

Newsletter

April 2022

Sheffield
LMC



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

GP CONTRACT CHANGES GUIDANCE

**INAPPROPRIATE TRANSFER OF WORK FROM
SECONDARY TO PRIMARY CARE**

**DEATH CERTIFICATION AND CREMATION
FORMS**

GENDER DYSPHORIA GUIDANCE

**SHEFFIELD LMC REPRESENTATION OF
LOCUM GPs**

**FIT NOTES: CHANGES INTRODUCED APRIL
2022**

BENEFIT ELIGIBILITY AT THE END OF LIFE

**NEW POLICY FOR APPLICATIONS TO THE
MEDICAL PERFORMERS LISTS (MPL)**

FLU ORDERS

**TEMPORARY EMERGENCY GENERAL
MEDICAL COUNCIL (GMC) REGISTRATION**

UPDATE FROM FOOD WORKS: APRIL 2022

GP CONTRACT CHANGES GUIDANCE

Following the [announcement of the GP contract changes](#) for 2022/23, which came into effect from 1 April 2022, the British Medical Association (BMA) has published [a video and guidance](#) explaining what this will mean for practices, with the aim of supporting practices in their decision making and next steps.

In addition, [slides have been made available](#) from recent webinars held by the General Practitioners Committee (GPC) Executive Team last week.

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INAPPROPRIATE TRANSFER OF WORK FROM SECONDARY TO PRIMARY CARE

Many of you will recall the lengthy negotiations that have taken place between Sheffield LMC and Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (STHFT) regarding inappropriate transfer of work from secondary to primary care.

This transfer was occurring prior to the COVID pandemic, but increased markedly during the pandemic. As such, we liaised directly with Jennifer Hill, Medical Director (Operations) at STHFT, and in September 2020 Jennifer helpfully [issued a reminder](#) to her secondary care colleagues of their contractual obligations. The reminder covered:

- Consultant to consultant referrals;
- Issuing Fit Notes;
- Medication supply following out patient attendance;
- Implications of virtual clinics, particularly prescription and blood test requests;
- Investigations on discharge / explanations of results;
- Timely production and transmission of clinic letters;
- Shared care arrangements;

Practices that receive inappropriate workload requests from secondary care are advised to communicate this directly with the consultant / specialty concerned. Where this does not resolve an issue, or if there is any doubt about whether a request is reasonable, practices can email the LMC office for advice via administrator@sheffieldlmc.org.uk.

Please note, however, that the LMC must not receive patient identifiable information.

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DEATH CERTIFICATION AND CREMATION FORMS

The [Coronavirus Act 2020](#), which introduced easements to death certification processes and cremation forms during the pandemic, was repealed on 24 March 2022. However, the following provisions are continuing:

- If a doctor has **not** seen the deceased in the 28 days prior to death or any time after death they can complete the MCCD (medical certificate of cause of death), however the registrar would need to refer the MCCD to the coroner. This time period will remain at 28 days and not revert to pre-pandemic 14 days.
- The ability for medical practitioners to send MCCDs to registrars electronically.
- The [form Cremation 5](#), which was suspended during the pandemic, will not be re-introduced after the Coronavirus Act expires and has now permanently been abolished.

The following emergency provisions are changing with the expiry of the Act:

- The temporary provision allowing any medical practitioner to complete the MCCD will be discontinued.
- Informants will have to register deaths in person, not remotely.

The Cremation Regulations (2008) do not state any time frame in which a doctor has to have attended the deceased before or after death to complete Form 4. If a doctor completes Form 4 without having seen the deceased before or after death, the Medical Referee will make a decision about whether or not a cremation should take place.

Further information can be found in the recently updated British Medical Association (BMA) guidance [COVID-19: death certification and cremation](#).

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GENDER DYSPHORIA GUIDANCE

The General Practitioners Committee (GPC) has updated their guidance [Managing patients with gender dysphoria](#) to include some advice in relation to Gender Identity Clinics (GICs) asking GPs to review patients who had already been referred to the GIC, due to long waiting times.

The guidance also explains the role of GPs managing patients with gender identity problems, including questions relating to patient records, confidentiality, prescribing and monitoring responsibilities.

Alongside the updated guidance, the GPC has also published a [statement](#) about the need for NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE/I) to commission gender identity services in England.

The GPC recommends that the guidance is read in conjunction with the BMA guidance on [Inclusive care of trans and non-binary patients](#), which explains first steps and best practice in providing a supportive service to transgender, trans and non-binary patients, including patients who present with gender incongruence and / or dysphoria.

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SHEFFIELD LMC REPRESENTATION OF LOCUM GPs

Sheffield LMC stopped receiving information about GPs joining and leaving the Medical Performers List from Primary Care Support England (PCSE) in 2016. Due to GDPR we have been unable to receive information about GPs working in Sheffield and their contact details from any other source.

With regard to GP partners and Salaried GPs, we are grateful to Practice Managers who respond to our requests for updated information regarding the doctors working in the practice. However, it has proved more difficult to identify Locum GPs.

Locum GPs are an important part of the modern workforce in these difficult and changing times and, historically, have been underrepresented both locally and nationally. Therefore, we have recently produced [guidance](#) highlighting the benefits of LMC representation, how to seek representation and contact details for further information, which we are disseminating through various channels.

If you have Locum GPs working in your practice, we would be extremely grateful if you could highlight our guidance, in order for them to be aware of the information and services that are available to represented Sheffield GPs. Thank you.

