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**1 Swine flu outbreak – important message from your LMC**

The situation regarding the swine influenza A (H1N1) outbreak continues to evolve.

Please remember to check your inbox and our [website](#) daily for the latest information and guidance. You can also keep us updated with your concerns by contacting our exclusive email address: [flu@lmc.org.uk](mailto:flu@lmc.org.uk).

Please note that the [flu@lmc.org.uk](mailto:flu@lmc.org.uk) email address is not an emergency helpline. However, please be assured that all queries and local intelligence are read. They are also fed back to NHS London on your behalf which helps us to raise the reality that you are facing with those organisations leading on flu.
If you do not receive an email response from the flu account, this is because we are prioritising the queries that we can deal with.

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2 **Vetting and barring scheme (VBS)**
As we have previously reported, the new vetting and barring scheme (VBS) came into force on 12 October 2009. The VBS is being introduced in stages and currently the following applies:

1. It is a criminal offence for a person who is on a barred list (eg, the Proceeds of Crime Act (PoCA) 2002, the Protection of Vulnerable Adults Scheme (PoVA) and/or List 99) to seek or undertake ‘regulated activity’.

   ‘Regulated activity’ includes working as a GP, as a practice nurse and may also include working as a healthcare assistant. It applies to those who are already in post or are seeking a new post.

2. It is a criminal offence for a practice knowingly to appoint a barred person to a ‘regulated activity’ post. Also practices should require an enhanced CRB check of all new recruits and of those changing jobs who will be undertaking ‘regulated activity’.

   The PoCA, PoVA and List 99 are being replaced by two new barred lists managed by the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) – one for barred from working with children, and one for barred from working with vulnerable adults. The enhanced Criminal Records Bureaux (CRB) check will now provide information held on these two ISA barred lists.

3. Employers have a duty to inform the ISA if they believe that an individual has caused harm, or posed a risk of harm, to children and other patients with whom they work.

   There is no central funding available to practices for CRB checks. Therefore, the issue of who pays for the check will be one for the employer and the applicant.

   General Practitioner Committee (GPC) guidance on the VBS will be available very soon. Further information is available on the [Independent Safeguarding Authority’s (ISA) website](http://www.indep safeguardingauthority.org.uk).

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3 **Doctors’ and dentists’ pay review body (DDRB) – latest news from the GPC**
NHS Employers (NHSE) and the Department of Health (DH) have now submitted evidence to the DDRB. The DH has recommended a 1% uplift for salaried GPs and GP trainers, no uplift to the GP educator pay scale and retention of a 45% supplement for registrars. NHSE called for a reduction to 40% of the registrars supplement.

Both the NHSE and the DH have asked the DDRB for very small gross uplifts to GMS contract values. They have stated that the increase should cover practice expenses but that this should depend on GPs delivering efficiencies. NHSE has recommended an uplift of ‘less than 1%’ and the DH has suggested a gross uplift of 0.5%. The DH’s recommendation was calculated to result in no uplift to net income while the NHSE’s recommendation is intended to result in a net increase only if practices deliver efficiencies and improved productivity.

Further updates from the GPC will be available soon.
4 Mental health services
We have become aware that work is ongoing on an Adult Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Barnet, Enfield and Haringey. This strategy has been drafted without any consultation with the LMC and we have had no opportunity to date to express our concerns about the current provision of mental health services in Barnet. One of our concerns, for example, is that despite referrals being made to a named consultant, responses are often received back from the triage team and it is not clear who is in the team or whether the letter has been seen by a doctor.

We will be raising our concerns with NHS Barnet. If you have any concerns about any of the services provided by the Mental Health Trust please contact Maria O’Dwyer who is the Head of Commissioning for Mental Health for NHS Barnet on 020 8952 2381.

5 Blue badge assessments
We have reported in previous newsletters of our discussions with NHS Barnet regarding the completion of Blue Badge assessments. NHS Barnet has been in discussion with Barnet Council for some time now with a view to Barnet Council employing an occupational therapist to do the assessments. Unfortunately these negotiations have stalled at least for the current financial year and so no alternative arrangements have been put in place.

