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1. **QOF Prevalence 2009/11 – important update for practices**

The General Practitioners Committee (GPC) and the Health Minister, Ben Bradshaw, have exchanged letters about prevalence changes. The GPC has asked the government to ensure that primary care organisations (PCOs) inform practices about the impact of the prevalence changes and work with LMCs to help badly affected practices. In addition, the GPC has asked NHS Employers to write to all PCOs and SHAs in England to encourage negotiations with LMCs on behalf of badly affected practices as agreed.

The Chair of the GPC, Dr Laurence Buckman, is due to meet Ben Bradshaw in the near future to discuss prevalence changes and the particular problems about the implications for funding in London.

2. **The importance of patient groups**

The BMA has produced some very helpful guidance on the importance of patient groups, how to go about setting one up and sustain it over time. You can access this information on the [BMA website](http://www.bma.org.uk).
Patient groups are a great way of gaining a useful insight into what your patients really think and the support of such groups can be invaluable.

We encourage all practices to take a look at this resource and, if you don’t already have a patient group, use this guidance to start one, because we can guarantee it will be worth your time. In the long run, practices will be judged on whether they have their own patient group and the recently released ‘Primary Care and Community Services: Improving GP Services’ report highlights patient groups as a key aspect of this new strategy.

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3 Display energy certificates – advice for practices
From 1 October 2008 practices, as "institutions providing public services" whose floor area equals or exceeds 1,000m², will need to display a DEC (Display Energy Certificate).

The legislation introducing the requirement for DECs is included in the Statutory Instrument 2007: 991 The Energy Performance of Buildings (Certificates and Inspections) (England and Wales) 2007.

The regulations apply to "buildings with a total useful floor area over 1,000m² occupied by public authorities and by institutions providing public services to a large number of persons and therefore frequently visited by those persons."

GP surgeries do not count as "public authorities", but they do count as "institutions providing public services". The question then becomes whether they are over 1,000m² and "providing public services to a large number of persons".

The legislation does not define a "large number" but the EPBD (Energy Performance of Buildings Directive) confirms that “if a GP’s surgery is over 1,000m², then it will be required to have a display energy certificate.”

If you are unsure as to whether this applies to your surgery then you should contact the EPBD helpline direct on 0845 365 2468. If you are still unsure after speaking to the EPBD than you should contact Trading Standards for a view, as they are responsible for checking compliance and administering any fines.

Please also note that the EPBD has confirmed that DECs apply to the area occupied by each entity within the premises. An example given is of a large building measuring 1,500m² occupied by a practice together with another private business with each occupying 750m². In this case, the EPBD has indicated that the practice would not have to have a DEC.

However, the EPBD has also indicated that there might be different considerations if the whole building was occupied by contractors offering public services such as a GP practice and a dental practice in one large building. If this was the case, then the contractors should contact the helpline for advice with full details of the nature of the businesses and the floor area that each one occupies.

Useful links:
1. Main web site
2. A guide to Display Energy Certificates and advisory reports for public buildings

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4 Report from the latest Hillingdon LMC meeting
The last Hillingdon LMC meeting discussed the potential impact of recent policy developments on local practices and GPs in Hillingdon, including sessional GPs. Challenges include the increase in commercialisation through Healthcare for London and the reduction of resources through QOF changes, changes to the calculation of prevalence and no GP pay rise.

- **Collaborative working** – Hillingdon practices have a good history of collaborative working, for example through co-operatives and the PBC Confederation. Dr Drage encouraged practices to use these networks to formulate strategies to put to the PCT for sharing and providing services and staff to:
  - improve patient access to services
  - demonstrate that there is sufficient primary care within an area
  - provide succession planning
  - provide an alternative to GP led health centres
  - submit collaborative bids for resources eg:
    - for services
    - for improvement grants to develop the provision of services across practices

- **Independent GP issues** – Drs Neueschwander and Wakerley highlighted how the uncertain future of general practice in Hillingdon had created anxiety for sessional/ salaried/freelance locum GPs and GPWSIs, who do not have the security of a partnership and wish to participate in local networks and commissioning. Practices and PBC can support these GPs by involving them in their planning and decision making and ensuring processes are transparent.

Your LMC wishes to improve its support to sessional GPs and is carrying out a survey on working conditions and assisting the PCT to improve its communications with independent GPs on its Performers List.

