



December 2020 Edition



We have each other's backs

**Editorial by Emma Ridgewell-Howard,
Chief Executive at Kernow Local Medical Committee**

December is often a time for contemplation; to take stock of the year almost ended and to wonder what the new year will bring.

I think that someone forgot to pass on that particular memo to Year 2020. Instead of time to reflect, we have had no time to draw breath (let alone eat a sandwich or remember to go to the bathroom) before the next tome of directions lands, the next round of changes are made and the next request to step up is upon us.

General Practice teams spend their working lives (in hours, out of hours, all hours) stepping up in all their essential roles; never more so, than right now. Covid-19 has thrown us headlong into a drama triangle which needs energy, perspective and support to step outside.

Few of us are able to provide those things in isolation, for our teams or – vitally – for ourselves; but when each of us has the other's back then it means something.

Trust builds. Corners begin to look just a little less twisty. We feel supported. Exhausted – without doubt. But not on our own.

Thank you to everyone who has worked so hard with us to 'have the back' of general practice this year; often from within general practice itself, and as often supporting alongside, you have made more difference than many of us have time to reflect upon, just at the moment – yet it is noticed.

So, thank you.

Think 111 – access to dental care

By Julie Green, Programme Manager for Urgent Care, NHS Kernow

Integrated Urgent Care, 111 and Out of Hours have been working on a number of areas and one of the issues which has come up regularly is patient access to NHS dentistry. From talking to some GPs, I understand this is also an issue for primary care – with patients presenting with dental problems when they have been unable to access dental care.

I have been working with NHS England (NHSE) on access. NHSE is aware of the issues and is developing a needs assessment which will inform the next round of commissioning – contracts are due for renewal in 2023.

We have been gathering data across all systems to enable us to understand the full picture. I have had a useful conversation with the LMC, which has helped me understand the data collection systems in primary care and that it may not be possible to pull analysis easily.

However, to ensure primary care is fully represented in the scoping, would you be able to PITCH (Peer improvement tips for care and health) any dental enquiries that come into your GP practices for this month and January 2021 please. Using quantitative data from Intensive Care Units and Emergency Departments and qualitative data from the PITCH reports, this should enable a richness of analysis to be available for NHSE to identify the current gaps and inform future commissioning arrangements.

If you would like to discuss this further, please contact me at: Julie.green18@nhs.net

LPC latest – Trial sites needed for the GP Community Pharmacist Consultation Service

By Drew Creek, Operations Manager at Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Pharmaceutical Committee (LPC)

Primary Care Network (PCNs) are growing in importance in the delivery of primary care and in community pharmacy this is no different. We now have Community Pharmacy PCN leads – they will be reaching out to Clinical Directors and Strategic Managers to see how they and community pharmacy can help as part of your extended PCN network. If, in the meantime, you want to know who your lead is, email me at: drew@cornwallipc.org

The GP Community Pharmacist Consultation Service (GPCPCS) is an NHS service which your reception teams can 'book' an appointment for your patients with a pharmacist in community pharmacy for certain pre-defined conditions. This service is live now, but the LPC is looking for trial sites to implement what could be a really helpful service in releasing on the day capacity in GP surgeries.

The LPC is offering to train your teams – this is primarily a reception-led service. This short [video](#) explains more. If you want to be part of this wave, email me at: drew@cornwallipc.org

RCH ICE GP Ordercomms Solution – pathology and clinical imaging

By Jayne Noye, Senior Project Manager, Cornwall IT Services, Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust

All Royal Cornwall Hospitals Trust (RCHT) specialities now have access to the Integrated Clinical Environment (ICE) system for placing pathology requests to be taken in primary care. This initiative represents a major change to the process by which pathology testing is requested by secondary care specialities and we would ask for your patience and understanding as RCHT staff complete the training and account set-up process.

Central to the success of this initiative is the expectation that secondary care requests are correctly processed by the surgery phlebotomy teams. Please do make sure that all staff involved in sample collection within your GP surgery are aware of the correct method to

search for and complete a secondary care request to ensure that all parties benefit from the many advantages the ICE system offers to users and patients.