Please remember that you are not contractually obliged to complete blue badge assessments. In the circumstances, if you no longer wish to complete the assessments, we have come up with a form of words which you may wish to display in the surgery or give to patients who request you to complete the forms. This is below:

‘Unfortunately, GPs are not responsible for the completion of Blue Badge assessment forms and in most areas this does not happen. We are currently in discussions with NHS Barnet (which is responsible for the provision of your healthcare), who we understand, are also in negotiations with your local authority about the process for completing Blue Badge assessments. Until an agreement is reached about who is the most suitable person to complete these assessments, we will not be able to complete any further forms. We want to ensure that these forms are completed appropriately and we may not necessarily be the best people to do this.

Unfortunately, we cannot direct you to the appropriate person to contact with regards to getting this form completed because, at present, we don’t have this information. However, we would suggest you contact the local authority and perhaps your MP in order to raise this issue. We also encourage you to contact Barnet Primary Care Trust directly by writing to the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) at Edgware Community Hospital, Burnt Oak Broadway, Edgware, Middlesex HA8 0AD or email pals@barnet.nhs.uk.

We apologise for any inconvenience caused and we hope to have this situation clarified as soon as possible.’
6 **NHS continuing healthcare assessment forms**
We would like to remind you that GPs are not obliged to complete NHS continuing healthcare assessment forms and if you choose to do so you are entitled to claim a fee. As previously advised, LMCs cannot legally negotiate a scale of what you should charge for this work so you are advised to establish your own fees. In the circumstances we suggest you calculate your hourly rate and work out how long the report takes you to complete and submit an invoice to NHS Barnet accordingly.

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7 **Clinical room required - can you help?**
Medical Justice, a network of volunteers who expose and challenge medical harms in immigration detention, requires a clinical room for one day a week, preferably on a Friday, in or near to Finsbury Park (preferred), King’s Cross or the Paddington area.

The room will need to be able to accommodate up to four people, including an interpreter, for examinations and teaching.

Medical Justice is a small charity, is not government-funded, is not qualified or registered to give immigration advice, and is not part of the NHS. It is a volunteer organisation that includes ex-detainees, doctors, lawyers and other experts. Medical Justice has little formal funding, few paid staff and relies mainly on private donations and unpaid work by members. Limited funds are available to pay for any room hire.

If you are able to help please contact Dr Frank Arnold, Clinical Director, the Medical Justice Network on 07740422918 or arnold_frank@hotmail.com.

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8 **Londonwide LEAD (Learning Education and Development) – providing training for the capital’s practice teams**
October LEAD events had a strong focus on ensuring practices are fit for purpose in today’s competitive environment, with events on practice business planning and information governance.

Following requests from our constituents, we held the first of a series of three fee paying workshops for practice managers entitled, ‘Business Planning to Secure Your Practice’s Future’:

- 14 October 2009 – The Brave New World of Primary Care (issues and challenges) – this explored what UK primary care could look like in three to five years time, issues for practices to tackle now to be ready to exploit the opportunities, how to identify your practice priorities and the role of the practice business plan.

  By the end of these three sessions, practice managers will be able to formulate a robust and nimble forward thinking business plan that will position their practice to respond positively to future challenges.

  The remaining two workshops will take place as follows:

- 10 November 2009 – Business Planning in the Real World of Primary Care
- 1 December 2009 – Creating your Personalised Practice Business Plan
Free information governance training for practice managers and practice Caldicott Guardians – NHS London is providing three free rounds of training sessions in central London to update practices on national information governance issues (such as the IM&T DES and IGSOC) and to support practices to achieve information governance standards. Demand has been so great that NHS London has doubled up the events. These events include worked anonymised examples from practices and breakout sessions to discuss practice problems with your peers and identify solutions and next steps to take back to your practice team.