5 PCT – practice IT SLA
The joint LMC – PCT primary care stakeholder IT working group has been meeting since January and agreed a revised SLA that was rolled out to practices. The LMC has thanked practice managers for their hard work.

6 RIO
The PCT will be working with five practices to pilot using the system to respond electronically to the PCT Child Health Department. The PCT hopes to resolve any teething problems and extend the system to all practices on 1 April 2009.
7 **Hillingdon Hospital (THH) issues**
LMC officers continue to meet with PCT and THH leads to find solutions to problems with pre-operative, discharge and referral processes.

Please continue to send anonymised examples of problems that need taking up with THH to Mr Peel at the PCT and copy in the LMC office.

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8 **Hillingdon LMC AGM 17 March 2009**
The Hillingdon LMC will be holding an open meeting on Tuesday 17 March 2009 in the Hillingdon Hospital Postgraduate Medical Education Centre, 6.30pm hot supper for a 7.00pm start.

The meeting will discuss

- How to support threatened practices now
- How to improve local recruitment and retention
- How to manage a practice in an environment of change and competition
- The practicalities – how PBC can be part of the solution

We will also be discussing what issues you would like raised at a national level through the GPC. Please do your best to send a practice representative to this important meeting.

Please look out for the flyer and confirm your attendance and catering requirements to lwilliams@lmc.org.uk or fax 020 7383 7442.

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9 **Motions for the national LMC Conference in June**
Your LMC is currently identifying motions to raise at this year’s conference. Your representatives at the Conference will be Dr T Davies and Dr M Garsin.

Please can you think about any issues that you would like to be raised nationally and forward them by the end of March to Lesley Williams, Committee Liaison Executive, by email: lwilliams@lmc.org.uk. You do not have to submit a carefully worded Motion: topics that you think need to be raised at a national level would be sufficient for the office to work on. All Motions will be confirmed with LMC members before they are put forward.

Some examples of topics raised at recent LMC meetings are:

- concern at the negative impact of QOF prevalence changes on London practices
- concern at the fragmentation of patient care created by secondary care providers referring back inappropriately to GPs for onward referral

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10 Please help us to help you – sessional/salaried/freelance GP communications

If you are a practice manager or senior partner we would be grateful if you could share this newsletter and this item in particular with any sessional/salaried/freelance GPs that work in your practice.

Londonwide LMCs represents all GPs within the NHS in London. We regularly email information to local GPs through:

- e-alerts on medico-political issues affecting your practice
- e-newsletters detailing Londonwide and local news
- invitations to upcoming educational courses and events

All information provided to Londonwide LMCs is treated in the strictest confidence and is kept securely on our database. The information provided is for our use only and will not be shared with third parties.

We would like to encourage you to keep us up to date with your contact details (email address and mailing address) so that we can ensure that you receive important information on a regular basis. This will also ensure that you are included on the Londonwide LMCs’ database for your local LMC’s bi-annual elections and any vacancies on the LMC that occur in between elections.

Please will you also let us know if you have any communications problems with your Performers’ List PCT so that we can raise these on your behalf by emailing info@lmc.org.uk.

11 Please prepare now for possible improvement grant opportunities in 2009/10

Some PCTs in the North West sector have operated improvement grant processes in 2008/09 and anticipate having a budget to support improvement grant schemes in the next financial year of 2009/10.

Historically, some practices have been unable to apply within PCT deadlines because of workload issues. Therefore, we would like to encourage you to prepare for possible bids now. This could mean that if funding is made available in 2009/10 you have potential schemes ‘on the shelf’ that you can submit.

We would encourage you to assess your practice needs and, if possible, having a range of schemes ready for minor improvement grants (under £50,000) and major improvement grants (over £50,000). Please note that major improvement grant applications of over £50,000 would require a business case to be submitted.

Please ensure that any proposals fit in with your PCT’s priorities as outlined in its Commissioning Strategy Plan. These could include the following. (Please note these are not ranked in order of priority):

- Compliance with statutory requirements (eg, health and safety, fire precaution, Disability Discrimination Act compliance (DDA))
- Length of useful life of premises
- Schemes that allow practices to meet minimum standards for primary care premises
- Schemes that add clinical capacity (linked to the practice development plan)
- Schemes that increase the range of services delivered in primary care
- Schemes that improve the patients’ environment

Recent examples from North West sector PCTs have been:

- an application for the redesign of a reception area including records storage, cabinets and CCTV
• an application to back scan patient records in order to take them off site and free up space that can better be used and may require related building alterations to be undertaken

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12 **Calling all practice nurses – free to attend workshop on 17 March 2009**

Our second **free to attend workshop for practice nurses** will take place on **Tuesday 17 March 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 and discussion on flu and pneumococcal vaccines, infection prevention and control in the community and the changing epidemiology of TB.

