

Dear colleagues

Update from GPC England meeting

[GPC England](#) met today where the committee passed a vote of no confidence in its elected chair, Dr Farah Jameel, as a means of electing a new chair.

The vote was part of a motion proposed by committee member Dr Rachel Ali and seconded by several colleagues.

As deputy chair I became acting chair of the committee in 2022 when Farah went on maternity leave.

Nominations for the next chair and deputy chairs of GPC England will open noon Monday 24 July, and the acting chair and deputies will remain in post until a new chair and deputies have been elected. Note that one of the seats for deputy chair will be open to a non-GPC member who is a BMA GP member practising in England.

Read the BMA statement [here](#)

Call to action and safe working in general practice

GPC England has recently published [Call to action \(CTA\) for general practice](#) - our strategy outlining what we need to provide high-quality, safe care for our patients and what we want to see in the next round of contract negotiations. Please share this with your colleagues and patients. In the coming months we will be asking you to write to your MP about the Call to Action, and in the meantime we urge practices to continue to use our [safe working guidance](#) to limit contacts to 25 per day in order to prioritise safe patient care, within the present bounds of the GMS contract.

Read our blog series delving into the key areas that make up GPC England's vision for general practice, the [Call to action](#). In the second blog in the series, Richard van Mellaerts outlines what the Government must do to allow GPs to deliver better quality care for patients [Invest in core values of general practice](#)

Tell us what you think about our [Call to action](#) by emailing info.gpc@bma.org.uk

Safe working – teaching GPs to be activists

The GPC England Officer Team is inviting LMC officers to register for a webinar about how to implement the GPCE England safe working guidance and how to teach GPs to become activists, on the following dates:

- 3 August 1400-1530
- 8 August 1500-1630
- 10 August 1200-1330

Register your interest to attend [here](#).

Preparing for balloting on industrial action

We need to come together to save general practice, defend our profession, and make general practice safe for patients. In April, GPC England voted to prepare to ballot GPs on industrial action if the Government does not agree to improve the contract drastically in forthcoming negotiations.

If you are a member, make sure the details we hold for you are up to date to ensure your vote counts. Update your member details on www.bma.org.uk/my-bma or [join us as a member](#) today.

Implementing a triage system in general practice

As there is currently no standardised care navigation or triage system for GP practices, the BMA have developed a [resource](#) that is designed to support general practices to implement a triage system if they wish to do so. Ensuring that patients are seen by the appropriate clinician in the right place and at the right time supports good patient care and experience, reduces pressure on GP practices and allows GPs to spend their time where it is needed the most. For practices interested in introducing care navigation and/or triage, we have provided a number of case studies along with two triage flowchart examples that can be tailored to suit your own practice.

DDRB pay recommendation and BMA response

Last week, the Government [announced its response to the DDRB recommendations](#) for doctors' pay in England. This announcement means that salaried GPs and all practice non-AARS staff in England will receive a 6% uplift on a consolidated basis. However, 6% is below inflation and further entrenches previous sub-inflationary uplifts. This fails to recognise the invaluable contribution and hard work of salaried colleagues and, whilst it may help retention a little, it does not go far enough. AARS staff will receive a funded uplift in line with Agenda for Change as in previous years. Read more about what it means for GPs [here](#)

We will be working with DHSC and NHSE to agree arrangements for the additional funding.

General practice responsibility in responding to private healthcare

GPC England has published [guidance](#) on general practice responsibility in responding to private healthcare, to help practices reduce this extra workload.

Due to nearly 7.5 million people on NHS waiting lists in May 2023, patients are increasingly resorting to seeking private healthcare to deal with their health problems, which is adding extra workload for general practices. Our guidance covers what the responsibilities are for general practices in response to private providers making requests, such as making private referrals, providing medical information about patients, organise further tests, issuing prescriptions, and onward NHS referrals.

Measles warning

Modelling by the UK Health Security Agency has warned of the potential of a [measles outbreak](#) unless rates of MMR uptake improve, with particular concerns around London. NHS England is running catch-up programmes within schools and outreach programmes within local communities to raise awareness of the importance of vaccination, and practices should receive information packs from their local NHS England teams to help respond to any increase in enquiries from patients. If practices don't receive this, or have any further queries, they should contact their ICB.

GP trainee visa sponsorship

The BMA is continuing to address the long-standing barriers to staying and working in the UK currently faced by trainee GPs as they approach completion of their training. As a temporary solution, the BMA has been working to secure agreement from the Home Office to allow an additional four months on Skilled Worker visas for GPs at the end of their training. This is intended to allow extra time to secure work with an employer and arrange sponsorship with them. The additional time will be available for all IMG trainee GPs who have successfully completed their training, and the Home Office has now confirmed this scheme will apply to GPs completing their training with Skilled Worker visas expiring from June 2023 onwards.

UK Visas and Immigration has been working with NHSE to ensure those GPs who complete their training this summer are identified when they submit their application. Those eligible should already have been contacted by NHSE with details of the application process. Note that you cannot apply more than one month before the current visa is due to expire (the end date on the BRP card or visa).

We will continue to work with government to find a permanent and lasting solution to this issue. If you believe that you may be eligible for this extension but have not been contacted with details, please get in touch with the international team via info.international@bma.org.uk

Industrial Action and time out of training (TOOT) for GP trainees

GPC UK and the GP Trainees Committee has [written to all GP Training Programme Directors](#) regarding Industrial Action and time out of training for GP trainees. Concerns were raised about the possibility that doctors who have demonstrated the competencies for their CCT could be required to carry out additional time in training due to having taken industrial action, as well as the possibility that trainees nearing the end of ST1 and ST2 could be held back. We believe that these would be improper outcomes in a competency-based qualification, and would like to avoid the unnecessary impact that extensions would have on newly qualified GPs, trainees and training practices. Affected GP trainees can [contact the BMA](#) if the extension to training has been applied inappropriately.

Sessional GPs conference

The [Sessional GPs conference will take place on Friday 22 September 2023](#) at BMA House and is free to BMA members with a cost of £75 plus VAT for non BMA members. There will be a mix of plenary and workshop sessions, including: Health and well-being for sessional GPs; Gender Pay Gap; Pensions; Know your contract; Portfolio working; Dealing with complaints; Negotiation skills

Wellbeing resources

As we continue to face overwhelming pressures in general practice, we encourage practices to continue to focus on their own team's wellbeing and take time to meet to reflect on their wellbeing and what they can do to protect it. This will meet the requirements of the QOF targets in the GP contract to do your [quality improvement project on staff wellbeing](#). We have produced a [document](#) which includes some tangible recommendations and tools for improving workload and safe working.

A range of wellbeing and support services are available to doctors, from our 24/7 [counselling and peer support services](#), [NHS practitioner health service](#) and [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 wellbeing](#). Please visit the BMA's [wellbeing support services page](#) for more information and resources.

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

Read the last bulletin: [Call to action for general practice | industrial action ballot preparations | implementing a triage system](#)

Read the latest [Sessional GPs newsletter](#)

As always please do feel free to get in touch on the email below and we will continue to do our very best to represent you and seek to improve our working lives.

Kieran Sharrock

GPC England acting chair

Email: Kieran.sharrock@bma.org.uk