As outlined in our last newsletter, the first workshops were on improving the security of GP surgeries and used risk assessments of two volunteer GP practices in London. The final presentation is now available on our website.

Further information and guidelines on IGSOC are available on the Connecting for Health website.

The latest LMC advice is available on our website.

The second round of workshops were on NHS Data Loss incidents – lessons learned from recent events that you can take back to your practice. There will be a full report in our next newsletter. However, it was highlighted that the Choose and Book system automatically copies referrals onto a system’s hard drive that need to be removed at the end of the working day.

The final workshops in this series will be Consent for information sharing which will cover what are the rules and procedures for obtaining consent and sharing information; how is the world changing as the NHS is linked together and the Summary Care Record goes into use?

Dates: Tuesday 17 November 2009 (1.00pm lunch, workshop 1.30–4.00pm), Aeonian Centre, Shropshire House, London WC1E 6JA and Thursday 19 November 2009 (1.00pm lunch, workshop 1.30–4.00pm), Mothers’ Union (Mary Sumner House), London SW1P 3RB.

To book a place, please visit our website or call NHS London on 020 7969 5767.

Dates for your diaries:

- Medical Records Workshops for GPs will be held on 17 November 2009, 11 December 2009, 19 January 2010, 23 February 2010, 16 March 2010, 20 April 2010. 25 places per workshop, please look out for your invitation.

- Our fourth, free to attend forum for practice nurses will take place on Tuesday 17 November 2009. The workshop will take place at the General Chiropractic Council, 44 Wicklow Street, London WC1X 9HL from 1.00pm to 4.00pm (lunch and registration from 1.00pm to 1.30pm).

The programme for the day will include presentations on ‘Whose job is it! The GP or the nurse?’, ‘The Diabetic Patient’ and ‘Writing an article – you CAN do it!’.

There are 60 places available, please complete the form emailed to your practice either electronically or by hand and return it to Marie Vassallo (mvassallo@lmc.org.uk) at Londonwide LMCs, Tavistock House North, Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9HX. Please also contact us if you have not received anything and would like to attend.
9 **NHS pension scheme pension contributions for GP locums**

Some GPs working for practices on a regular fee based arrangement have been claiming the employer’s contribution element of their pensionable income from their PCT.

The statutory NHS Pension Scheme Regulations state that fee based GP work in a practice is only recognised as GP Locum work (in pension terms) if the GP is engaged on a strictly temporary basis. NHS Pensions advises that regular fee based work in excess of six months in one practice cannot be regarded as a pensionable GP Locum post.

Therefore if you are employing a fee based GP on a more regular long term basis this would not be defined as “temporary” under the statutory Regulations. For NHS pension purposes, the GP is afforded “type 2 medical practitioner” scheme status and would then be treated the same (in pension terms) as a Salaried GP. This means in effect that the practice then becomes responsible for paying the Scheme employer contributions at 14%.

NHS Pensions has recently issued [newsletter TN 8/2009](#) which covers this issue.

If you have any queries relating to this issue, please contact NHS Pensions on 0845 421 4000 or visit the [website](#).

10 **Replacement for quality management analysis system (QMAS)**

The Department of Health (DH) and NHS Connecting for Health (CfH) are currently considering replacing the Quality Management Analysis System (QMAS) with a more flexible calculating and reporting system. The DH and CfH are looking to extend the payments supported beyond QOF to the following:

- the Quality and Outcomes Framework (the national QOF)
- quality indicators recommended by NICE that are not negotiated into the national QOF
- most directed enhanced services (DES)
- local enhanced services (LES) that work in the same way as the other payments that are supported by the new system

We will keep you informed of the results of the recent consultation when they are available.

11 **Smart card log out times**

We have received a number of concerns regarding operational difficulties with the current system log out time for smart card users, based on a system defined maximum of 10 hours.

We have raised the particular concern that, with extended hour surgeries, the range of log in time can be up to 13 hours, should surgery commence at 8.00am and extended surgeries be booked until 8.00pm. We have also been advised by GP colleagues that the system can take some time to log back in, once the automatic log out has taken place.

