

CLMC Bulletin 515 – 16/08/22

GP Wellbeing

Last week we heard the [distressing news](#) that Dr Gail Milligan, a GP at Camberley Health Centre in Surrey, took her own life. The BMA and the General Practitioners Committee, expressed the profession's condolences to Dr Milligan's family and her Practice.

Dr Milligan was, like so many of us, under intense pressure at work, as we struggle to meet what often feel like the impossible demands of the job. It's clear that action by Government is the only way in which these systemic pressures can be relieved on a long-term basis. On behalf of the profession, the BMA have long been urging government to tackle these issues that contribute to burnout and worsening wellbeing among doctors, be they GPs or otherwise, and they will continue to raise these issues. Last week the BMA wrote to James Morris MP, the minister for primary care, urging him to take action, and they will continue to impress upon the government the need to support the workforce.

Within Tees and the North East, we also had the sad news of the loss of one of our NECS colleagues, Ross Gallagher. It is all within the NHS who are feeling the pressures of work and life; we cannot underestimate the great impact and toll the last years have taken. With Ross' family agreement, the ICB in Tees Valley (formerly Tees Valley CCG) have set up a JustGiving page in his memory and honour (<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/ross-gallagher>). The funds will go directly to Middlesbrough & Stockton Mind and the ICB will pass on all the messages included to the family.

It is important that we look out for each other and remember to be kind to the whole NHS family; be it clinicians, managers, commissioners or administrators (and all in between!) we are under immense pressure. Every day every one comes to work to do all they can to help others; in doing so we often take on the weight of the people we come into contact with. We often face abuse, We often forget just how good a job each and every one of us is doing. Take a moment to reach out to your friends and colleagues, to remind those around you just how much they are valued.

Within the North East, we have commissioned Validium to offer [wellbeing services via Validium for ALL working in general practice within the North East](#) (including locums). We understand that a number of staff have accessed this confidential service and it has been well received. Please do not hesitate to contact Validium if you feel they can help.

There is also a wealth of [ICS provided support through their North East Support Hub](#) Telephone: 0191 223 2030 or Email: Hubstheword@cntw.nhs.uk or via online form on the website

The BMA also want you all to know you have the support of your colleagues and your union. A range of wellbeing and support services are available to doctors, and we encourage anybody who is feeling under strain to seek support. Please take a moment to check in on your colleagues' wellbeing and look out for each other.

Support comes in various forms, from confidential counselling services to networking groups and wellbeing hubs with peers as well as the [NHS's Practitioner Health service](#) and non-medical support services such as [Samaritans](#).

Specialist services are also available, helping doctors with specific issues ranging from Covid and addiction to financial and legal assistance. Most services are free of charge and available to all doctors and medical students, not just BMA members. Please do not hesitate to reach out.

Please visit the BMA's dedicated [wellbeing support services page](#), speak to a BMA adviser on [0330 123 1245](tel:03301231245) or email support@bma.org.uk and for further information see the [extended directory](#). We encourage you to access any, or all, of the forms support mentioned above, or encourage colleagues to do so, if you believe your or colleagues' wellbeing is at risk.

NHS England have also developed a whole range of support services accessible on the [Looking After You webpage](#). This area of the website is all about supporting NHS people and offers practical tips and advice as well as training courses, how to guides and general wellbeing information.

Abuse faced by Tees general practice teams and training for frontline primary care staff

CLMC would like to take a moment to reflect on the terrible situations we have found our Tees practice staff facing in the past days, weeks and months. It is absolutely appalling to learn of the level of abuse (verbal and physical) that staff are enduring whilst trying to carry out their role of helping others. No person should be in fear of going to work and they absolutely should not be subject to physical assaults.

We would like to assure all our members that we are doing all we can to support tackling this behaviour and restoring general practice as a safe place to work. We appreciate that any changes cannot come soon enough and 1 incident is 1 too many but we will continue to raise the issues and try to find solutions with the ICB, patient groups and practices.

As part of this work we are engaged in the specification development for the Special Allocation Scheme and we have pushed for the reintroduction of the cross health, social and emergency service working group which was stood down due to the pandemic. Additionally, we were successful in securing some security funding from the winter access fund which has led to the breakaway training that is provided through the Tees Valley Training Hub throughout August and further de-escalation training, also provided through the Tees Valley Training Hub. Finally, we are looking at the appointment a person/organisation to lead the wider risk assessment/abusive patient support work and we hope to have further updates on the support that will be offered via CLMC through this element of funding very soon.

Please also be aware of a free training programme entitled 'Handling difficult situations with compassion' is now available for frontline staff. [NHS England » Handling difficult situations with compassion – training programme](#) It is delivered online, is three hours long and is available daily from September 22 to March 23. Considering the current climate within general practice, where we know that staff are having to frequently deal with challenging behaviours, this course is something you may wish to consider for your team members.

