

LMC Update Email

10 May 2019

Dear Colleagues

GP shortages and workload pressures

On Wednesday the BBC devoted a significant amount of time throughout the day focusing on the workload and workforce issues impacting general practice. An analysis, compiled by the [Nuffield Trust](#) for the BBC, found that the number of GPs per 100,000 people has fallen from 64.9 in 2014 to 60 last year, representing the worst sustained drop in GP numbers in nearly 50 years. In response to this I said, *"These figures reflect what the BMA has been warning for some time. In recent years, GP numbers have been in freefall as repeated government pledges to boost numbers have fallen flat. Family doctors are under intense pressure to meet rising demand from a growing population, many of whom are elderly and living with increasingly complex conditions, and in many cases, workload has become unmanageable, leading doctors to reduce their hours or retire."* Read my full statement [here](#). Read the Nuffield trust analysis [here](#), and their [blog](#) about it.

You can read the story on [BBC News online](#) and watch a special [Panorama](#) linked to a new [workload survey from Pulse](#) magazine which we had helped with (see below). It was also reported by the [Press Association](#), [Mirror](#), Express, [BMJ](#), and the Huffington Global.

Thank you to the many GPs who were interviewed about this and helped to highlight the issues we face. I was interviewed on [BBC Leeds](#) (first item), [BBC Today](#) (around 2h10), by Eammon Holmes on [Talk Radio](#) (15m in) and on LBC. My comments were also used in news bulletins on BBC Radio 1, BBC Radio 2 and BBC Radio 6, as well as a number of local radio stations.

George Rae was interviewed on [BBC Radio Newcastle](#) (around 24mins in), Mary McCarthy on [Radio Coventry and Warwickshire](#) (around 2hrs37) and Peter Holden on [BBC Radio Derby](#) (about 2h12m). Krishna Kasaraneni and David Wrigley were also interviewed on LBC (no recordings available). Other interviews included Gaurav Gupta for BBC South East, Zoe Norris for BBC Humberside, Alan Stout for BBC Northern Ireland and David Bailey for BBC Wales. The BMA GP trainees subcommittee co-chair, Sandesh Gulhane, was interviewed on BBC Radio Five Live's drive time programme about how the shortages impact on GP trainees. Listen [here](#) (1hr 40 mins in).

The same analysis also showed that Scotland has the highest number of GPs per 100,000 patients (76, compared to 60 in England), although the [Nuffield report](#) shows falling numbers in Scotland as well (depending on the time period). The BBC article acknowledged that major challenges still exist with recruitment and retention, and that the Scottish government has pledged to recruit a further 800 GP over the next decade. Read more [here](#).

GP shortages have also been blamed for the closure of rural practices in Wales. Charlotte Jones, Chair of GP Wales, commented: *"It reflects the current pressures on practices and the crisis we as a profession are facing. It is reflected in other parts of the UK but we do feel it quite acutely in many of the rural parts of Wales."* Read the story on [BBC online](#).

The Brighton Argus reported that David Liley, CEO chief executive of Healthwatch Brighton and Hove, warned that the shortage of GPs in Brighton is an 'accident waiting to happen'. Commenting, GPC England executive team member, Krishna Kasaraneni, said: *"Workforce shortages continues to blight general practice and exacerbate other workplace pressures, including unmanageable workloads, for the remaining staff. It is by making general practice a more attractive practice and fostering a more positive working environment that we can begin to recruit and retain more talented doctors to the*

profession.”

Pulse GP workload survey

The workload survey by [Pulse](#) highlighted above found that more than half of GPs say they are working above safe limits, with on average 11-hour days and dealing with a third more patients than they feel they should be. In response to this, Matt Mayer, former GPC workload policy lead, said: *‘The results of the survey done by Pulse are concerning, and confirm GPs are working far beyond their capacity.’* Farah Jameel, GPC England Executive team, also commented in the [Guardian](#) saying that the findings were “striking but sadly not altogether surprising” and reflected the “intense pressure GPs are under every day”.

The [Pulse](#) survey also showed that female GPs are more likely than male GPs to work longer hours. In response, Farah Jameel said: *‘We know women may be more likely to actively seek out reduced contractual hours due to family and other commitments, so if female GPs are routinely working beyond their structured hours, it can have a real damaging effect on doctors’ wellbeing and home life. And most importantly it will continue to increase the unacceptable gender pay gap, which must be addressed immediately.’* Read the story in [Pulse](#), [Pulse](#), [Guardian](#), [Business Telegraph](#), [msn.com](#), [Yahoo.uk](#) and [the Week](#).

