



WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

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1. Mandatory vaccinations FAQs for GPs and practices – GPC Update

Given the impact the requirement for [COVID vaccinations as a condition of employment](#) in the health and social care sector will have for GPs and practices as contractors, providers and employers, we are developing a set of [FAQs](#) which will address redeployment, termination and implications for practices, which will include answers to:

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 (eg pay protection, changing terms and conditions)?

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 – viability of practice, impact of service provision, impact on remaining workforce etc?

This will be published next week and will sit alongside wider [BMA guidance](#) published earlier this week. Both sets of guidance should be read in conjunction with each other. We will add to the guidance as more questions are asked and more information becomes available. NHSE/I has also released [guidance for employers](#).



2. Face coverings in Practice Settings – GPC Update

[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 and other patients 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 them 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](#).

3. COVID-19 self-isolation can end after 5 full days following 2 negative LFD tests – GPC update

From [Monday 17 January](#), people with COVID-19 in England can end their self-isolation after 5 days, as long as they test negative on day 5 and day 6 with LFD tests. The health service is experiencing disruption from widespread absences due to the rapid spread of Omicron but healthcare workers do not want to risk infecting colleagues and patients - many of whom are clinically vulnerable. So they can only return to work safely after a shorter period of isolation and two negative lateral flow tests if they have [access to high-grade masks](#), and many are finding that this is still not the case.

Read the [BMA statement](#). Read the [NHSE/I guidance](#) on isolation for NHS staff

4. New: Anti-vaccination protests

We have been informed by security and police teams that there is potential for co-ordinated action at a small number of vaccination and testing sites from Thursday 20 January onwards.

There has been an increase of antivax activity at site level over the last few days and are writing to ask all sites to revisit their security arrangements and to set out advice in the event of any disruption.

All police forces have been fully briefed and are ready to support in the unlikely event of any disruptive activity. If any site experiences or is aware of the potential of intimidating and threatening behaviour, please call 999.

Please ensure you make clear you are not reporting peaceful or respectful anti-vaccination protests but are reporting intimidating or threatening behaviours.

Security officials have informed us that a small number of individuals are claiming to be 'common law constables' with ability to detain vaccination staff with the seizure and destruction of vaccine stock and equipment.



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There is no legal basis of civil arrest of any vaccination staff or volunteers and no legal power to seize any vaccination stock. This is a criminal offence and police forces are ready to respond in this way.

We have been in liaison with West Midlands Police who have plans in place to manage any local issues and have also issued advice to their staff supporting the local COVID response. **The safety and protection of our staff remains paramount.**

We continue to support the roll-out of vaccination locally, recognising the important role of vaccination in reducing severe illness from COVID and supporting our return to a more normal way of life.

If anyone feels threatened, intimidated, or is experiencing aggressive verbal abuse please do not hesitate to call 999 and request police assistance.

5. New: Paediatric pulse oximetry training - BSOL

For those practices who requested a paediatric pulse oximeter, please see below some useful training resources on how to use them. You will appreciate the difference in measurement and interpretation in comparison to adult pulse oximetry. Engagement in training was an expectation for provision of the device. The devices are currently being delivered to practices.

[Quick start guide](#)

[Video](#)

[FAQs](#)

6. New: Latent Tuberculosis LIS - BSOL

Thank you to practices progressing with LTBI LIS despite the challenges. We hope practices that may have put this LIS on hold during the booster campaign can now restore the screening programme. Please contact [Indu Ravindranath](#) for any support you may need to restore LTBI LIS, thank you.

7. Skilled Worker Visa Sponsorship BSol Webinar Virtual – 23rd February 2022 1-2pm BSOL

Skilled Worker Visa, previously known as Tier 2 sponsorship, is an opportunity for practices that are having difficulty recruiting to vacant GP posts, to employ non-European Economic Area (non-EEA) clinicians who would like to continue working in the UK. Trainees qualify at two points each year (usually February and August). BSol STP Primary Care Workforce strategy is to recruit, retain, return and role reallocation to support our workforce and diverse demographics.

A virtual webinar is due to take place on Wednesday 23rd February 2022 from 1-2pm via Microsoft Teams. This webinar is for practices who would like to recruit to these roles and for potential Skilled Workers to join Birmingham and Solihull and for those due to CCT soon.

Keynote speakers include Faye Donaghy, Medical Workforce Programme Manager NHSEI, Practice Manager perspective and an IMG perspective who has benefited from this.

The webinar will provide information on the following:



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Overview and process to follow for Practices who have a Tier 2 License

Process to engage and become a Tier 2 Licensed Practice

Options and next steps for International Medical Graduates including those who are due to CCT soon

To join the meeting please follow this link: [Click here to join the meeting](#) and share with colleagues who would like to join Birmingham and Solihull.

8. New: BCHC and UHB Community District Nursing service update

BCHC and UHB community district nursing services have confirmed they are currently operating within previously agreed prioritisation methods for winter planning and may therefore be in a position that preventative treatments are not able to be prioritised at present. Due to higher than usual sickness levels, exacerbated by the impact on DN capacity of the Omicron COVID variant, you may be notified that your patients are not being seen immediately but we would like to reassure you that the DN Teams will rebook these at a time that staffing levels permit.

The CCG is aware that both primary care and district nursing services are having to reprioritise work throughout each day due to shielding and sickness and appreciate this is adding an extra strain on the limited nursing capacity available across the system.

DN teams will prioritise work schedules daily and liaise with general practice as required if there is any uncertainty about the priority level of a particular referral. In Birmingham because of the way that the team operates across locality structures, there may be days where some teams are more depleted due to sickness than others, but all teams are operating under the same agreed winter pressure agreements.

If you have a concern about a particular patient not being prioritised and want to discuss this with the DN Team then please do [contact your community matron](#) to check the situation.

9. BSol Shared Care Record Q&A Webinar

The LMC have received several enquiries in relation to the BSol Shared Care Record – DSA and as such we have arranged a Q&As webinar session with our shared care record clinical lead Dr Philip Downing and Berit Reglar the Data Protection Officer and Solicitor from UHB who authored the DSA, where you will be able to find out more and raise any queries or concerns.

The session will be held on **Tuesday 1st February 2022 at 13:00 to 14:00** via Microsoft Teams, joining instructions below. This is an open session and you do not need to book, just join the event on the day. We hope that you will be able to join us.

Microsoft Teams meeting

Join on your computer or mobile app

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

[Learn more](#) | [Meeting options](#)



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Please note our office contact times remain 10:00-16:00 and any queries on the day should be directed to birmingham.lmc@nhs.net as we are currently remote working so would be grateful if all contact were made via the nhs.net email.

Please note that the LMC are unable to accept calls or hold communications with patients, we are GP representatives, and we would respectfully ask that Practices do not advise patients to contact us. Could we also remind Practices that any copies of patient related correspondence MUST be anonymised as the LMC cannot accept patient identifiable data.

Helpful Links:

BMA COVID-19: toolkit for GPs and GP practices <https://www.bma.org.uk/advice-and-support/covid-19/gp-practices/covid-19-toolkit-for-gps-and-gp-practices> Comprehensive guidance for GPs, partners, and practice managers to manage employment and contractual issues and service provision during the coronavirus pandemic.

GOVERNMENT WEBSITE: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus> for recent and upcoming changes, guidance & support.

NHS ENGLAND: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/implementing-phase-3-of-the-nhs-response-to-the-covid-19-pandemic/>