If you have any queries or concerns about this new initiative please direct them to the GP ordercomms team at RCHT: rch-tr.GPOrdercomms@nhs.net

Over the past year the Clinical Imaging PACS Team have worked with Cornwall Information and Technology Service (CITS) and NHS Kernow to enable requesting of radiology tests. The pages have been tailored to include the most frequently requested exams from GPs to ensure a streamlined process for users.

Currently we are piloting this additional module to ICE at Three Spires, St Agnes and Falmouth Health Centre.

The pilot has been well received, with positive comments such as 'easier than filling in the normal form'. Live rollout is due to start in January 2021.

We would welcome any GP practices interested in becoming an 'early adopter site' – please contact the ICE Team via rch-tr.GPOrdercomms@nhs.net Thank you to the GP practices who have submitted an interest – we will be in touch soon.

This is an exciting change and will likely see an improvement in appointment turnaround times and accuracy of data/report returns.

PITCH update

By Gill Dinnis, Senior Patient Safety and Quality Manager, NHS Kernow

Peer improvement tips for care and health (PITCH) was developed 12 months ago to provide general practice with a central reporting system where it can raise concerns, share learning and highlight excellence.

NHS Kernow hosts this service in its role as commissioner – the information gained has provided a valuable insight into what is working well and not so well across the system. To enable further system-wide learning, other organisations have had the opportunity to also report through PITCH. A total of 301 submissions have been received so far.

What's worked well?

Thank you for your feedback on how PITCH is working for you. As you know, other providers have started using it to send in feedback relating to general practice. Some of your feedback has enabled significant event audits to be undertaken and learning to be shared in GP practices and sometimes wider.

Time for an annual review

So PITCH has been here for 12 months and its time we did a review of how it's working. Some of your feedback has said the process has become labour intensive and a better way to identify system-wide learning should be developed. We have also received feedback that this has become too operational and it's not identifying where commissioning decisions can be challenged to improve patient care. PITCH shouldn't take away the ability to have clinician to clinician conversations and we can see examples of this.

Whilst we complete a review, PITCH will remain open for GPs to use. We will continue to theme your entries and publish, where appropriate, any actions taken in response.

We will ask other providers that have started to use PITCH to share GP feedback to contact practices directly. We will continue to monitor and support providers with individual patient safety incidents as appropriate.

The review will be complete by March 2021. Read more [here](#).

New national representation for Practice Managers

A Practice Manager in Cornwall has played a key role in helping form the first national organisation of its kind to represent and support her counterparts.

With 55% of Practice Managers nationally intending to leave their posts in the next 12 months, it's a clear sign that there is growing discontent and a potentially huge problem for general practice that needs to be tackled sooner, rather than later.

To this effect, the Institute of General Practice Management (IGPM) has just been formed and has received backing from the likes of the British Medical Association (BMA) and Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP).

You may wish to look into the potential benefits of joining this new body – the terms of reference are being finalised – and you can sign up for the IGPM's newsletter [here](#) to be kept up to date. You can also follow on Twitter at [@TheIGPM](#)

Nicola Davies, Practice Manager at Roseland Surgeries in Cornwall, is one of the founder members of the IGPM and will be writing a column in a future LMC newsletter to provide a further update.

Nicola and the other IGPM co-founders said Practice Managers are key to the success of general practice, providing the leadership, innovation and skills that all GP practices need to deliver holistic patient care in a complex environment and the formation of a national body to represent them is a hugely important step forward.

Nicola added: "I feel I have incredibly supportive partners, but I'm aware that some colleagues up and down the country can feel isolated at times, which adds to their burden."

Nicola also takes part in the latest in a series of Practice Manager panels to discuss Practice Management as a profession and their key role in operational issues such as delivery of the flu vaccination programme. Listen to the Ockham Healthcare podcast [here](#).

