

LMC ViewPoint



The newsletter of Leeds Local Medical Committee Limited

30th May 2023

Practice premises are not “Fit for the Future”

RCGP have published a report, ['Fit for the Future: Reshaping general practice infrastructure in England'](#). This report sets out the severe challenges GPs and their teams are experiencing with their premises, based on a survey of over 2,600 general practice staff. They reported struggling with insufficient physical space to deliver safe and high-quality care, host expanded teams, and receive trainees, as well as limited access to adequate maintenance and IT infrastructure. The report includes a set of recommendations to the Government and key decision makers to urgently invest in general practice infrastructure and address these challenges.

Alongside the report, the College have launched the [Advocacy Guide](#), which aims to give practices the tools to engage with politicians and foster more local level relationships. They suggest inviting MPs to visit practices so they can see first-hand the conditions GPs and their teams are working under. The guide includes a template letter for practices to send to their local MP inviting them along to their practice, a step-by-step guide on how to hold a successful meeting, and template press releases to publicise any visits that take place.

Implications of national Agenda For Change agreement

Following the recent industrial action, the government and the NHS Staff Council, representing health unions, have agreed to accept the [pay offer for Agenda for Change staff in England](#). As a result, ministers have been asked to now implement this offer, which covers the 2022/23 and 2023/24 pay years. The additional payments for the previous pay year (2022/23) will be paid as a non-consolidated lump sum, and the new salary rates for this year (2023/24) will take effect from 1 April 2023. The Staff Council has an expectation that the NHS Pay Review Body pay-setting process will be set aside for this year.

This clearly has implications for staff pay arrangements in general practice as we have only been provided with a global sum uplift to pay a 2.1% increase in pay for 2023/24 and yet the government have suggested that there will be no additional funding for practices to be able to make comparable pay uplifts. Leeds LMC has raised the need for this, and the serious consequences if it is not forthcoming, with both NHS England nationally and the ICB locally. We would encourage practices to also raise this with their local MPs.

We know that practices will want to do all that they can to support their staff during the ongoing cost of living crisis but many are also facing significant financial pressures themselves with rising expenses and below inflation funding rises for a number of years. As part of the 23/24 contract change the Investment and Impact Fund has been repurposed and 70% of this (£172m) has been brought forward and is being paid to PCNs, and on to practices, in 12 monthly allocations. This was intended to support improving access.

Leeds LMC believes that good access starts with practice staff wellbeing and this includes good terms and conditions. We believe that it is reasonable for practices, if they want to, to use some of the IIF resource they are now receiving to contribute towards staff pay arrangements using the national Agenda for Change agreement, including the one-off non-consolidated 22/23 additional payment, as a guide.

Clearly if practices do this there will be less funding available to expand access opportunities and we have therefore discussed with the ICB in Leeds. We are pleased to confirm that the ICB in Leeds agree with approach and recognise that access and experience are linked to reward and retention of experienced and valued practice and PCN staff.

Weight Management Service

Leeds LMC has written to NHS England, Leeds City Council and West Yorkshire ICB to raise our serious concerns about the lack of tier 2 service after the closure of the One You Leeds service last year, and which is now having a significant impact on the ability of GP practices in Leeds to help and support their patients who are overweight or obese and who are at risk of developing related complications. Our letter is attached.

We have received a reply from Tom Riordan, chief executive of Leeds City Council stating that “the challenges facing local government finances have been extremely challenging over recent years, leading to difficult decisions around the best use of limited resources. This resulted in the decision to reduce the budget available from April 2023 onwards for some of our healthy living services, including the weight management element of our One You Leeds service”.

He adds that “Leeds City Council Public Health have been working with the Leeds Committee of the West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board (ICB) to develop a proposal for an integrated weight management model covering the full adult weight management pathway. We are currently awaiting a decision as to whether this proposal will be agreed by the ICB. In addition, the provision of weight management services is being reviewed by the West Yorkshire ICB and Public Health are also contributing to this work.”

We continue to raise this important issue with the ICB. We have not had a reply from NHS England who commissioned the weight management enhanced service which currently Leeds practices are unable to adequately work towards.