Patient Lists

NHSE/I has asked PCSE to recommence data quality checks on GP practice patients lists, this includes a reconciliation of practice patients lists. This work was paused during the COVID-19 pandemic but started again on Monday 1 August 2022. Copies of the communication circulated to practices can be found here: [Patient list reconciliation](#) and [Patient list maintenance](#).

Although some targeted list reconciliation activity continued during the pandemic as essential groundwork for the decommissioning NHAIS, it has now been un-paused as a 3-year rolling cycle for all GP practices. The reconciliation checks the practice-held list with the NHAIS list held by PCSE. PCSE plan to start a new 12-month cycle, meaning a third of practice will be contacted over the next 12 months that have not previously had a reconciliation request.

GPC have raised concern with NHSE/I that this is a bureaucratic burden for practices which will detract from practices' capacity to provide patient care and asked that the process be delayed until practices had their full complement of clinical and administrative workforce.

Whilst NHSE/I have acknowledged and considered the points raised, they have declined the request, stating that the process will only affect a small proportion of practices nationally and that there will never be an ideal time to restart the process.

Pay Transparency update

In April 2022, amendments to the GP contract regulations were made that removed the requirement for individuals within scope of the general practice pay transparency provisions to make a self-declaration of their 2020/21 NHS earnings by 30 April 2022. Individuals within scope of the pay transparency provisions are not required to take any action in relation to their 2020/21 NHS earnings at this stage.

Pay transparency remains part of the current regulations, however DHSC has confirmed that commissioners should not enforce the requirement at this time.

Currently the individuals in scope of the regulations introduced in October 2021 will need to make a declaration of their 2021/2022 earnings in April 2023 as the provision remains in the GP contract. The latest position on Pay Transparency is available on the NHSE website: [NHS England » General practice pay transparency](#)

GPC continue to request further suspension of the requirement to declare earnings as we believe this is harmful to morale of the profession and could lead colleagues to reduce their working commitments or to retire. We also believe that it is inequitable to single out general practice for this requirement.

Changes to COVID-19 Vaccination ES (Phase 5)

Many raised significant concerns about recent amendments to the Enhanced Service for the COVID-19 vaccination programme, particularly in relation to the reduction of the item of service charge from £12.56 to £10.06, the removal of the care home administrative payment, and the decision to pass the cost of consumables (needles and needle disposal, cotton swabs etc) on to practices.

GPC wrote to Nikki Kanani (Medical Director of Primary Care, NHSE/I) and Amanda Doyle (Director of Primary and Community Care, NHSE/I) on 18 July to raise these concerns. They underlined the key role of, and enormous efforts made by, general practice in the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccination programme and highlighted that this amendment will effectively disincentivise practices from taking part – with severe risks to vaccine uptake and public health. GPC strongly urged NHSE to reverse its decision, and to extend the opt-in window to reflect these late changes. Finally, GPC explored NHSE/I to adopt a collaborative approach on these crucial issues, noting that GPCE was not afforded a meaningful opportunity to negotiate these amendments.

On 3 August GPC heard back from Nikki Kanani and Caroline Temmink (Director of Operations and Delivery, CVP, NHSE/I). Whilst it included recognition that general practice has helped to save ‘an estimated 200,000 lives and 186,600 hospital admissions’ throughout the pandemic, the response also made it clear that NHSE was not willing to make any of the concessions requested to ensure that the Enhanced Service remains sustainable. Whilst this is a frustrating outcome, GPC will continue to make representations on this issue to NHSE/I. Despite NHSE/I’s assertions, the pandemic remains a public health an emergency and, therefore, requires us to operate on an emergency footing; decisions taken to reduce the strength of our COVID-19 vaccination programme must be vehemently challenged.

Polio vaccine – London

As you will be aware, it was announced that [all children between the ages of 1 and 9 in all London boroughs will be offered a polio vaccine booster](#). This has been recommended by the JCVI, following the discovering of polio in sewage in north and east London.

Prior to this announcement, the details regarding how this vaccine programme would be delivered had not been agreed. The involvement of GP practices in this programme was not discussed or agreed with either GPC England, Londonwide LMCs or Surrey and Sussex LMCs. GPC are currently having urgent conversations with NHSE/I to reach agreement on whether or not practices will be involved in the programme. As part of these discussions they have raised their concerns regarding capacity to deliver any part of the programme, and funding available for the work involved.

GPC have made clear their discontent with how this announcement was made prior to agreeing how this programme would be rolled out, especially as practices are already overburdened and do not have spare capacity. We will ensure you are updated when progress is made.

GPC England Officer Team election

Following a recent decision at GPC England, the GPCE Executive Team (made up of a chair, a deputy and two executive team members) has become the GPC England Officer Team (made up of a chair and three deputies). This brings the leadership structure of GPC England further in line with what is standard practice at the BMA and ensures parity of esteem between the Officer Team. It will not impact the function of the Team.

