf of the DWP when requested (ESA113 / FRR2).

DWP do not require patients to request information direct from their GP. If DWP or their providers - CHDA for ESA and UC; Independent Assessment Services (IAS) and Capita for PIP - consider that further medical evidence is necessary, they will seek it.

CHDA information:

- <https://www.chdauk.co.uk/frequently-asked-questions-gps>
- www.chdauk.co.uk.

IAS and Capita information:

- <https://www.mypipassessment.co.uk/supporting-evidence/medical-professionals-guide/>
- <http://www.capita-pip.co.uk/>

DWP guidance:

- *DWP Medical (Factual) Reports* offers background information on each form and clarification on specific questions, in order to make the processes as effective as possible:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dwp-factual-medical-reports-guidance-for-healthcare-professionals>
- *The Benefits System: A short guide for GPs* describes the main benefits that DWP provides, and situations when you may be asked for information relating to a benefit claim on behalf of your patients:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-short-guide-to-the-benefit-system-for-general-practitioners>

There is no contractual requirement for GPs to provide reports, letters of support or offer an opinion in relation to benefit claims direct to patients or anyone else, such as the Citizens Advice Bureau or the Tribunal Service. However, GPs may wish to provide a report or letter of support if they think it would help their patient's case and may charge a reasonable fee for undertaking the work. When refusing to provide information directly to the patient, GPs would be advised to:

1. Inform the patient that mechanisms are in place for relevant information to be requested from GPs by a number of organisations involved in the process.
2. Make it clear that the refusal to provide medical evidence should not be taken as having any bearing on the case in question.

For ease of future reference, this guidance can be found at:

<https://www.sheffield-lmc.org.uk/website/IGP217/files/DWP%20Claims%20&%20Appeals%20May19.pdf>

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**DS1500:
UPDATED GUIDANCE**

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has recently updated their guidance for clinicians completing the DS1500 form, on behalf of patients who apply for benefits through the special rules process and who it is thought will reasonably die within the next 6 months.

The guidance no longer refers to "terminal illness", clarifies that determining life expectancy is not an exact science and that the form does not just apply to patients with cancer.

The updated notes can be found in section 2.7 of the guidance available via:

<http://www.sheffield-lmc.org.uk/website/IGP217/files/medical-reports-completion-guidance.pdf>

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**ESA65B: ISSUING FIT NOTES FOR PATIENTS
APPEALING THEIR WORK CAPABILITY ASSESSMENT (WCA)**

Following feedback from stakeholders on the ESA65B letter that GPs receive, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) would like to remind GPs that if a patient is found fit for work following a WCA, subject to the GP's clinical judgement, the GP may continue to issue fit notes if the patient appeals against the decision. This may allow the patient to receive Employment and Support Allowance while they await the outcome of the appeal. If subsequently the patient's appeal is unsuccessful, and it is decided that they are fit for work, the GP should only issue further fit notes if their condition worsens significantly or the patient develops a new condition.

The DWP are in the process of reviewing the ESA65B letter to clarify this further.

Guidance for GPs on the issuing of fit notes whilst appealing is available via:

<http://www.sheffield-lmc.org.uk/website/IGP217/files/the-benefits-system-a-short-guide-for-gps.pdf>

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**CONTRACT RELATED CHANGES TO
VACCINATIONS AND IMMUNISATION PROGRAMMES**

As part of the GP contract changes in England for 2019-20 there have been changes to some existing vaccination and immunisation programmes, to increase the item of service fee to align with other vaccinations, and changes to cohort groups. There is also a new MMR catch-up programme for 10 year olds who have not received a completed course of vaccines via the school programme.

Further information can be accessed via:

<https://www.bma.org.uk/advice/employment/gp-practices/service-provision/prescribing/vaccination>

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**NHS PROPERTY SERVICES (NHSPS)
REGULARISATION OF TENANCY ARRANGEMENTS**

NHS England (NHSE) and NHS Improvement have published a letter for practices who are NHSPS tenants, which states their commitment to supporting a regularisation of tenancy arrangements and explains the benefits of a formal lease:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/lease-regularisation-letter.pdf>

The aim is for practices to either sign up to a full lease or to a rental agreement letter, which they see as an interim measure, while they continue work on agreeing facilities management, other services and ultimately lease terms. Where it is evident that providers are failing to engage, NHSPS may seek legal recourse.