ICB financial update

Gaynor Connor, Director of Primary Care and Same Day Response at the ICB in Leeds has sent a [letter](#) that sets out the financial context for the ICB in Leeds and how this relates to general practice. She highlights that the Leeds Health and Care Partnership is in financial turnaround. Financial plans for 23/24 are built on the premise the ICB can achieve in-year savings of £16m (and a share of a further £8.5m additional savings for the Leeds place to collectively achieve in addition to their existing efficiency targets), and that LTHT can achieve its waste reduction target of over £100m. The other NHS providers efficiency targets are between 3-4% of their total turnovers and Leeds City Council's target savings are in excess of £65m.

This is a reflection of the wider underfunding of NHS and social care services which is not matching increased demand for services.

At this point the financial position is impacting on the Same Day Response service provided by the Leeds GP Confederation. The funding for this service, which has benefited practices and patients across the City and supported the system during times of escalation, was made available through non-recurrent budgets initially via the Winter Access Fund and subsequently through other non-recurrent funding. The ICB is currently unable to provide further funding to sustain the service in light of financial deficit for the service beyond June 2023. Whilst the ICB are looking at options the worst-case scenario is that the service will cease in early summer.

Gluten Free prescribing policy

Practices have been made aware of proposals to review the prescribing policy for gluten-free (GF) products. This is part of ongoing work to have policies that are the same across West Yorkshire. The NHS West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board (ICB) is recommending stopping GF prescribing in Leeds and Calderdale to bring these areas in line with other areas. This will affect around 700 people in Leeds.

Patient involvement on this recommendation has now begun and the ICB in Leeds has provided content that can be shared by letter, text or email to be shared with patients who have received GF items in the last six months. Patients will be provided with information about the proposal and be directed to [this survey](#) for patients who have received GF items in the last six months. Paper copies of the survey and alternative forms will be available on request from the ICB. Patients will be asked specifically not to contact their GP practice about this involvement.

Delivery plan for access to general practice

NHS England have published a summary of the key actions required as part of their [Delivery plan for recovering access to primary care](#). This includes a [checklist](#) of actions for PCNs and practices.

In addition, NHS England have informed practices that new functionality is now available on GP systems to allow practices to accurately record the mode of an appointment, in line with the Access Plan requirements. This will help improve how appointment data is recorded in general practice and will also more accurately demonstrate how much work is being done by GP teams, something that is not always properly recognised.

System users will now need to select one of the standardised method options for every appointment:

- Face to face (home visit)
- Face to face (surgery)
- Telephone/audio
- Video with audio
- Written (including online)
- Not an appointment.

These options will be displayed when users create a new slot type or amend an existing slot type. Practices should refer to the individual guidance provided by their supplier for further details.

Patient Choice

The government have announced a renewed focus on [patient choice of referral](#). Within primary care they have stated that:

- eRS functionality has been updated in March 2023 to create a single menu of service options. This will support referrers to see in one place, a wider variety of consultant-led services.
- We are asking all referrers to ensure they shortlist on average 5 choices from which the patient may choose, where this is practicable, clinically appropriate, and preferred by the patient. This will be enabled by new functionalities and should be based on conversations with the patient about their preferred selection criteria eg. waiting times, distance from their home or that of family members.
- Where they have access to technology, patients should be encouraged to use Manage Your Referral within eRS or the NHS App to choose their provider.
- Resources to support offering patients choice can be found at digital.nhs.uk/services/e-referral-service/helping-patients-manage-their-referral-online

Workforce data

The latest [workforce data](#), published last week, show that the number of fully qualified GPs has significantly declined since September 2015. In April 2023, the NHS in England had the equivalent of 27,231 fully qualified GPs, which is 2,133 fewer than in September 2015. Over the past year the NHS has lost the equivalent of 512 fully qualified, full-time GPs, and on a headcount basis, we have lost 428 GP partners and 149 salaried, locum and retainer GPs – creating a net loss of 577 individual GPs from the NHS since April 2022 – more than 1 GP per day. This coincides with a rise in patients: as of April 2023, there was a record-high of over 62.43 million patients registered with practices in England. As a result, the average number of patients each fulltime equivalent GP is responsible for continues to rise, and is now 2,292. This is an increase of 355 patients per GP, or 18.3%, since 2015, demonstrating the ever-mounting workload in general practice.

Transfer of primary care complaints function from 1 July 2023 to NHS ICBs

As part of the delegation of NHS England's direct commissioning functions to Integrated Care Boards from April 2023 is the transfer of the current primary care complaints function from 1 July 2023. This includes the process of managing complaints, the transfer of staff from the current NHS England complaints team to ICBs and the transfer of all ongoing complaints and investigations (received on/after 1 July 2022).

