

ISSUED TO LLR GPs & PRACTICE MANAGERS ON 24.01.2022

This month we are covering the following areas:

- a. Changes to the Covid restrictions (face coverings)
- b. EMAS paramedics contacting practices
- c. Positive lateral flow results flowing into patient's records
- d. Updated: Covid Exemption certificates
- e. Updated: Vaccination as a condition for deployment in the healthcare sector (VCOD)
- f. 2022/23 Priorities and operational planning guidance
- g. GP Contracts and variation notices
- h. Lymphoedema Service
- i. LMC levy rebate to practices
- j. LMC Law webinar on PCN agreements
- k. Medical Certificates of Cause of Death (MCCD)
- l. Getting ready for patients to have access to their GP Health Records
- m. Recruitment

a. CHANGES TO THE COVID RESTRICTIONS (FACE COVERINGS)

Following the government's recent announcement, it was confirmed that from next Thursday (27 January) face coverings will no longer be mandatory in public places. Last week, NHSE published the following message in their newsletter. *'we want to remind primary care colleagues that the UK Health Security Agency's [infection prevention control \(IPC\) guidance](#) remains in place for all staff and patients, in GP practices, dental practices, optometrists and pharmacies to ensure that everyone is protected. please continue to encourage patients to wear a face covering to keep staff and other patients safe.*

Resources supporting IPC guidance, including social media assets and posters to use at entrances to notify visitors that they need to wear a face covering, are [available to download](#) from the campaign resource centre'.

GPC has also confirmed that the [IPC guidance for health settings](#) has not changed and states "Universal masking with face coverings or surgical masks (Type II or IIR) to prevent the transmission of SARS-CoV-2 and other respiratory infectious agents in health and care settings, as a source control measure, should continue to be applied for all staff, patients, and visitors"

Furthermore, [practices should carry out risk assessments](#) of their environments and assess what level of respiratory protective equipment should be worn by different groups in various settings. Health and Safety law makes it your responsibility to protect staff, patients and any other person on practice premises based upon these risk assessments, thus making mask wearing a legal requirement if your risk assessment suggests masks should be worn.

If challenged by patients not wanting to wear a mask you can advise the about the [IPC guidance](#) and your risk assessments and inform the patient that "the law imposes on me the duty to expect you to wear a mask, and on you the duty to wear one in these premises"

Download our [poster about using face coverings in practices](#).

b. EMAS PARAMEDICS CONTACTING PRACTICES

The LMC has been approached by several practices in regard to EMAS paramedics calling practices for information or support from the GP to assist with agreeing onward care for that patient. It is recognised that majority of practices are able to respond to the paramedics in a swift manner, and the collaborative working and joint approach in deciding the best actions for the patient is of benefit to all.

However, there will be a variety of situations which will mean the practice will not be able to respond to the paramedics as quickly as they aspire e.g. 15mins. As the LMC, we want to highlight, there is no contractual requirement for practices to provide this service and practices don't need to respond to paramedics in a certain timeframe.

If an EMAS paramedic calls the practice and the practice feels they are unable to speak to the paramedic swiftly on that day, it could be suggested that the practice notifies EMAS, so they can make appropriate decisions to manage the patient accordingly.

c. POSITIVE LATERAL FLOW RESULTS COMING INTO PATIENT'S RECORDS

The LMC would like to pre-warn that practices will soon start to receive electronic results of self-tested and self-reported Lateral Flow Tests. This is in response to the government's policy change on Covid testing, where confirmatory PCR testing is no longer advised.

d. UPDATED: COVID EXEMPTION CERTIFICATES

Further to our last update on covid exemption certificates, we have updated our guidance to include a step-by-step guide to support practices in navigating the toolkit. All the information can be found [here](#).

e. UPDATED: VACCINATION AS A CONDITION FOR DEPLOYMENT IN THE HEALTHCARE SECTOR (VCOD)

The LMC is still awaiting guidance from GPC on questions raised around the VCOD, and are expecting a FAQ to be published imminently:

- What does mandatory vaccination mean in reality for employed staff, partners as workers, and practices as employers?
- Who decides whether unvaccinated individuals are redeployed or terminated and how (for both employees and partners)?
- Are there legal obligations when going through redeployment (pay protection, changing T&Cs)?
- Are there protections against termination for both salaried staff and partners?
- What happens if there are several staff in the practice who are vaccine hesitant

This will be published this week and will sit alongside wider [BMA guidance](#) published last week. Both sets of guidance should be read in conjunction with each other.