We have therefore written to the Primary Care Clinical Lead at Connecting for Health to ask that a solution is implemented very soon in order to rectify these issues. We have proposed that the log out
12 Women doctors: making a difference – report of the chair of the national working group on women in medicine
In a chapter of his 2006 Annual Report, the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) considered the implications of the recent increase in the number of women entering medical school. This figure has risen from 492 in 1960/61 to 4,583 in 2008/09. This increase has created demand for, amongst other things, improved flexibility of working hours and changes to career expectations, as well as leading to new challenges for workforce planning.

Despite this large increase in the number of women entering medical school, there remains an under-representation of women in senior grades of the medical profession. In August 2008, Baroness Deech was asked to chair the National Working Group on Women in Medicine in order to consider the opportunities available to women working in the medical profession.

The report from the working group has now been published. It considers the current situation, reviews existing work and recommends a programme of action to improve opportunities for women in medicine.

You can download a copy of the report from our website.

13 Calling all salaried and locum GPs – BMA event ‘Recognise your Talents, Realise Opportunities’ on Friday 13 November 2009
This full day conference for salaried and locum GPs entitled ‘Recognise your Talents, Realise Opportunities’, will take place at BMA House on Friday 13 November 2009. The aim of the conference is to provide salaried and locum GPs with the tools that they need to succeed, including how to develop the skills that they already possess. For further information, call BMA Conferences on 020 7383 6819 or visit the BMA website.

14 Opportunity for general practice nurses (GPNs)
We are currently developing a website to provide an online programme which will be an essential resource for any nurse new to or returning to general practice. The website will provide introductory level learning resources and self-assessment questionnaires across a range of topics, covering baseline skills for nursing in general practice. It will represent the building blocks of an educational pathway to support a career in general practice nursing.

We now need GPN volunteers to help to test the new website. Volunteers will be asked to remotely test a unit of the website and to provide feedback on their experiences. The final programme will be launched at the first GPN Annual Conference in March 2010. Discounts will be offered to those volunteers who wish to complete the full course.
If any GPNs would like to participate in this exciting opportunity, please contact Jonathan Ashby at the LMC office on jashby@lmc.org.uk.

15 **Calling all practice nurses – free forum on Tuesday 17 November 2009 – places still available!**

Places are still available on our fourth, free to attend forum for practice nurses, which takes place on Tuesday 17 November 2009.

The workshop will take place at the General Chiropractic Council, 44 Wicklow Street, London WC1X 9HL from 1.00pm to 4.00pm (lunch and registration from 1.00pm to 1.30pm).

The programme for the day will include presentations on ‘Whose job is it! The GP or the nurse?’, ‘The Diabetic Patient’ and ‘Writing an article – you CAN do it’.

Places are limited at this free event so please complete the booking form electronically or by hand and return it to Marie Vassallo at Londonwide LMCs, Tavistock House North, Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9HX.

16 **Assessors in general practice**

The National Clinical Assessment Service (NCAS) is currently looking to recruit six to eight GPs who are currently working in a single handed or small practice with less than three whole time equivalent (WTE) partners, in an inner city or urban environment and/or providing an out of hours service to be part of the NCAS assessor panel.

Assessors are required to be available for up to 15 days a year to ensure that a service can be provided throughout the UK.

The deadline for the current recruitment is 20 January 2010, and the three-day training workshop is scheduled for 17 to 19 March 2010. Further details and application forms can be found on the NCAS website.

17 **Local involvement networks (LINks)**

LINks were established in April 2008 to take over the responsibility of patient and public involvement forums. Their purpose is to find out what people want from their health and social care services.

The BMA has recently issued a frequently asked questions guidance document on LINks. The guidance covers such items as:

- What is a LINk?
- What do LINks do?
- Are LINks able to enter and view my practice?
- Do I have to respond when a LINk requests information?