There is a vacant position on the GPC England Officer Team. Following a recent decision at GPC England, this position shall be elected to ensure democratic accountability.

GPs who were members of the BMA were eligible to stand, and four candidates put themselves forward for the position. A hustling between the candidates and the electorate, voting members of GPC England, was held on Tuesday, 9th August. Voting opened on Wednesday, 10th August and closes on Wednesday, 17th August. The result of the election will be announced following this.

If you have any questions about the election process, please email elections@bma.org.uk.

Best Practice Show, 12-13 October 2022, NEC Birmingham

This year the BMA and GPC England will be at [Best Practice Show](#), UK's number one event for the primary care and general practice community, at the NEC Birmingham on 12-13 October 2022.

Free for healthcare professionals, the conference programme will provide up to 12 hours of CPD certified training, expertly tailored to meet the training requirements of healthcare professionals, with clinical content closely following the GP curriculum spearheaded by the Royal College of General Practitioners.

The BMA and GPC England will have a dedicated theatre at the conference, with a programme focussed on the most pressing issues facing general practice, including the future of general practice, working within ICSs, workload management, workforce management (ARRS roles and multidisciplinary teams), primary care estates, and more.

The conference programme as a whole will address major policy topics impacting general practice, such as around access, health inequalities, digital innovation, and the GP contract. It will also cover a range of clinical issues around areas such as cancer, dermatology, diabetes, gastroenterology, neurology, mental health, and cardiovascular disease. This year we'll also have a renewed focus on women's health and pain management as well as more content on immunisations.

If you are interested in attending, you can register [here](#).

GPC GP Bulletin & Informal Messaging

Read the latest GP bulletin (England) [here](#)

Read more about the work of the GP [Committee](#)

Read practical guidance for [GP practices](#)

See the latest update on Twitter: [@TheBMA / Twitter](#), [@BMA_GP / Twitter](#) [@DrFJameel / Twitter](#)

Read about BMA in the media: [BMA media centre | British Medical Association](#)

Mental health and wellbeing – looking after you and your practice team

Primary care coaching - communications toolkit

In these pressured times it is absolutely critical you look after yourself and your teams. NHSE/I have launched their new communications toolkit, supporting promotion of the NHS England and NHS Improvement Looking After You national coaching service: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1aS8-sTH1W9qv49d9Tq3hhwg9jJZZ5MFs>

Within the toolkit you will find social media images, banners, bulletin copy, website copy and quotes from those who have used the free services. There has been some excellent feedback from those who have accessed coaching, but we are aware there are still many colleagues who are not aware of this available support. It remains a difficult time for the workforce, so we would appreciate any help you are able to give to share these offers.

A member of their team would also be happy to come to meetings or events within regions and systems to talk about the offers: england.lookingafteryou@nhs.net

A coaching landing page hosts all three offers: www.england.nhs.uk/lookingafteryou. Recognising that frontline primary care colleagues involved in the delivery of primary care services, both clinical and non-clinical, continue to face many challenges, NHSE have developed three coaching offers for the workforce:

- 1) Looking After You Too – coaching about you and your wellbeing
- 2) Looking After Your Team – coaching about you and your team
- 3) Looking After Your Career - coaching about you and your career

The coaches are highly skilled and experienced, and all coaching is free and confidential. The sessions are delivered virtually, preferably via a video platform, but telephone appointments are also available. Thousands of people have booked sessions and given positive feedback on their experience.

GP appraisal leads and GP tutors offer of telephone support conversations remain for any GP who feels they would like to talk through any aspect of their professional/personal life that has been affected by Covid. To organise a telephone support conversation, either with the appraisal lead or with a GP tutor, please contact the appraisal team, or email di.jelley@nhs.net

Crisis Coaching & Mentoring: [Coaching and mentoring sessions are available now](#) for all NHS and Health and Social Care leaders. Delivered by The Centre for Army Leadership and Meyler Campbell Coaching, these sessions are designed to support with the huge pressure on the ability of the NHS to deliver safe, high-quality care, sharpen focus on meeting the core needs of staff, ensuring wellbeing and sustained motivation to deal with this rapidly changing situation. The intervention will give leaders an understanding of crisis leadership that goes beyond what is necessary and focused on engagement and motivation through Covid19. Further information and how to register [see link here](#)

The BMA's [report on the mental health and wellbeing of the medical workforce](#) which sets out ten recommendations to be addressed to protect staff during the pandemic and in the future. The BMA is here for you and offers supportive [wellbeing services](#) which include face-to-face counselling. You can access one-off support or, after triage, a structured course of up to six face-to-face counselling sessions. Call 0330 123 1245 today or [visit the website](#) for more information.

For all other support, speak to a BMA adviser on [0300 123 1233](tel:03001231233) or email support@bma.org.uk

[Read more about doctors' wellbeing during the pandemic](#) and on Twitter [@TheBMA](https://twitter.com/TheBMA)

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