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GPC meeting

The GPC met on 23rd April 2009 and this newsletter provides a summary of the main items discussed.

DDRB report

The DDRB published its 2009 report since the GPC's last meeting. Although the recommended uplift was lower than the GPC requested, the DDRB's report represented something of a turning point and seems to create a number of favourable precedents for GPs. The uplift was intended to be in line with other branches of the profession and factored in practice expenses while not being persuaded by the case made by other parties to take efficiency savings into consideration.

The DDRB report and PMS practices

A letter from the Department of Health to SHAs dated 3 April 2009 recommends that PCTs consider the implications of the DDRB's award for PMS practices on a case-by-case basis. It suggests that applying the DDRB recommendation to PMS practices may result in PMS practices typically receiving a percentage uplift to their core funding comparable to the minimum uplift for GMS practices (0.7%), as opposed to the higher uplift received by GMS practices with

no MPIG or low levels of MPIG. The Department recommends that, to help make this decision, PCTs may wish to compare the funding of local PMS practices with the equivalent GMS funding for delivering the same services. We would expect PMS practices to receive a minimum uplift to core funding of 0.7%, plus the standard uplift to QOF and enhanced services funding.

Enhanced services expenditure

LMCs should be aware of two separate enhanced services spending issues discussed at the April GPC meeting.

First, owing to late publication of the clinical DES guidance, the profession is unlikely to have benefited from the 1.5% additional investment promised to the profession for 08/09. The negotiators are discussing this with NHS Employers and have taken the matter up formally with Alan Johnson. The GPC will continue to do its best to secure this money for the profession. With NHSE, the negotiators have asked the Technical Steering Committee to monitor enhanced services expenditure to aid our understanding of this situation.

As a separate issue, this year's DDRB recommendation should deliver an uplift to enhanced services of 1.74%. The GPC made a strong case to NHS Employers that this should be applied to Directed Enhanced Services only to ensure that the new investment reaches the profession. The Department of Health is however adamant that the uplift be applied across DESs and LESs. While the GPC is unhappy with this situation, it is important that LMCs are aware of the Department of Health's recent communication to SHAs of 3 April 2009 ('Fairer Funding of GP Services') which states:

"...the effect of the differential investment formula will be to increase the value of Enhanced Services payments by 1.74%....The Department of Health will increase DES payments in the Statement of Financial Entitlements by 1.74%. It is for PCTs to consider the implications of the DDRB recommendations for the LESs they commission and payments made under NESs which they administer locally on a case by case basis. In principle, we would expect PCTs to honour the spirit of the negotiated agreement and, other things being equal, increase contract prices in line with the 1.74% increase for DESs. However, PCTs are responsible for ensuring value for money from the services they commission and will need to consider with local practices the pricing of individual commissioned services."

Negotiations update

GPC negotiators met NHS Employers on 25 March to continue informal discussions about the arrangements for 2010-11, ahead of formal negotiations once the NHSE has received a mandate. A number of issues were nevertheless discussed including a possible extension of last year's clinical DESs, seniority and death in service benefits for locum GPs during a 'flu pandemic. Our most substantial topic of discussion was how to deal with MPIG over the next few years. We have agreed to undertake some joint modelling over the coming months to help inform our decisions.

NHS Next Stage Review procurements

The GPC circulated a questionnaire to all LMCs in January 2009, seeking specific information concerning the new procurements under the Equitable Access to Primary Medical Care initiative. The awarding of the contracts for these Darzi procurements by PCTs has taken longer than expected, and the GPC has so far received only limited information.

The initial findings of the questionnaire were presented to the committee for information, but it was acknowledged that more data needed to be gathered for the analyses to be meaningful. Although it was understood that many contracts have been delayed, and that it took time to collect the information to complete the questionnaire, it was reiterated that this data collection process remained vital to ongoing work in building an accurate national picture of the Darzi procurements.

The GPC will be contacting LMCs again shortly in areas where responses have been low to seek further information on the development of the local procurements. Although the GPC questionnaire requires information about the new contracts and the winning bidder for these procurements, it is equally useful to know of any PCTs that procurements have not taken place for any reason. In either situation, it remains important for the LMC to keep abreast of these local developments, seeking information from the PCT where necessary.

Revalidation

The RCGP's *Guide to the Revalidation of General Practitioners* document is now available on the RCGP home page (www.rcgp.org.uk). Last month the GPC discussed this, and the GPC's education, training and workforce subcommittee has considered it further. The RCGP has invited comments on its 'living' document, and so we will shortly be writing to them with our suggestions for ensuring that revalidation is suitable for the NHS, the profession and for patients.