NHS digital GP appointment figures

[Figures published by NHS Digital](#) show that the demand for GP appointments is increasing, from a total of 38.9 million appointments in the first three months of 2019, which is an increase from 35 million in the same months in 2018. The figures also show that 7.3 million of those (18.7%) were telephone consultations. In response to this I said: *“These figures underline how hard GPs up and down the country are working. Over the same period we are losing hundreds of highly valuable GPs, so those left behind are facing even higher workloads. Over recent years, a growing number of consultations that are now done by phone, often providing more convenient care for patients who do not then need to travel to the surgery, while also reserving face-to-face appointments with GPs for those who need them most.”* Read the story in [Grimsby live](#).

Support for establishing Primary Care Networks

The PCN Network Agreement deadline is next week on 15 May. The requirement is to submit the registration form, which includes some information that is then repeated in Schedule 1, although Schedule 1 is not required (but can be submitted). The registration form includes a section for ‘initial network agreement’ which is where the PCN should include the network agreement including the names of practices and other members of the network.

We have also prepared some **decision making templates** for you to use in Schedule 1 to the agreement – which is available in the PCN toolkit tab on our [PCN webpage](#).

In addition, we have published specific **guidance about how Sessional GPs and networks should interact with each other**, which is available [here](#) (and also on the [PCN webpage](#)).

There is a [PCN masterclass: leadership through change for aspiring clinical directors](#), to be held on Tuesday 18th June. This is a free event and is available for those who will be the named Clinical Director for each PCN. Further details available [here](#).

PCN Network Agreement Update

The mandatory PCN Network Agreement has been updated to correct some minor reference errors in the originally published version. The amendments are:

- Reference to “persons” in Clause 58 has been updated to “person”
- Reference to “Clause 6464” in Clause 61 has been updated to “Clause 64”

- Reference to “Clause 722(b)” in Clause 72 has been updated to “Clause 72(b)”
- Reference to “Clause 722” in Clause 73 has been updated to “Clause 72”

The updated Mandatory Network Agreement is available on the [NHS England website](#).

New contractual guidance and ready-reckoner

NHS England has published further guidance about the new and amended GP contractual requirements for 2019/20 and related enhanced services. In addition, NHSE, in partnership with GPC England, has published a “Ready Reckoner” which is intended to provide an indication of the changes in income streams that may affect GMS practices from 1 April 2019. Both documents are available on the [NHS England website](#).

NHS England Community Pharmacy Oral Health Campaign

Following a motion at the 2017 ARM on child oral health, the BMA, working with the chief dental officer, has agreed to raise the profile of this issue among health professionals. The following campaign aimed to raise the profile of oral health therefore may be of interest:

From 13 May to 13 June 2019 there will be an *NHS England Community Pharmacy Campaign* focussing on the oral health of children, primarily the 0-5 age range. It is timed to coincide with *National Smile Month* and so increase public awareness of good oral health. This poster campaign will be available to all pharmacies in England and will feature a poster in the pharmacy along with a children’s brushing chart and information leaflet, alongside any displays the pharmacy may wish to make. NHS England hopes that it will raise public and professional awareness of the benefits of good oral health and to promote Dental Check by 1, and the regular dental attendance of children. More information about the campaign is available on the [PSNC website](#). For further information please contact: England.CDOExecutive@nhs.net

Medicine supply update

Please see attached the medicine supply update for May from the Department of Health. Note that this and a number of other attachments have already been shared with LMCs.

NHS e-Referral Service (e-RS) – how has implementation gone? (England)

GPC England is represented on the NHS England / NHS Digital-led Electronic Referral Advisory Board and is keen to report any difficulties or issues that practices may be having with the e-RS since it became a contractual requirement to use it in October 2018. We’re particularly keen to hear about any technical issues, functionality limitations, including across federated models of care, or anxieties GPs may have around transfer of clinical responsibility. Email Alex Ottley (Aottley@bma.org.uk) with your feedback - this will be used to help improve the e-RS.

[A guide for GPs](#) on the e-RS, jointly produced by GPC, NHS Digital and NHS England, was published on the BMA website in January 2019.

LMC access to the BMA website

It has been drawn to our attention that some LMCs may be having difficulty accessing the BMA website. All LMCs do have access but need to use the login details registered for submitting conference motions. This may, however, be an individual’s email address, registered to input conference motions only.

If you wish to create an office account, using the office email address as part of your login and a password that everyone can use, or if you are unsure of your current login details and password, please email Karen Day at kday@bma.org.uk and she will email you your relevant information.

LMCs – change of details

If there are any changes to LMC personnel, addresses and other contact details, please can you email Karen Day with the changes at kday@bma.org.uk.

Read the latest GPC newsletter [here](#).

Have a good weekend

Richard