From 1 July 2023 the way members of the public make a complaint about primary care services to the commissioner is changing. Rather than contacting NHS England, they will contact West Yorkshire ICB. However members of the public will still be able to make a complaint to the provider. This is not changing. Members of the public with ongoing complaints received on/after 1 July 2022 will receive a letter from NHS England informing them that the ICB is now handling their complaint with confirmation of their case handler. More details can be found in the linked [letter](#).

EMIS Web Panic Button Update

In March 2023 EMIS informed users of their intention to remove the Panic Button functionality from EMIS Web due to concerns regarding its efficacy (including, that certain local network configurations prevent the button working as designed). However, following concerns raised by many practices and the BMA, EMIS have now agreed to amend their decision. They will now be removing the Panic Button as standard from EMIS Web on Friday 29th September 2023 however practices can now request the functionality is retained.

Practices can request that the Panic Button in EMIS Web remains available. As part of this request, practices will be required to acknowledge and accept responsibility for the known risks and limitations associated with the functionality. Organisations who request the Panic Button to remain available, will be able to request that it is subsequently disabled at any time.

Change to communication of MDT outcomes

It has been agreed with LHT that Cancer MDT outcome letters will not be sent to GPs until a discussion has taken place with the patient. This change started from Monday 22 May 2023. This is to reduce the risk of patients learning of their MDT outcome through their GP record rather than being told by and given the opportunity to discuss with the specialist team. In cases where test results and next steps are not clear, it could cause confusion and anxiety for patients if they were to read this without the opportunity to discuss with a member of the MDT team.

Ordering repeat prescriptions in the NHS App

NHS England have created the promotional materials for practices to help inform patients about ordering repeat prescriptions on the NHS App. This includes patient leaflets, posters and images for screen display. Learn more about [requesting repeat prescriptions through the NHS App](#).

Cease of HPV vaccination record uploads to NHAIS via Open Exeter

The National Health Application and Infrastructure Service (NHAIS) is being decommissioned for the NHS Cervical Screening Programme and will be replaced with the Cervical Screening Management System (CSMS). To prepare for the necessary HPV vaccination record migration, practices will no longer be able to amend or upload HPV vaccination records to NHAIS via Open Exeter from 21 August 2023, read only access will continue for users until November 2023. Replacement solutions for providers to upload HPV vaccination records after NHAIS is decommissioned are still currently being explored and an update will be provided in due course.

NHS response to COVID-19: Stepping down from NHS level 3 incident

On 19 May 2022, NHS England stepped the national NHS level 4 incident down to a level 3 incident. Since then, we have continued to see waves of COVID-19 infection. But, partly thanks to the outstanding NHS vaccination programme, none have been as significant in terms of loss of life as those in 2020-21. Although we continue to treat COVID-positive patients in hospital NHS England believe that we are now in a position to move to the next stage in our COVID-19 response. The World Health Organization has also recently announced that COVID-19 is no longer a Public Health Emergency of International Concern.

NHSE have stated that colleagues from primary and community care, mental health and other parts of the NHS have worked tirelessly to deliver these achievements, with partners in local authorities, the voluntary and community sector, social care, the military and public health.

As of 30 June 2023, the NHS will no longer be collecting data where an individual has died from COVID-19 via the CPNS system. Instead, data on individuals who have died with COVID-19 will be recorded using the death certification process which is the same as other infectious diseases.

Annual flu letter

UKHSA and NHS England have published the [annual flu letter for 2023/24](#) flu vaccination programme. Practices should be aware that there are no changes to the reimbursable vaccines from the 2022/23 programme. Further details will be available once the specification has been agreed and published.

Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training on Learning Disability and Autism

All GP practices in England must ensure their staff receive training in learning disability and autism, including how to interact appropriately with people with a learning disability and autistic people. This requirement was introduced by the Health and Care Act 2022 in July last year. The government's preferred training programme is the [Oliver McGowan training](#) on Learning Disability and Autism. However, the Act does not specify a training package or course for staff. The [CQC](#) cannot tell practices specifically how to meet their legal requirements in relation to training, and while NHS England and ICBs may share the government's training programme preference and encourage uptake, it is ultimately for practices to determine how their staff are trained to meet their legal requirements.