PCSE issues

Covid-19 notwithstanding, problems with Primary Care Support England (PCSE) and their impact on your practice have not gone away – one of the business as usual items that you could certainly do without. If you are experiencing intractable challenges, please escalate them (with CAS number) to the LMC at admin@kernowlmc.co.uk and also PITCH them so they are visible to NHS Kernow colleagues. The LMC will do our level best to help you resolve them.

LMC website

The LMC's new [website](#) contains over 300 pages of information, advice and guidance – with updates added regularly. Sign-up takes two minutes [here](#) if you haven't already registered for secure access to our dedicated GP, Sessional GP and Practice Manager areas.

Supplier relief for public health contracts

The LMC has written again to Cornwall Council colleagues, seeking support for an improved package of financial relief in relation to the public health contracts commissioned of general practice.

While negotiations through the summer did not reach an agreed outcome, we appreciate the value that our colleagues place on the services delivered by general practice teams and have asked them to reconsider the position of their supplier relief and payment by results, in view of general practice whole team involvement in the Covid-19 vaccination programme – which is a national priority. The link to our letter is [here](#).

Covid 19 and requests for fit notes

In the majority of cases, patients don't need to ask their GP for a fit note for periods of absence due to Covid-19. Kernow LMC has reproduced a letter to patients – with thanks to Nottinghamshire LMC – explaining this, for GP practices to adapt. Visit our [website](#) to download the template.

The Covid-19 Vaccination Collaboration Agreement

The [Covid-19 Vaccination Collaboration Agreement](#) is designed to support the delivery of the CVP by setting out the responsibilities and relationships between collaborating GP practices. The General Practitioners' Committee's (GPC) has had legal support to scrutinise the document and is satisfied that it is fit for purpose, being in line with other similar collaboration agreements already in place.

GP practices are reminded that following the regulatory requirements set by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) they will need to use the vaccine within 3.5 days, not the previously suggested 5 days, and so need to ensure patients are invited to attend within that timescale. All patients will need to be offered a second appointment 21 days afterwards for their second vaccination. Vaccines are being held back nationally to ensure they are available to provide this second dose.

Enhanced Service Specification: Covid-19 vaccination programme

NHS England (NHSE) has published the [Enhanced Service Specification](#) for Primary Care Networks (PCNs) who have received confirmation that they will be local vaccination centres, alongside a [letter](#) about the next steps.

If you haven't already seen it, the joint LMC and NHS Kernow position statement about the Covid-19 vaccine Enhanced Service (ES) is available [here](#). All GP practices in Cornwall have signed up to the ES.

Meanwhile, NHSE has created a [dedicated space](#) on the FutureNHS web platform for the national rollout of the vaccination programme. Log in or sign up to find key documents, a discussion forum and upcoming and previous webinars. NHSE has added some useful FAQs



to the space, with the most up to date answers to common questions around eligible cohorts, appointment bookings, preparation for the vaccinations and more.

GPC guidance on the Covid-19 vaccination programme

The General Practitioners' Committee's (GPC) [guidance page about the Covid-19 vaccination programme](#) has been updated and includes FAQs throughout to answer questions from GP practices.

The GPC continues to update this regularly, as and when new information becomes available, so please refer back to this guidance page.

PHE publishes Covid-19 vaccine guidance

Public Health England (PHE) has issued new guidance to support frontline workers in delivering the coronavirus vaccine to the most vulnerable.

There is a new [chapter](#) in Immunisation against infectious disease, also known as the Green Book, a vital guide for those administering vaccines.

The guidance includes new Covid-19 vaccine e-learning modules, vaccinator training recommendations and a competency assessment tool.

Guidance for doctors who are isolating and those in vulnerable groups

With national restrictions in place, the Government is [advising](#) people who are clinically extremely vulnerable to work from home. The General Practitioners' Committee (GPC) has published some FAQs to explain what this means for doctors in that group, or who live with someone who is. Read more [here](#).

