

Sessional GPs Newsletter



www.bma.org.uk

for salaried and locum/freelance GPs

January 2012

Welcome to the Winter 2012 edition of the Sessional GP Newsletter.

This issue covers the following topics:

Pensions reform

NHS Reforms update

Locum agreement guidance

Guidance on setting up and developing Sessional GP groups

Devolved administration updates

Information cascades

Revalidation

Retainer and Returner schemes

Sessional GP Conferences

BMA membership

We aim to keep you informed about the wide range of new and ongoing issues affected salaried and locum GPs. This newsletter features updates on what the Sessional GPs Subcommittee and General Practitioners Committee are doing to represent Sessional GPs' interests to **make sure your voice is heard.**

If you have any suggestions for how we might improve the newsletter, or have any ideas of articles to include in future editions, please email sessionalgps.gpc@bma.org.uk

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The Sessional GPs Subcommittee

The Sessional GPs subcommittee has 16 members, elected on a regional basis to ensure representation from across the UK. The current members are listed below. See the [BMA website](http://www.bma.org.uk) to contact your representative.

Alexandra Ames London/Salaried

Kate Barusya Eastern/Locum

Stephen David Bassett Wales/Locum

Nik Howarth West Midlands/Locum

Anne Jeffreys Yorkshire/Salaried

Malcolm Kendrick North West/Salaried

Mary O'Brien Scotland/Locum

Bashir Qureshi London/Locum

James Parsons Yorkshire/Salaried

Mark Selman South West/Salaried

Vijoy Kumar Singh East Midlands/Locum

Clare Singleton North West/Salaried

Victoria Weeks London/Salaried

Lydia West Southern/Locum

Paula Wright North East/Salaried

Northern Ireland representative – current vacancy



STANDING UP FOR DOCTORS

British Medical Association, BMA House, Tavistock Square, London, WC1H 9JP © British Medical Association, 2012

BE INFORMED

**YOUR PENSION
FUTURE
SAY**

Pensions reform – Your Pension | Your Future | Your Say

The BMA recently launched a new campaign, **Your Pension, Your Future, Your Say**. This campaign aims to increase awareness of current pension proposals, as well as to ensure that all members' personal details are accurate and up-to-date. Pension roadshows have been taking place across the country, and several [webcasts](#) and presentations from these events are now available online.

Pension tension: how the government proposals affect you

For a doctor's guide to government changes to NHS pensions, look no further than the BMA **'Pension Tension' website**. This site, along with our [interactive modeller](#), helps to illustrate how the current proposals will affect you.

What next

The BMA has not accepted the government's final offer on pension reforms.

Following a UK-wide consultation of all our members, the BMA received over 46,000 responses with an overwhelming 84% of rejecting the government's final offer on pension reform. Following this, BMA Council have written to the government formally rejecting their pensions proposals, and are pressing for further negotiations so that fairer changes to the NHS pensions scheme can be agreed.

Work is also being undertaken on what industrial action may look like for BMA members, with the aim of ensuring the risk of harm to patients is minimal. An emergency BMA Council meeting has been scheduled for 25 February 2012 to discuss the possibility of balloting for industrial action, should the government's position not significantly change.

You can keep abreast of current developments on the proposed pension reforms by visiting the [BMA Pensions campaign webpage](#) regularly.



NHS REFORM

NHS Reforms update

Since the release of 'Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS' White Paper for England in July 2010, and the introduction of the Health and Social Care Bill to Parliament in January 2011, the BMA has been working hard to influence the reform proposals to ensure that the needs of doctors and their patients can be met.

At a BMA Council meeting on 24 November 2011, a motion was passed opposing the Health and Social Care Bill in its entirety. This decision was taken following proposals for commissioning support as published in the Department of Health document 'Developing Commissioning Support: Towards Service Excellence'. A briefing paper explaining the reasons for BMA opposition to the entire Bill is [available here](#).

Dr Laurence Buckman, Chairman of the General Practitioners Committee (GPC), wrote to all GPs in England in December 2011

detailing GPC concerns about the Bill as it currently stands, as well as highlighting key conditions which GPC believe are critical to the way forward in the development of Clinical Commissioning Groups. This letter can be viewed [here](#).

Bearing in mind these new developments, the Sessional GPs Subcommittee urges all Sessional GPs to communicate regularly with their Local Medical Committees. It is vital to contact your LMC to ensure that you are on their mailing list. Contact details for all LMCs are available on the [BMA website](#).