Updated guidance on accelerated access to GP-held patient records

The BMA have updated their [patient access to records guidance](#). On 31 October 2023, practices are contractually obligated to provide record access for patients. GPC England has written guidance to address common questions, key deadlines and practical considerations to extending online access. They have also stated that given their current and ongoing concerns they are taking further legal advice and challenging the way this project is being rolled out in the contract imposition we have faced. The BMA will provide more information on this challenge in the coming months.

Digital Tools to support 'Modern General Practice Access' Leeds in person event

On Tuesday 27 June general practice colleagues are invited to a technical showcase of how the PATCHS online consultation tool can be used. We are very aware that many practices have raised concerns about the procurement and use of PATCHs and we inviting comments from practices in advance of the meeting. Please complete our survey but also take the opportunity to raise your comments and concerns at the meeting itself so they can be properly addressed

The evening will give attendees the knowledge of how PATCHS can support the commitments of the GP access recovery plan and provide a more seamless service for patients and healthcare professionals and deliver better outcomes for all. It will focus on the functions and options that are available through PATCHS, the challenges that have already been addressed in areas of deployment and data protection concerns that might raise wider questions.

Contributors from primary care will also be joined by acute care colleagues from Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust who will provide wider context updates and delegates from the NHS App and the Patient Portal will explain how PATCHS can be linked with their apps and service offerings. Digital learning teams from around Leeds will also be on hand to speak about how they can support upskilling existing staff and provide necessary training for patients.

The event is being held at Oulton Hall. Food and refreshments will be provided from 6pm before the evening commences at 6.30pm. Registration for this event is via [Eventbrite](#). Please ensure all attendees register as space is limited

Leeds GP Confederation Connects Session - Referral Processes and the Interface between Primary and Secondary Care – 6 June 12.30pm

Join Dr Rob Eastham to discuss updates to the DART Referral Hub Template for SystmOne practices and the ongoing development of Referral and Decision Support (RADS) tools for use by all practices. The session will highlight important learning points on referral processes and the interface between primary and secondary care.

This session is particularly aimed at those in practice who use e-referrals and DART forms and are involved in 2 week wait referrals.

[Click here to join this session.](#)

Health Facilitation Team - Learning disability nurses supporting General Practice

This service is available to all GP practices across Leeds, please see attached 'hello my name is' poster which we welcome you to advertise within your practice.

Please see link below to the Health Facilitation Team leaflet.

<https://www.learningdisabilityservice-leeds.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Health-Facilitation-Team-LD-A4-Leaflet-2021-2022.pdf>

Leeds Frailty Education Programme - LTHT

Last winter LTHT piloted a [frailty education programme](#) designed for a multi-professional audience which got great feedback. It covers the [Skills for health core capabilities framework for frailty](#) to around tier 2 level.

LTHT now have dates for the full 2 day course on 6th and 7th June and 4th and 5th July.

It will be open to all health and social care professionals and suitable for anyone who wants to know more about frailty, comprehensive geriatric assessment, dementia, delirium, falls, polypharmacy and other topics like advance care planning and ethical and legal issues.

Delivering sessions alongside other expert geriatricians and colleagues from palliative care, pharmacy and beyond. It is intended for GPs who want to learn alongside colleagues from their MDTs

It is free to Leeds Health and Social care staff. More details, including how to book [here](#)

Leeds Marathon – Congratulations

Huge congratulations to all those warriors who work in General Practice who took part in the Rob Burrows Leeds Marathon on the 14th May, such an amazing achievement!

RMBF recruiting doctor volunteers

RMBF are one of the largest charities for doctors and medical students in the UK providing financial support to doctors, medical students and their families in times of crisis.

However, there are still far too many doctors who do not know about the recruitment of doctor volunteers at RMBF.

Kate Bresler-Jones, Head of Volunteering at RMBF kbreslerjones@rmbf.org would be delighted to talk this through with anyone who is interested in joining their growing network of volunteers. Please see attached flyer for more information or visit their website www.rmbf.org.

Counter Fraud Newsletter

Please see the attached newsletter for your information [Counter Fraud Newsletter May 2023](#)

PRACTICE VACANCIES

PLEASE VIEW VIA WEBSITE LINK- [Leeds LMC: Jobs](#)

Comings & Goings

Farewell to Lisa Carroll – Practice Manager – Garforth Medical Practice. After 15 yrs of dedication and success leading GMP, we wish Lisa all the best in her retirement – she will be very much missed by all staff at Garforth and across the wider PCN.