Places are limited at this free event so please complete the [booking form](mailto:mvassallo@lmc.org.uk) and return it to Marie Vassallo (mvassallo@lmc.org.uk) at Londonwide LMCs, Tavistock House North, Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9HX.

As you know we have been working hard to expand the services that we provide to GPs and their practice teams, in particular, looking at the provision of a broader range of education and training. In 2008 we established Londonwide LEAD (Learning Education and Development). LEAD focuses on providing training for GPs, practice managers and practice nurses across the capital.

LEAD will be increasing the provision of practice nurse focused training over the coming months.

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13 **Licence to Practise: GMC consultation on draft regulations and supporting guidance**

The GMC has proposed that in future, all doctors wishing to practise medicine in the UK will need to be both registered with the GMC, and hold a licence to practise. This new requirement to hold a licence to practise will come into effect in Autumn 2009. The consultation ends on 21 April and the results will be published 21 September 2009. For full details on the consultation please visit the [GMC website](http://www.gmc-uk.org).

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14 **Preparing for pandemic influenza – concise update**

Our colleagues at Wessex LMC have kindly produced concise guidance on preparing for pandemic influenza.

The guidance is for GPs and their teams in general practice. Practice Managers in particular should find it helpful. Please feel free to download the guidance from the [Wessex LMC’s website](http://www.wessex-lmc.org.uk).

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15 **Londonwide LEAD (Learning Education and Development) – upcoming events**

Londonwide LEAD focuses on providing development and training for **GPs, practice managers** and **practice nurses** across the capital.

We have just provided a very successful seminar for **GPs** and **practice managers** on completing Invitations to Tender (ITT). We intend to offer the following training in 2009 for **GPs**:

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• Two GP clinical update sessions
• A workshop on note-taking and summarisation
• An update on the complaints process for GPs and practice managers
• A workshop on how to develop a marketing strategy for your practice
• Two workshops for sessional GPs

In order to improve communications across the capital, LEAD initiated pan-London practice manager forums. The forums enable practice managers from diverse areas of London to get together and learn from each other’s experiences. Further practice manager forums are scheduled for 23 June and 14 October.

Further workshops will be run on developing a marketing strategy for your practice, an update on the complaints process and other areas such as contracts of employment.

LEAD has increased the provision of practice nurse focused training with the help of Sue Cross, Practice Nurse Advisor to Londonwide LMCs. Sue has experience of being a practice nurse, nurse practitioner and an Associate Director of Primary Care Nursing.

We are always looking for further input for you, our audience. Please do let us know if there are any workshops that you would like us to provide, by contacting: info@lmc.org.uk.

16 Department of Health (DH) end of year bulletin on QMAS
The DH bulletin gives QMAS users and administrators advice and guidance on the changes to QMAS for the year ending 2008/09. The bulletin covers information on the Statement of Financial Entitlement (SFE) for 2008, deadline for end of year payments, PE7 and PE8, records 23 (ex smoker), PC03, National Prevalence Day and user passwords.

There is also a helpful section on frequently asked questions.

17 BMA launches new handbook for salaried GPs
The BMA has launched a new Salaried GPs Handbook designed to give employers and employees comprehensive information on the legal and contractual issues facing salaried GPs.

Areas covered in the handbook include:

• Detailed advice on the statutory and contractual rights of salaried GPs and their employers
• Guidance on how to become a salaried GP and the work involved
• The best way to get involved in local and national representation

A hard copy of the handbook has been sent to all BMA’s salaried GP members and is available to all BMA members on the BMA website.
**18 Medicines du Monde annual conference – mobilizing healthcare professionals and activists – a force for change – 21 March 2009**

This all day event in London will bring together leading academics, parliamentarians and field workers from around the world to discuss divergent interests and identify areas of common ground.

Items covered on the day will include:

- Access to healthcare: a growing problem amongst vulnerable migrants
- Workshops on advocacy in the UK and abroad
- Should the law prohibit the deportation of terminally ill patients?
- A special performance by Actors for Human Rights

If you would like to attend this event please visit [www.medecinsdumonde.org.uk](http://www.medecinsdumonde.org.uk) or call 020 7515 7534.

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