Patients who are on the shielding list will receive a [letter](#) directly from Government about what they should do and a copy of the letter is sufficient to give to an employer as evidence for Statutory Sick Pay purposes – patients should therefore not need a fit note issuing by the practice. Read more in the GPC's guidance for practices on [protecting clinically extremely vulnerable patients](#).

'AndILookLike' initiative

As we are wearing face coverings, patients cannot always recognise us – the LMC is aware of clinicians and staff at GP practices elsewhere taking a photograph of their face and hanging it on their ID lanyards.

This simple idea is an extension of the 'my name is initiative' and is something local GP practices in Cornwall may wish to consider doing. Patients in other parts of the country have welcomed this initiative.

Temporary approval to suspend the need for signatures on prescriptions

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care has approved a temporary measure to help limit the transmission of coronavirus by suspending the need for patients to sign prescription, dental and ophthalmic forms for five months until 31 March, 2021. This must be carried out in line with the criteria set out in this [guidance](#).



PPE portal – update on Christmas orders and delivery

The Department of Health and Social Care's (DHSC) personal protective equipment (PPE) portal will be operational over Christmas. The portal delivery partners (Royal Mail and their Pallet Carrier) will not be delivering on Christmas Day and Boxing Day. Orders made during this time should still be delivered within five days. However, the portal team plan to increase order limits prior to Christmas to allow providers to order more PPE in case there are any delays to deliveries over the festive period.

Meanwhile, if you have questions about when you can place your next PPE order, why some items are showing as out of stock, or any other queries, please see the PPE portal FAQs. They can be found by logging into www.nhs-ppe.co.uk and scrolling to the bottom and selecting help/FAQ. If you have any concerns that aren't answered, please contact the customer service team on 0800 876 6802. The team is available from 7am-7pm, 7 days a week.

Management of the long-term effects of Covid-19

A recent survey of Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) members showed 67% of respondents were looking after at least one patient with ongoing symptoms of Covid-19 lasting more than 12 weeks. The RCGP has provided [a response and top tips](#) for caring for these patients.

Letter to CQC on supporting general practice during a period of unprecedented pressure

The General Practitioners' Committee (GPC) has written to the Care Quality Commission (CQC) again urging them to immediately halt all non-essential inspections and practice monitoring to allow GPs and their teams, currently under immense pressure, to focus on the job at hand during the coronavirus pandemic.

The GPC has made clear to the CQC that, in addition to delivering flu vaccinations to 30 million patients in England this year and also leading the Covid-19 vaccination campaign, GPs and their teams must be supported and enabled to provide care that best serves the needs of their patients, in a way that adds most clinical value and keeps patients, clinicians and staff safe – it is imperative that they are not distracted from their primary focus of ensuring the ongoing care of their patients.

Tracker survey results

The British Medical Association's (BMA) [latest tracker survey](#) shows that 74% of GPs responding are quite or extremely anxious about work in the coming months and 47% say their levels of stress, anxiety and emotional distress had got worse since the pandemic began.

Some 64% of GPs reported higher than normal level of fatigue or exhaustion from working during the pandemic and 62% reported that they or a clinical colleague in their practice had been forced to self-isolate within the past two weeks – with 39% of all respondents reporting a 'moderate' or 'significant' impact on patient care. View the [GP specific results](#). The survey also demonstrated that worries about workload pressures are more from non-covid related issues – underlining why more support is required from NHS England and NHS



Improvement (NHSEI) to help practices maintain some degree of services at a time when hospitals can and are stopping doing routine elective work.

These figures clearly highlight the increasing pressure on general practice during the second wave of the pandemic. Staff are working harder, they are very tired and concerned that they are going to have difficulty satisfying demand in the next few months and the overwhelming reason for moving to remote consultations is to keep staff and patients safe. Read the [BMA statement here](#).

If you are aware of a colleague who is struggling in Kernow and would benefit from some support, or you recognise that you are in trouble yourself, [register online](#) or call the LMC's pastoral support service. If you need urgent pastoral support from the LMC please phone our service now in confidence on 01726 210141 or 07789 775909.