The CCG workforce team has recently sent guidance to practices and will be delivering a webinar alongside the LMC on **Tuesday 25th January 2022 at 4pm** which is open to all practices to join.

Join on your computer or mobile app

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Or call in (audio only)

[+44 20 3321 5208, 397813650#](#)

Phone Conference ID: 397 813 650#

f. 2022/23 PRIORITIES AND OPERATIONAL PLANNING GUIDANCE

NHSE/I has published [guidance on priorities and operational planning for 2022/23](#), based on a scenario where COVID-19 returns to a low level and the NHS make significant progress in restoring services and reducing the COVID backlogs in the first part of the year. The guidance includes future funding arrangements.

g. GP CONTRACTS AND VARIATION NOTICES

The [model contracts and contract variation notices have now been published](#), including the general practice pay transparency obligations. But as previously communicated, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care has

confirmed the implementation of general practice pay transparency will be delayed until at least Spring 2022. Read our [guidance on declaring earnings](#).

h. LYMPHOEDEMA SERVICE

As practices will be aware the LLR Lymphoedema service ceased a while ago with LOROS. Since then, practices have reported to the LMC they are struggling to navigate their patients and direct them to an alternative provider. Following discussion with the CCG, we are pleased to hear that they have commissioned LPT to deliver the service going forward and they anticipate this service will be up and running March/April.

In the meantime, the LOROS advice line is available to support clinicians as an interim measure until a new service is in place for new referrals and existing patients. The advice line number is 0116 231 8429 and when calling will need to leave a voicemail message containing your name, contact number and a suitable time to call you back. The staff within the Lymphoedema service will then return your call.

i. LMC LEVY REBATE TO PRACTICES

The LMC is working through the issuing levy rebate payments to practices, however due to the banking restrictions it has taken longer than anticipated but we envisage all payments will be made by mid-February.

A remittance email is being sent to practices once payment has been made for your records.

There also still remains a number of practices that have not responded to our initial email, so we will be following these up separately.

j. LMC LAW WEBINAR ON PCN AGREEMENTS

The LMC is currently organising a webinar which will be delivered by LMC Law looking at PCN agreements. This will be open to all, but we thought it would be timely to deliver the webinar in February to support the PCN re-configuration and give everyone the opportunity to review/refresh their agreement.

A separate communication be sent to practices shortly outlining the content, but if you wish to know anything specific to PCN agreements, please let us know and we will try and incorporate it to be covered in the webinar.

k. MEDICAL CERTIFICATES OF CAUSE OF DEATH (MCCD)

Amended regulations (The Registration of Births and Deaths (Amendment) Regulations 2021 SI 2021 No. 1436) have been published which mean that even after the Coronavirus Act has been rescinded, there will still be no requirement to report to the coroner patients seen within 28 days prior to (or after) death. This is instead of the 14-day rule that existed prior to the pandemic.

In addition, the amendments allow for MCCDs to continue to be sent electronically to registrars. The LMC is seeking information whether the requirement to send the original MCCD to the registrars by post will continue.

l. GETTING READY FOR PATIENTS TO HAVE ACCESS TO THEIR GP HEALTH RECORDS

From April 2022, patients with online accounts such as through the NHS App, will be able to read new entries in their health records. This applies to patients whose practices use TPP and EMIS systems. Further information on the programme is available through the [NHS Digital website](#).

To help GPs, practice staff and primary care commissioners support patients to access their GP-held records, we have a [series of webinars](#) which explain what this means for you, and what you will need to do next to prepare for this. Dates are available throughout January and February.

m. RECRUITMENT

Do you have a vacancy within your practice? We would be more than happy to advertise your vacancy on our website for free. Simply send us a copy of the advert and job description to enquiries@llrlmc.co.uk.