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***FIT NOTES:
CHANGES INTRODUCED APRIL 2022***

On 6 April 2022, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) changed regulations so that fit notes do not require a signature in ink to authorise them. Instead, a new template is being delivered that is authorised by the name of the doctor being included in the form. This means fit notes can be completed, authorised and sent digitally.

The main points are:

- GPs' names will be automatically captured by their IT systems from their user login.
- The exact date the system will be updated depends on your system supplier.
- Until the new template is delivered, continue to use the current version, which still requires a signature in ink to be valid.
- Until the systems are fully updated both the previous and new versions are legally compliant and employers have been told they must accept both.
- If patients are not able to receive the fit note digitally or require a paper copy, then this must be provided (but does not require an ink signature).
- If there are issues then the form can still be completed by hand and authorised by the doctor writing their name, or signing the fit note in the relevant place and will still be legally compliant.
- Hospitals will still be using paper fit notes ordered from DWP, but from 6 April this should be on the new template.

Read more about these changes on [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).

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BENEFIT ELIGIBILITY AT THE END OF LIFE

The 'Special Rules' allow people nearing the end of life to (i) get faster, easier access to some benefits, (ii) get higher payments for some benefits, (iii) avoid a medical assessment. GPs can be asked to provide medical evidence (currently a DS1500) for a benefit claim under the 'Special Rules' process.

The rules are currently called the Special Rules for Terminal Illness (SRTI) and apply to people who have 6 months or less to live. These are changing to the 'Special Rules for End of Life' (SREL), which apply to people who have 12 months or less to live.

Due to parliamentary constraints, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) can only change the rules for 2 out of 5 benefits from April 2022. This means that from 4 April 2022 there are:

- 2 sets of 'Special Rules' criteria to consider;
- a new medical evidence form, the SR1, which will operate alongside the DS1500 form.

This is a transitional period until the new rules are extended to all 5 benefits. When this occurs, the DS1500 form will be withdrawn and the SR1 form will remain as the medical evidence form that can be provided to support a 'Special Rules' claim.

To support people accessing these benefits and to find out more about the new process and medical evidence form, the DWP has published [guidance](#).

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***NEW POLICY FOR APPLICATIONS
TO THE MEDICAL PERFORMERS LISTS (MPL)***

NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE/I) has published a [new policy for applications to the MPL](#), which introduces a number of changes, including:

- Removal of duplicated checks;
- Introduction of more nuanced support tailored to the specific needs of the performer;
- Confirmation that performers are able to increase or decrease their scope of work whilst on the MPL.

It is hoped that the new policy will bring positive changes for GPs in England. It is anticipated that it will allow a quicker application process due to the reduced documentary evidence required, and that the majority of applicants will be able to be included on the list with an education and / or clinical support plan and a probationary flag. These applicants will not require consideration by a Performers List Decision Panel.

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FLU ORDERS

Following the recent publication of the [guidance for the 2022/23 flu programme](#), it is apparent that some practices may have based their orders on last year's expanded cohorts and be experiencing difficulties in amending them. The General Practitioners Committee (GPC) has raised this with NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE/I), who has assured the GPC that they have received commitments from manufacturers to being flexible if the reimbursement letter impacted existing orders.

If manufacturers are refusing to provide this flexibility, practices should seek assistance by sending the specifics to the NHSE/I flu inbox phco.fluops@nhs.net.

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TEMPORARY EMERGENCY GENERAL MEDICAL COUNCIL (GMC) REGISTRATION

The UK government [has announced](#) that the temporary emergency GMC registration they introduced to support the pandemic response will close on 30 September 2022.

The GMC will shortly be in contact with doctors who still hold this type of registration to outline their options and to thank them for holding this type of registration during such a challenging period. The options are likely to include retaining temporary emergency registration until 30 September, asking the GMC to remove it, or applying to restore routine registration and licence to practise.

Further information about temporary emergency registration can be found on the [GMC website](#).

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UPDATE FROM FOOD WORKS: APRIL 2022

Please find below an update from Jo Hercberg, Director, Communications and Partnerships at Food Works (Sheffield LMC's chosen local charity).

Food Works Farm

[The Food Works Farm](#) is active again! In 2021 we harvested over 800 kg of fresh produce and we're planning for even more this year. Growing our own food boosts our ability to cope with disruptions to supply. As we have all seen in the media recently, we are at the whim of the supermarket supply chain which can be changeable. Growing food locally ensures good food remains accessible, right here in Sheffield. It's a plus for the environment too with less food miles, more local biodiversity and a focus on seasonal produce. Are you growing food this year? You can get involved and Grow A Row for Food Works! We'll happily collect any surplus you have available throughout the season.

Get Involved

Would you like to build a fair and sustainable food system in Sheffield? Here are 2 easy options that would really help:

1. Join us as a volunteer <https://thefoodworks.org/volunteer/>
2. Donate to support our work <https://thefoodworks.org/product-category/donations>

Every £10 allows us to save 15 kg of food from going to waste - enough to feed a person for a week. It also helps to avoid the same amount of carbon emissions that the average person in the UK produces each day.

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Please forward any articles for inclusion in the LMC newsletter to
manager@sheffieldlmc.org.uk

Submission deadlines can be found [here](#)

Contact details for Sheffield LMC Executive can be found [here](#)
Contact details for Sheffield LMC Secretariat can be found [here](#)