

Dear colleagues

**GP contract meeting with Minister O'Brien**

Further [to GPC England's rejection of the 2023/24 contract change proposals](#) at its meeting on 2 February, we have met with Neil O'Brien MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, to discuss the GP contract deadlock.

Mr O'Brien thanked us for the constructive approach to contract discussions and commented on how hard GPs are working, and sought to focus on unnecessary bureaucracy and what changes could be made to QOF (Quality and Outcomes Framework). We raised the issue of the unsustainable pressures practices are under and the lack of investment, with the system working beyond capacity and the fact that every GP lost results in, on average, over 2,200 patients needing to be distributed to other already overburdened GPs. We stressed that stability is urgently needed for the next 12 months but the profession does not feel supported by Government at the present time, and that there is the perception that secondary care gets all the additional resource and focus and the huge negative impact this is having on GP practice workload.

Minister O'Brien confirmed that, within the forthcoming General Practice/Primary Care Recovery Plan, the primary secondary care interface is receiving particular attention, and acknowledged that there is more to do on GP appointments in terms of getting accurate data as the belief is GPs are actually doing more than national statistics currently show. Government/DHSC is also keen to tell a positive story regarding primary care. The Minister also reported willingness to change QOF, ARRS (additional roles reimbursement scheme), IIF (Investment and Impact Fund) where possible, bringing in changes faster and that DHSC welcomes ideas on this.

We also raised the issue of QOF and the impact of the end of year focus on unnecessary "box ticking" and stressed that less prescriptive quality improvement style approaches would be better, as this would ensure an improved experience for patients with GPs able to focus on the right aspects of their care.

We also stressed that the current intended core practice contract funding uplift is insufficient to help cover the cost of practice expenses and we strongly urged the Government to identify additional financial support for 2023/24 to ensure practices are not forced to reduce their workforce and thus patient access, to cut costs or, even more worryingly, cease operating altogether.

As we stated in the last newsletter, if the Government and NHS England refuses to negotiate an improved offer, and a contract is imposed on practices, we would be forced to consider all options, including the potential for industrial or collective action.

We encourage practices to continue to review their working practices in reference to our [Safe working guidance](#) to prioritise care in order to manage the finite workforce and resources available.

Read more about the pressures in general practice [here](#)

### **2023/24 GP contract update webinars**

We are organising five webinars to ensure that every GP has an opportunity to hear about this year's contract changes, ask questions, and share their feedback, at no cost. The GPCE officers will deliver the same presentation at each webinar, meaning that attendees need only attend the event most convenient to them.

These webinars will replace the roadshow events familiar to many from pre-pandemic times. The unusual lead up and consequent delay to this year's negotiations has rendered that approach impractical. It will also free up more time for in-person engagement with the officers regarding the future shape of the contract.

We encourage as many members to attend these events as possible, as we will use these as an opportunity to explain our next step options and hear member feedback.

Further details and registration will be available via the [BMA's Events page](#) in due course, and we will include the registration links in the next bulletin/update. The planned dates and times are:

Tuesday 21st March 19.00-20.30  
Wednesday 22nd March 12.30-14.00  
Wednesday 29th March 19.00-20.30  
Thursday 30th March 12.30-14.00  
Thursday 30th March 19.00-20.30

The presentation will be delivered first, with questions answered afterwards, so that those who cannot stay for the full 90 minutes will still have the key information.

### **Junior doctors' ballot on strike action and guidance for GP trainees**

A reminder that the last day to send back the ballot on [strike action for junior doctors in England](#) is **Friday 17 February** in order for it to be counted. The ballot closes 20 February,

You can also download the latest GP trainee materials to share with colleagues on the [BMA website](#).

Further guidance for practices and LMCs to support GP trainees will be shared in the coming weeks.

### **Working with Torture Survivors - an e-learning course for healthcare professionals**

Freedom from Torture, a charity providing therapeutic care to survivors of torture across the UK, have designed a course for doctors and healthcare professionals providing care for refugees and asylum seekers. The course was established in response to requests for training from GPs who are treating increased numbers of asylum seekers. A significant proportion of these patients will have experienced traumatic events, including torture, and have resulting complex health needs. Doctors may feel that they lack the specialist knowledge required to support this group.