The General Practitioners Committee (GPC) opposes any form of intimidation and remains committed to reaching a negotiated settlement. The agreements need to be reached after discussion, including any commitments from previous commissioners and must be affordable. The lease regularisation programme needs to be backed up by NHSE's previous offer of reimbursement of some legal costs and Stamp Duty Land Tax. Practices should not be forced into any agreement which places the viability of the practice at risk and solutions must be sustainable. This would adversely impact on patients. The British Medical Association (BMA) is committed to working with NHSPS and NHSE to resolve these issues.

The BMA's guide to NHSPS leases can be accessed via:

<https://www.bma.org.uk/advice/employment/gp-practices/premises/gp-premises-leases>

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**TECHNOLOGY, INFRASTRUCTURE AND
DATA SUPPORTING NHS STAFF**

Following engagement with British Medical Association (BMA) members in 2018, and a survey conducted as part of the Caring Supportive Collaborative project, the BMA has published a report on information and technology in the NHS. The report contains a range of feedback and recommendations, many of which are primary care specific, aimed at making the workload of GPs and practice staff more manageable. The report can be accessed via:

<https://www.bma.org.uk/-/media/files/pdfs/collective%20voice/policy%20research/nhs%20structure%20and%20delivery/the%20bma%20vision%20for%20nhs%20it%20report.pdf?la=en>

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**PRIMARY CARE SUPPORT ENGLAND (PCSE)
GP BULLETINS**

PCSE produces GP Bulletins that are circulated to the nominated main contact PCSE holds for each GP practice. PCSE recently conducted an audit which indicated that only 45% of recipients open the email, and only 25% of these click on any of the links within the bulletin. Concerns had also been raised with PCSE that important messages do not filter down to trainee and locum GPs.

It has been agreed that methods of communicating with practices will be reviewed. In the meantime, the GP bulletins can be accessed via: <https://pcse.england.nhs.uk/news/2019/>

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**GENERAL PRACTICE INDICATORS:
TEMPORARY OUTAGE**

NHS England (NHSE) has informed the General Practitioners Committee (GPC) that the general practice indicators (www.primarycareindicators.nhs.uk) will have a new **go live delivery date of 31 May**. All efforts will be taken to bring this date forward if possible, however, there remain a number of items relating to formatting and resolving outstanding data issues for some specific indicators so they were not ready to launch as planned on 1 May.

NHSE has put in place a contingency plan to support commissioners or practices if needing to access indicators for any urgent operational needs. The idea is that if there is an urgent need to view data, they will share a cut of most recent indicators either for the practice requesting it or the commissioner for the practices in the geography requested; this would include all general practice indicators (most recent data available) – except for specific indicators where they are resolving issues and they would also exclude providing the practice banding.

The data access requests would be highly exceptional circumstance requests rather than an expectation that all practices and commissioners should be using a data extract in May. Exceptional data access requests can be made to nelcsu.england.primarycareindicators@nhs.net.

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CELEBRATING GENERAL PRACTICE EVENT

Article submitted by Sanet Wildman, Faculty Administrator, South Yorkshire & North Trent RCGP

On Saturday November 9th at Tankersley Manor Barnsley we are having our fourth ‘Celebrating General Practice’ event and it’ll be the best ever because we will be honouring the devotion of so many in our teams who show compassion and integrity in the service of our patients without thought of recognition or reward.

There will not be any formal awards, but instead, we would love you to design a poster that celebrates the work and the people of your own team. We will get these printed and displayed on the night and later on the web so that everyone’s good work has a chance to inspire us all. Even if you can’t join us on the night, do share what you feel proud of and the details of what to do can be found at: https://i.emlfiles4.com/cmpdoc/7/7/0/9/9/1/files/35785_practice-posters-for-celebrating-general-practice-2019.pdf

The evening will be informal, buzzy and most of all, fun, with a buffet, ceilidh and a chance to let our hair down! Perhaps you might use the opportunity as an early practice Christmas party? The event will be free for RCGP members and subsidised for everyone else at £20 per ticket, but places are limited, so please book as soon as you can via: <https://rcgpportal.force.com/s/lt-event?site=a0d0Y00000AeOP6QAN&id=a1U1i000000Cx6EAK>

We are very much looking forward to a seeing you for a great evening together!

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**Please forward any articles for inclusion in the LMC newsletter to
manager@sheffieldlmc.org.uk**

**Submission deadlines can be found at
<http://www.sheffield-lmc.org.uk/website/IGP217/files/Newsletter%20&%20VB%20Deadlines%202019.pdf>**

Contact details for Sheffield LMC can be found at:

Executive Officers: <http://www.sheffield-lmc.org.uk/page1.aspx?p=13&t=1>
Secretariat: <http://www.sheffield-lmc.org.uk/page1.aspx?p=13&t=2>