The BMA website also holds up-to-date information on all of the work we are doing in relation to the current NHS reforms, including the complete series of guidance that the GPC has produced for GPs. [This is available here](#).

Specialist BMA Guidance for Sessional GPs

The BMA Sessional GPs subcommittee regularly produces guidance for GPs, covering a wide range of issues. This specialist guidance provides useful advice and on matters important to you.

You can see the full range of guidance [here](#).

Guidance on Locum Agreements

The Sessional GPs subcommittee have produced a guidance document specifically for locum GPs who wish to produce written agreements with the practices for which they work.

Written locum agreements can have a number of benefits, and create successful working relationships with practices. This

BMA guidance reflects the self-employed status of a locum GP, covering significant areas such as definition of core work and additional and enhanced services.

BMA members can view this guidance on the [BMA website](#).

How to set up and develop Sessional GP Groups

Thinking of setting up a sessional GP group? Local sessional GP groups offer invaluable peer support for sessional GPs at all stages of their career. For those experiencing professional isolation or reduced access to education, clinical information and career opportunities, these groups can offer a range of both educational and social benefits.

The Sessional GPs Subcommittee has developed guidance on all the steps involved in setting up and developing a local sessional group. This guidance shares some of the models of good practice, as well as successful ideas and raises awareness about potential pitfalls.

You can view this document on the [BMA website](#).

Look out

For an interactive tool including information of regional sessional GP groups, coming soon to the BMA website.

Locum Handbook: Coming Soon

Look out for the BMA's handbook for Locum GPs, which will be published in Spring 2012.

Devolved Administration Updates



SCOTLAND

Retainer Scheme

SGPC recently wrote to the Scottish Government Health Directorate (SGHD) with concerns that some NHS Boards in Scotland have been capping their total number of retainer sessions to 2 per week per retainer. There has been no reply as yet to our letter but it will be raised again at the next negotiating meeting.

Information Cascades for Sessional GPs

SGPC has written to SGHD regarding problems with communication between NHS Scotland and sessional GPs. This letter was based on the letter that GPC sent to the Department of Health in England in May.

Locum GP Appraisal Funding

SGPC continue to raise the lack of funding for GP locums appraisal with the Scottish Government



NORTHERN IRELAND

A lot of sessional doctors in Northern Ireland have been finding it harder to find regular work as practice budgets contract and locums come to be seen as 'luxury' expenditure. Many newly qualified GPs are also finding it very hard to join Out of Hours providers.

The prospect of revalidation still looms and remains a worry for a lot of sessional doctors. Locums are particularly concerned about appraisal and what the exact requirements will be. In addition, there are concerns about the possible introduction of a minimum number of sessions to qualify for appraisal. With regards to CPD, sessional GPs want to be equally included in information cascades, to have the same opportunities for education as GP principals and, for the purposes of audit – to get a cipher number!

We also continue to be incensed by the lack of a returner scheme in Northern Ireland and are working with GPCNI to fight for one to be introduced. That a large number of excellent and competent GPs are unable to work in Northern Ireland because of this has to be seen as a national scandal and a complete waste of effort that went into their initial training.



WALES

Work on improving information cascades to Sessional GPs in Wales is going from strength to strength. In two Health Boards a full cascading process has been successfully implemented, with a further soon to be completed.

GPC Wales continues to promote involvement of Sessional GPs in leadership roles and is working with LMCs to achieve this. The Deputy Chair of the Sessional GPs subcommittee, Dr Stephen Bassett, plans to visit LMCs in the near future to discuss concerns of sessional doctors. If there are specific issues you would like to raise, please forward these to the Wales GPC secretariat at the following email address: dmartin@bma.org.uk

Representing you

Information Cascades

The GPC and its Sessional GPs Subcommittee have been consistently raising concerns about problems with important information reaching sessional GPs. We recently conducted a survey of LMCs on current information cascading practices in their local area. The results of this survey were overwhelming in demonstrating a need for national cohesion on information sharing and co-ordination.

As a result of our efforts in highlighting this issue, in September 2011 the Department of Health National Managing Director of Commissioning Development, Dame Barbara Hakin, wrote to all Chief Executives of PCT clusters in England. In this letter, it was recommended that personal contact details of all salaried and locum GPs on the medical performers list be used to convey important information to all sessional GPs. A copy of this letter can be viewed [here](#).

The GPC welcomes this first step in ensuring that sessional GPs receive important communications and information vital to their professional development. The Sessional GPs Subcommittee will continue to highlight this issue, ensuring that as Clinical Commissioning Groups develop, structures are put in place that allow effective information cascading to salaried and locum GPs.