Backed with funding from BMA Giving, the BMA's charitable arm, the 10-module course educates on the physical and psychological impact of torture, the unique treatment needs of survivors of sexual torture and how to document evidence of torture in medical records. GPs and other healthcare professionals can access the course online and free of via the Freedom from Torture [website](#)

### Claiming for Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

If you have a conversation with an individual about PIP, please signpost them to the PIP information pages at [GOV.UK/PIP](https://gov.uk/PIP) so they can consider if they may be eligible prior to claiming. The PIP pages include easy-read guides and links to YouTube videos about eligibility, evidence requirements and the claims process. These will help individuals to consider whether PIP is the right benefit for them and understand what supporting information they need if they decide to claim.

### LMC Secretaries Conference

Please remember to register [here](#), to attend the LMC Secretaries Conference, being held on Thursday 9 March 2023 in London at BMA House, by **22 February**. This is a registered only event and everyone attending must be registered.

### Annual Conference of Representatives of LMCs (UK) 2023

The Annual Conference of Representatives of LMCs (UK) 2023 is due to take place on 18 and 19 May and will be held face to face in London at Friends' House. LMCs have been emailed information about submitting motions (including motions amending standing orders) to conference, which should be submitted by LMCs via this [link by 12 noon, on 28 February 2023](#). If you have any questions about the Conference, please email [info.lmconference@bma.org.uk](mailto:info.lmconference@bma.org.uk)

### GPC elections

Nominations for seats to the General Practitioners Committee are open in the following regions:

- Hillingdon/Brent & Harrow/Ealing, Hammersmith & Hounslow
- Lewisham, Southwark & Lambeth/Bexley & Greenwich/Bromley
- Cheshire/Mid Mersey
- Northumberland/Newcastle & N Tyneside/Gateshead & S Tyneside/Sunderland
- Glasgow & Clyde
- Gloucs/Avon
- Wilts/Dorset
- Bucks/Oxfordshire
- Berks/N&E Hamps
- Barnsley/Doncaster/Rotherham/Sheffield
- Leics & Rutland/Northants
- N Yorks/Bradford
- Dyfed Powys/N Wales
- N Staffs/S Staffs/Shropshire
- Sandwell/Walsall/Wolverhampton/Dudley

These seats are for a three-year term, 2023-26 sessions, subject to GPC structure review which is currently ongoing which may impact the seat to which successful candidates are elected. You must be a BMA member to stand in this election.

Please note that in previous years there was a requirement that only GPs who paid the voluntary levy could nominate themselves for election. That requirement has now been removed.

To submit your nomination for any of the above seats please visit <https://elections.bma.org.uk/>  
The deadline for all nominations is **12pm Wednesday 1 March 2023**.

For any questions relating to the role or GPC please contact [info.gpc@bma.org.uk](mailto:info.gpc@bma.org.uk)  
If you have any queries regarding the election process, please contact [elections@bma.org.uk](mailto:elections@bma.org.uk).

### Welsh LMC conference resolutions 2023

The Annual conference of Welsh local medical committees was held on Saturday 4 February in Llandudno. The agenda highlighted the concerns of Welsh GPs around the sustainability of practices amid ever increasing workload and financial pressures. The conference was chaired by Dr Sara Bodey (North Wales LMC) with Dr Tim Davies (North Wales LMC) as deputy chair. Please see the attached resolutions from the conference.

### Wellbeing

As we continue to face overwhelming pressures in general practice, we encourage practices to focus on their own team's wellbeing.

A range of wellbeing and support services are available to doctors, from our 24/7 confidential [counselling and peer support services](#) to networking groups and wellbeing hubs with peers, as well as the [NHS practitioner health service](#) and non-medical support services such as [Samaritans](#).

The organisation [Doctors in Distress](#) also provides mental health support for health workers in the UK, providing confidential peer support group sessions.

See our [poster with 10 tips to help maintain and support the wellbeing](#) of you and your colleagues.

Please visit the BMA's dedicated [wellbeing support services page](#) for further information.

### GPC England committee pages and guidance for practices

Read more about the work of the [Committee](#)

Read practical guidance for [GP practices](#)

See the latest update on Twitter: [@BMA\\_GP / Twitter](#) [@TheBMA / Twitter](#)

Read about BMA in the media: [BMA media centre | British Medical Association](#)

Contact us: [info.GPC@bma.org.uk](mailto:info.GPC@bma.org.uk)

Read the last GP bulletin: [Meeting with minister O'Brien | new GP contract webinars | claiming for PIP](#)

Read the latest [Sessional GPs newsletter](#)

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