LMCs should be aware that the RCGP's document is not the final version. We are aware that some PCOs are advising GPs to use this to start preparing for revalidation. This is inaccurate. The GMC has clarified that there will be a phased roll-out of revalidation only once the pilots have been evaluated and there is a robust network of responsible officers in post. Given that the revalidation pilots will now run until late 2010, and that there will also be second and third wave pilots, you can infer from this that revalidation will not be commencing in 2010. Therefore PCOs' advice to start revalidation now is premature. Further and more detailed advice on this will be circulated in due course.

Get Ahead: The Essential GP Trainee Skills Day

The GPC GP trainees subcommittee is organising an exciting one-day event for all those who are preparing for life as a GP, whether GP trainees, foundation trainees or those who have recently completed GP training.

Taking place on Friday 10 July at BMA House in London, this Essential Skills Day aims to help attendees make the most out of their training and preparation for life as a GP, from expert advice on presenting oneself to employers through CV and interview, to managing finances in the early years of practice. There will be sessions on how to make the most out of career choices and helping those preparing for life as a GP to avoid the pitfalls of the journey ahead.

Registration fees are £95 for BMA members, and £155 for non-members. For further information and to book a place, [please visit our website](#). If you have any questions, please contact BMA Conferences on 020 7383 6137/6923 or by email at confunit@bma.org.uk.

GPC regional election results

The following candidate has been elected unopposed to GPC from the following region.

- Julius Parker – Surrey & Croydon

As this was a bye-election, Dr Parker's term of office will run until June 2010. A further election will be held in this constituency in spring 2010 for a three year term.

Future meetings of GPC

The GPC has agreed to run a pilot during the upcoming 2009-2010 session in which subcommittee meetings will be held on the same day as GPC meetings. Three of the scheduled ten GPC meetings next year will begin at the later time of 2pm and subcommittee meetings will be held from 10am to 1pm.

Subcommittee meetings are currently held on different days from GPC meetings and it is hoped that, as well as increasing the efficiency of GPC, the pilot will result in a reduction in expenses for the GP Defence Fund.

Guidance on preventing child accidents in the home – download or order free copies now

We have been made aware of some recent publications by the [Child Accident Prevention Trust \(CAPT\)](#) to help parents of young children and the practitioners who work with them keep children safe from accidents at home:

- *Accidents and Child Development*, an easy-to-use guidance booklet for any practitioners involved with the safety, or care of children. You can download this document or order hard copies **for free** from the [ECM Online Publications page](#) or from the [ECM Resources and Practice Page](#), reference DCSF-00255-2009BKT-EN.
- *How Safe is Your Child at Home?* a short leaflet for parents and carers, covering common risks to children in the home and how they can be reduced. You can download this document or order hard copies **for free** from the [ECM Online Publications Page](#) or to the [ECM Resources and Practice Page](#), reference DCSF-00254-2009LEF-EN.

Alternatively, you can order **free** hardcopies of both publications (quoting the references above) from:

DCSF Publications
PO Box 5050
Sherwood Park
Annesley
Nottingham NG15 0DJ

Tel: 0845 60 222 60
Fax: 0845 60 333 60
Textphone: 0845 60 555 60

Media coverage report

Please find attached (appendix 1) a GPC media coverage report prepared by the BMA's press office, detailing GPC media activity during the last few weeks.

The GPC next meets on 21 May 2009, and LMCs are invited to submit items for discussion. You may like to review these, beforehand, with the representatives in your area who serve on the GPC. The closing date for items is 12 May 2009. It would be helpful if items could be emailed to Catharina Ohman-Smith at cohman-smith@bma.org.uk. You may also like to use the GPC's listservers to exchange views and ideas.

GPC News

GPC News is available via the Internet, via the BMA's web pages: www.bma.org.uk

LMCs are reminded that their regional representatives can provide more detailed information about the issues covered in GPC News, and other matters. Other members of the GPC would also be pleased to accept invitations to LMC meetings wherever possible. Their names and addresses are in the GPC Yearbook. The secretariat can also provide a written background brief if required, but it would be helpful to have such requests well in advance of your meetings.

Finally, if LMCs require assistance on local issues, they can also contact the BMA's local offices: addresses are on page 3 of the GPC's yearbook.

This newsletter has been sent to:

- Secretaries of LMCs and LMC offices
- Members of the GPC
- Members of the GP trainees subcommittee
- Members of the sessional GPs subcommittee