Revalidation

The GPC and the Sessional GPs Subcommittee continue to work to ensure that revalidation is an equitable process for every doctor. The BMA has been promoting this issue through representation on official groups, informal meetings and written submissions to relevant bodies.

Concerns remain about the process of remediation and funding for these proposed arrangements. The effect of revalidation proposals as they currently stand will pose significant problems for sessional GPs, and in particular for peripatetic locums. The Sessional GPs subcommittee and the GPC are continuing to engage with the GMC, RCGP and Revalidation Support Team to resolve these issues before revalidation is implemented in 2012.

Retainer and Returner Schemes

Ensuring future funding for GP retainer and returner schemes remains a workforce priority for the Sessional GPs subcommittee.

We are interested in hearing of any cases where GPs have experienced difficulty returning to workforce due to lack of availability of a retainer scheme placement, or returning to work following time off. If you have experienced similar problems, please let us know by contacting us at the following email address: sessionalgps.gpc@bma.org.uk



Be involved



Essex Sessional GP Conference

The inaugural Essex Sessional GP Conference held in October 2011 was an overwhelming success. A collaborative venture between the North and South Essex LMC and the Postgraduate Medical Institute (PMI) at Anglia Ruskin University, the Sessional GP Conference was spearheaded by Dr Kate Barusya, Eastern Representative on the Sessional GPs Subcommittee and Dr Kamilla Porter, Vice-Chair and Sessional GP representative on South Essex LMC, with Arthur Hibble, Director of GP Development and Primary Care at the PMI and Dr Brian Balmer, CEO of North and South Essex LMC. The overriding objective of the conference was to engage with sessional colleagues in the region, many of whom have limited access to information about personal development and education.

Over fifty GPs from across Essex attended the event with equal numbers of salaried and

locum GPs, as well as GP educators, Out of Hours GPs and prison doctors. The keynote speech of the conference, given by Professor Hibble emphasised the importance of professional self-worth and highlighted many of the reasons why becoming a sessional GP is an increasingly aspirational career choice

The feedback from the conference was overwhelmingly positive. One doctor wrote: 'Thank you so much for an excellent inaugural conference, time very well spent,' while others commented: 'Feeling less isolated. The conference was very helpful. Please continue'.

Work is now underway for a second conference in 2012 and it is hoped that the sessional groups that have been set up or expanded as a result of the conference will return next October and feed back to delegates on their progress of the year.

Sessional GPs: All you want to know, all you want to ask

Friday 23 March 2012

BMA House, Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9JP

Why you should attend

Working as a sessional GP has its particular challenges, and this one day conference aims to offer expert advice practical information and guidance to support all sessional GPs in making the most of their careers.


Addressing the issues that matter to you, including pensions, appraisal and revalidation as well as making successful career choices, you will also be able to personalise the programme by selecting from a choice of breakout groups.

Topics will include:

- **CV writing and interview skills**
- **Working as a locum GP**
- **Employment law**
- **Negotiating skills**

You will also have the chance to meet colleagues from around the country, discuss shared issues and concerns as well as develop networks and cascade information.

To register your interest in the conference and receive further information as it becomes available, please email confunit@bma.org.uk.



**SESSIONAL GP
CONFERENCE
2012 –
FORTHCOMING
EVENT**

Keeping in touch

Contacting your Local Medical Committee

Local Medical Committees (LMCs) are the local representative body for GPs. The LMC that represents you should keep you informed about any issues affecting general practice locally. It cannot be stressed enough how important it is that the LMC has your up-to-date contact details. You can find out how to get in touch with your local LMC on the [BMA website](http://www.bma.org.uk).

Contacting the Sessional GPs Subcommittee about issues in your area

To ensure that we are addressing the issues affecting sessional GPs, we need to hear from you. If you are a BMA member and need individual employment advice you should contact the BMA on 0300 123 123 3. If you would like to bring an issue to the attention of the subcommittee then please email the details to sessionalgps.gpc@bma.org.uk

We want your details

The Sessional GPs Subcommittee represents all Sessional GPs in the UK, regardless of whether or not they are BMA members. If you are a BMA member you should make sure that your contact details are up to date and that you have registered your status as a sessional GP. You can update your membership details [online](http://www.bma.org.uk) or by emailing membership@bma.org.uk.

If you are not a member but would like to receive future editions of this newsletter you should email membership@bma.org.uk to register your details.

Become a member

Join today and ensure you have our full support when you need it.
www.bma.org.uk/join