QOF system suppliers update

As GP practices will be aware the Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF) 2020/21 has been [revised to reflect the impact of Covid-19 on general practice](#). The General Practitioners' Committee (GPC) recognise that practices need to reprioritise aspects of care not related to Covid-19 and the QOF requirements have been modified for 2020/21 to support this and to help release capacity in general practice. Practices and commissioners have been asked to work together to confirm that any population stratification is clinically appropriate for their local population.

Clinical system suppliers have recently updated QOF indicators and prompts. In some instances, this may have impacted on practices' records of progress to date. Practices should be reassured that the indicators affected by this update are those that are subject to income protection as outlined in 2020/21 QOF guidance. Practices are not expected to re-code or re-review patients for indicators affected by this system update, unless there is a clinical need to do so.

Updated Directed Enhanced Service Specification for flu

An updated [DES Specification for the seasonal flu and pneumococcal vaccination programme 2020/21](#) has been published to reflect GP practices now being able to access central flu vaccine supplies.

Flu vaccines for general practice staff

When arranging [flu vaccines](#) for general practice staff, remember to include all the Primary Care Network (PCN) DES-funded additional roles, including social prescribing link workers. It is the PCN's responsibility to ensure that this happens whether or not they are directly employed or hosted by an external organisation.

Influenza immunisation call and recall error

The General Practitioners' Committee (GPC) is aware of some GP practices being approached by concerned patients after mistakenly having been sent letters from NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSEI) telling them they should book a flu vaccination. The GPC has raised this with NHSEI and has now been informed that this was in response to an error made by NHS Digital (NHSD).

In developing a cohort of people at greater risk from influenza for NHSEI, NHSD mistakenly included those who had a diagnosis of glandular fever at some point in the past. Although current glandular fever causes people to be immunosuppressed, past glandular fever does not. As a result, a number of people incorrectly added to that cohort received letters from NHSEI encouraging them to have a flu vaccination. When the mistake was discovered, the process of sending letters was stopped and the misidentified people removed from the cohort. NHSD has written to the misidentified patients, in three cohorts depending on their age and hence what further action, if any, they should take.

TPP SystemOne and EMIS Web practices: electronic notifications for flu vaccinations from community pharmacies

GP practices will receive [electronic notifications](#) from pharmacies that use PharmOutcomes and Sonar IT systems when a patient registered with their practice has received a flu vaccination in a community pharmacy. This will significantly reduce the number of paper notifications you need to manually process and improve patient data by reducing transcribing errors. Some GP practices using TPP SystemOne already receive these notifications. If you do not receive these notifications yet, your system supplier will inform you of your switch-on date and provide further information and guidance. You should also continue to check for notifications received via NHSmail or post.

PCN development funding guidance

Updated Primary Care Network (PCN) [guidance](#) from NHS England (NHSE) sets out the PCN development priorities and information about use of national £43.7m funding for 2020/21.

NHS Confed: PCN Network virtual conference session recordings

If you missed any sessions at the recent [NHS Confederation PCN Network's annual conference](#) you can now access the recordings.

Delegates who have already registered can [log into the event platform](#), while others should email eventbookings@nhsconfed.org.

Bone health card to help patients stay on osteoporosis medication

Each year a large number of people suffer from fragility fractures and over three quarters of those who are prescribed osteoporosis medication are not on treatment a year on from their fracture. People who have sustained one fragility fracture are twice as likely to sustain another, which can be life altering and it has been shown that osteoporosis medication needs to be taken continuously for several years to be effective at preventing further fractures.

The Royal College of Physicians' (RCP) Fragility Fractures Audit Programme (FFFAP) has, in collaboration with the General Practitioners' Committee (GPC) and the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP), developed [the bone health card](#) to help patients with fragility fractures to discuss their medication and any issues with their primary healthcare team to



ensure key information is discussed when reviewing medication and where to get further information and support.

Dr Chris Tiley is leading some local FRAX work on behalf of the LMC.