Visit the guidance section on our website to download the full document.
18 **Don’t forget to use our successful vacancies section**

Our website contains a free to use and very popular vacancies section. Indeed, a number of practices now regularly advertise their vacancies on our site.

All you need to do is visit the [jobs section](#) on our website and complete the easy to use [post a vacancy form](#). We will then post your vacancy onto the website for a period of time of your choice.

Please do use this free service.

19 **Prize draw winner!**

We are delighted to announce that Mrs Val Mitchison, Practice Manager at the Forest Road Group Practice in Edmonton, was the lucky winner of a prize draw that took place at our recent ‘New Complaints Procedure’ workshop. Mrs Mitchison won a television kindly supplied by our event sponsors, Opus Telecom.

Don’t forget to visit our website for further information on forthcoming events on [Business Planning in the Real World of Primary Care](#) (Tuesday 10 November 2009), [Creating your Personalised Practice Business Plan](#) (Tuesday 1 December 2009) and [Medical Records in primary care - the importance of good record keeping](#) (various dates from November 2009 to April 2010).

20 **Courses of interest**

- **Transforming eye health and sight loss services in London, 16 November 2009**
  
  **Venue:** Canary Wharf, London  
  **Cost:** Free of charge  
  **Course details:** This afternoon seminar, for health and social care commissioners, managers and other key professionals based in London, is being run by the London Visual Impairment Forum. It will include the launch of the report on services for visually impaired people in London, presentations by leading professionals in the health and social care sector, discussion groups for planning action and networking. Bookings close on Wednesday 28 October 2009.

  **Contact:** To attend this free event visit the [Vision 2020 website](#) or call 020 7378 0985 for more information.

- **Improving end of life care using a competency framework, 25 November to 1 December 2009 and 23 February 2010**
  
  **Venue:** St Christopher’s Hospice, 51-59 Lawrie Park Road, London SE26 6DZ  
  **Cost:** £90  
  **Course details:** This day seminar aims to equip managers from all care settings to implement the end of life competency framework. Participants will have an opportunity to reflect on the following: the Department of Health’s End of Life Care Strategy (2008) and the reasons for its development; the responsibility of nursing and care staff to provide skilled and competent end of life care; what competencies are and what they are not; how to implement them; how to improve the care your staff deliver at the end of life.
Contact: To find out more or to reserve your place visit www.stchristophers.org.uk/education or email education@stchristophers.org.uk.

- **Practical allergy for primary care, 2 December 2009**
  - **Venue:** St Thomas’ Hospital, Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 7EH
  - **Cost:** £50 (rising to £65 late registration). 15% discount for BSACI members.
  - **Course details:** Kings College London Allergy Academy is delighted to present its first primary care study day in collaboration with Allergy UK and the British Society of Allergy and Clinical Immunology. Following the huge rise in the burden of allergic disease, many doctors in primary care have been left feeling unprepared to give their allergic patients the best possible care. This study day aims to take a highly practical approach in the management of allergic disease in the primary care setting, drawing on both allergy specialists, as well as experienced general practitioners. The day will include a combination of lectures as well as interactive case based sessions using delegate response pads.

  Contact: Visit the [Allergy Academy](http://www.allergyacademy.org.uk) website for further details and registration.

- **Quality in Modern General Practice: getting ready for the new agenda, 4 December 2009**
  - **Venue:** BMA House, Tavistock Square, London, WC1H 9JP
  - **Cost:** £86.25 inc VAT (BMA Members), £143.75 inc VAT (Non Members)
  - **Course details:** This General Practitioners Committee (GPC) one-day conference aims to inform GPs about the forthcoming changes to the quality agenda facing the profession. These changes include registration with the Care Quality Commission and practice accreditation. The policies and initiatives will have a significant impact on general practice. The conference will consider the new quality agenda, discuss what the changes are and why they have been introduced, and how these changes will affect primary care.

  Contact: For further information, call 020 7383 6923/6137, visit the [BMA website](http://www.bma.org.uk) or email confunit@bma.org.uk.

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