

### **General election campaign health pledges**

With the general election campaign in progress, parties are starting to publish their plans for general practice should they be elected. Earlier this week the [Conservative Party announced](#) that under a Conservative Government they would increase the number of GPs in training by 500 a year from 2021-22 to approximately 4000 a year. They also plan to increase the international recruitment of GPs and to recruit a further 6000 more pharmacists, physios and other GP staff funded by an additional £300 million. In addition, they would intend GP trainees to spend a greater proportion of their training in general practice rather than hospital posts. Read my response to their announcement [here](#). This was reported by [Sky News](#), [BBC Online](#) and [GP Online](#). I was interviewed by BBC Radio 4's Today programme on Saturday – listen [here](#) (from 1 hour 37 minutes).

On Wednesday, the [Labour Party announced](#) their proposals to expand GP training places to 5000 each year and plan to invest an extra £2.5 billion to overhaul the primary care estate, which follows our joint letter (attached) to the Prime Minister in August, calling for urgent action to ensure funding for primary care premises. They have also committed to providing free prescriptions. Read our response to their announcement [here](#). This was reported by the [Mirror](#), [Pulse](#) (on the premises pledge).

We support commitments so far made to increase the number of GPs in training as there continues to be an urgent need to address unsustainable workloads and to ensure patients get the care they need. However, creating more training places will only deliver a change if these places can be filled, so more work needs to be done to encourage doctors to choose general practice as a career. There is also much more that needs to be done to retain existing GPs and address the factors that have led to the continued fall in GP numbers resulting in previous promises falling far short.

We are disappointed that both Conservatives and Labour have so far failed to commit to address the current pension issues that punish doctors for staying in work. We await health proposals from the other parties in this election.

### **NHS crisis: "long term problems must be addressed"**

Gaurav Gupta, GPC member and premises policy lead, spoke to BBC Radio Kent on the NHS performance figures and said that the NHS was under 'incredible pressure' with BMA analysis showing things will only get worse this winter. He said staff in hospitals and GP practices urgently needed more support in order to cope, however, it was not just about the short-term fix and adding that a 'long-term sustainable solution' was essential. He also spoke about the impact of the punitive pension system saying: "We need big tax reform because a lot of senior doctors are being from the system when we need them most."

Listen to the full interview [here](#) (from 53 minutes in).

### **Flu vaccine delays**

PHE have again written to practices in England this week about the delays in nasal influenza vaccine supply which is impacting the school based programme. I was interviewed on ITV Lunchtime news (not available online) on Friday 8 November, about these delays and said: "We need to ensure that everybody gets protected, whether that be children in schools, older patients, or people in care homes, and practices and schools will do their best to make sure that everybody gets protected. But there are concerns that many practices and others have that we are seeing delays in supplies, not just this year, but previous years. We hope that government can work with suppliers to ensure that these delays do not keep happening."

### **Self care week**

It is the annual self care week next week, 18-24 November. This is a national awareness week organised by the [Self Care Forum](#) to help people understand the benefits of self care and how they can better look after their own health. Samira Anane, GPC member GPC member and policy lead for education, training and workforce, has written a blog about how GPs can promoting lifestyle changes for patients – read it [here](#).

There is also [GP guidance](#) about patient empowerment as well as guidance on self care for [patients](#), available on the BMA's [Patient Liaison Group resources and self care page](#).

### **Northern Ireland LMC Conference 2019**

The Northern Ireland LMC conference will take place tomorrow, Saturday 16 November, in Belfast. The theme will be “General Practice in Northern Ireland – are we turning a corner”. You can read more in the [blog about the conference](#) by Alan Stout, NI GPC chair. Access the conference agenda [here](#).

### **LMC England Conference**

The [Agenda](#) for the forthcoming LMC England Conference to be held on 22 November was published last week. The Conference will be web streamed live via this link <https://bma.streameventlive.com/event/115>

There was widespread coverage about the debate to be held on home visits, where Kent LMC is calling on the GPC to remove home visits from core contract work for GPs. They argue that GPs no longer have the capacity to provide the service with the LMC saying a separate acute service for urgent visits should be provided by the NHS. This was covered by [Mail Online](#), [Telegraph](#), [Independent](#), [Times](#) (paywall), [Telegraph](#), [GP Online](#) and [Pulse](#). [Pulse](#) also reported on the motion calling the GPC to reject the establishment of PCNs and instead develop a new contract.

### **LMC England Conference elections**

All elections at the [LMC England Conference](#) will take place on the BMA's online election system. Nominations for Chair, Deputy chair, and five members of agenda committee opened today (15 November) at noon and eligible representatives may nominate themselves using the following [link](#)

To take part in elections you must have a BMA website account – this can be credited [here](#). You do not need to be a BMA member to create a BMA website account. It is strongly recommended that representatives obtain a BMA website account in advance of conference to ensure there are no complications on the day. The online election system is easily accessible through smartphones, tablets and desktop computers and the BMA provides voting stands at conferences to ensure that all delegates are able to take part in the election process. If you require assistance on the day, please visit the elections team or email [elections@bma.org.uk](mailto:elections@bma.org.uk).

### **Wales LMC Conference 2019**

I as pleased to attend the [Welsh LMC Conference 2019](#) which took place last weekend in Llandudno, Wales. Read the speech from Dr Phil White, BMA Cymru Wales GP committee chair [here](#).

### **Scottish LMC conference**

The Scottish LMC conference will be held on Friday 29 November 2019 from 8.30am to 4.45pm at the Golden Jubilee Conference Hotel, Clydebank. Read the agenda [here](#)

### **Position statement on screening**

The RCGP has published a [Position Statement on Screening](#) by organisations which have not been approved by the UK National Screening Committee, which we fed in to and co-badged.

### **Women in Academic Medicine survey**

The Women in Academic Medicine group, which is part of the BMA's Medical Academic Staff Committee, has published a [short survey](#) to find out the reasoning behind a lack of diversity in academic careers. This is to understand the changes necessary to increase diversity and improve career progression as well as to determine the attractiveness of an academic career. They are particular keen to hear from current and former medical academics, but there are questions for all doctors. Please pass this onto colleagues who may be interested.

### **BMA launch new website**

The [beta version of the new BMA website](#) is now live. It will run alongside the current BMA website until it has been developed to the point where it can replace it. Over 500 pages of redesigned content is available. Read more [here](#).

Access the GPC pages here: <https://beta.bma.org.uk/what-we-do/committees#general-practitioners-committee> The new [GPC UK page](#) has more information about the committee, such as the priorities, and also includes links to the GP bulletin, surveys and elections.

BMA support services for GP practices are now here: <https://beta.bma.org.uk/advice-and-support/gp-practices#bma-support-services-for-gp-practices>

### **Prescribing costs for 2018-19 published**

NHS Digital has published [Prescribing Costs in Hospitals and the Community: England 2018-19](#), which show the estimated costs at list price of medicines used in hospitals and prescribed in primary care. It includes the costs at list price, which is the basic cost of a drug excluding VAT. It does not take account of any contract prices or discounts, dispensing costs, fees or prescription charges income.

### **Medicine supply update**

Please see attached the latest medicine supply update from the Department of Health and Social Care medicine supply team.

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

Have a good weekend

Richard