Guidance on seatbelt exemption certificates issued by GPs

Regulations under the Road Traffic Act 1988 generally oblige all drivers and passengers in the front and rear of motor vehicles to wear seat belts. There is an exemption for anyone holding a valid certificate signed by a medical practitioner stating that it is inadvisable on medical grounds for him or her to wear a seat belt. In deciding whether to grant exemption, a medical practitioner needs to judge each case on its merits. There are no conditions (eg pregnancy) which justify automatic exemption. Read guidance from the Department of Transport [here](#).

Lloyd George notes

As you are aware, the GP Contract requires that Lloyd George notes are digitised by 2022/23 so patients will have access to their records, space will be freed up in GP practices and time will be saved for staff.

The General Practitioners' Committee (GPC) recently confirmed that funding will be centralised – and in the main there should be no funding requirements from GP practices. The LMC will keep you updated about all substantive developments, as we hear of them.

Patient confidentiality

The rapid development of recording and communication technologies has had a profound impact on the confidentiality of patient information and patient identity. Read [guidance](#) from the Medical Defence Union (MDU) to understand certain protocols and avoid mistakes.

CQC myth-busters

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) has updated further myth-busters to clear up some common misconceptions on [GP Fit Notes, Registration and Partnerships, Making information accessible](#), and [Chaperones](#).

Pathway to Partnership: New Partner Development Programme

The New Partner Development Programme for GP Practices will begin in January 2021. The 12 month programme is spread over six full days of face to face sessions and eight peer-group sessions across the year. For those new to partnership, NHS England (NHSE) offers full funding for training.

This programme is for new and prospective partners in GP practices looking to accelerate their professional development and help their practice thrive and succeed.

Accredited by the Institute of Leadership Management, the programme allows you to accumulate 60 CPD points and is structured around three key pillars – Leadership, Strategy and Operations.

For further details and to register your interest, please click [here](#).



CONNECT

Monthly newsletter for the Duchy's GPs and practice managers

GPC roles

Dr Bruce Hughes has been re-elected as the General Practitioners' Committee's (GPC) Policy Lead for Representation. As many of you will know, Dr Hughes is also the GPC Representative for the Cornwall and South West Devon regional seat. Meanwhile, Dr Rachel Ali, a Medical Secretary at Devon LMC and a GP in Plymouth, has been appointed as the GPC's first ever Gender Diversity Champion.

Provision of Occupational Health for portfolio GPs

A reminder that portfolio GPs can access the nationally commissioned occupational health service provided by Heales. More information is available [here](#).

GP Maternity/Parental leave webinar

The General Practitioners' Committee (GPC) has produced a [guide](#) to support all GPs planning their maternity and parental leave.

The GPC will be delivering a [webinar](#) covering GP maternity leave on Wednesday, 9 December, from 12.20pm-2.30pm.

RNLI safety advice

The Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) is concerned about a large increase in open water swimmers and cold water dippers during the winter and has produced a [briefing](#) for GPs and their patients.

Lifeboat crews have seen a 14% increase in callouts to swimmers in 2020 compared with 2019.

Latest jobs in local general practice

The latest practice vacancies – including GP and practice manager roles – are available on the jobs page of the LMC's new website: www.kernowlmc.co.uk/jobs/current-vacancies/ Vacancies are also available on the [jobs page](#) of Kernow Health's website.

Kernow Health's Staff Bank is also now live for workers and practices to sign up. Please follow these links:

<https://cornwallcepn.co.uk/general-practice-staff-bank/>

[Bank Worker sign-up](#)

[Practice manager sign-up](#)

Lantum are supporting practices in key functions, including adding shifts and availability. If you or your practice teams would like any additional support in using the Bank, please contact kernowhealth.workforce@nhs.net



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Produced by Kernow Local Medical Committee. Copy submissions for the January 2021 newsletter should be emailed to Richard Turner, Communications Lead at the LMC, at rich@kernowlmc.co.uk by Friday, 18 December please.

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