

SHEFFIELD LOCAL MEDICAL COMMITTEE

NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2007

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APPOINTMENT OF LMC ADMINISTRATOR

Following the announcement in the September LMC newsletter of the departure of Laura Gilbert from the organisation for personal reasons, the LMC Executive is delighted to announce the appointment of a new LMC Administrator, Chevon Morgan.

Chevon started with us on 5 November 2007. She arrived with good qualifications and youthful enthusiasm, but I am sure we will all treat her in the appropriate and gentle manner to start with! Chevon's contact details can be found on our website at: <http://www.sheffield-lmc.org.uk/secretariat.htm>

CHANGES/EXTENSIONS TO OPENING HOURS – VOLUNTARY PILOT SCHEME

All practices should have received this correspondence from Sheffield PCT recently, requesting interest in

participating in a pilot for the provision of extended opening hours. This was discussed at a full LMC meeting on Monday 12 November where significant reservations were raised regarding practices committing themselves to any such local arrangements.

We recognise that the PCT is being encouraged to act upon central guidance to promote extended hours. However, the recent GPC news states that discussions have recently begun between the GPC, the government and NHS employers on extended opening hours.

At this time we would stress that local GPs should not feel pressured into accepting any local arrangements that they do not feel are satisfactory.

The LMC thinks that it is important for practices to remember that the national contract is from 8.00 am to 6.30 pm on weekdays and practices should look to those hours before extending.

The LMC will continue to discuss options for local arrangements, but

would stress that any nationally negotiated outcome should not preclude the operation of more favourable local solutions where these are available. Similarly, any local agreements should include an option to transfer to a national agreement, should GPs wish to do so and a preferable national model becomes available.

It is entirely up to individual practices how they would wish to proceed. However, feedback from several LMC members suggested that the financial incentive to participate in the pilot was at best inadequate.

SHEFFIELD GP COLLABORATIVE – CHRISTMAS EVE AND NEW YEAR'S EVE COVER

The LMC is pleased to report that, following negotiations with Sheffield PCT, we have been informed that there has been a change to the level of cover available to practices.

All practices served by Sheffield GP Collaborative should have received a communication recently confirming that they will be in a position to offer full cover from 3 pm on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve.

GP PATIENT SURVEY- YOUR DOCTOR, YOUR EXPERIENCE, YOUR SAY

All GPs should have recently received a letter from the Department of Health (DOH) with regard to this year's GP patient survey. This is an important document to act upon as it relates to the 2007/08 Access DES and Choice DES. In addition, there is a particularly useful Q&A section on the GP Access Survey.

A copy of the letter can be accessed via the DOH website at:

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationandstatistics/Lettersandcirculars/Deacolleagueletters/DH_079926

In brief, practices need to make decisions as to whether they wish to participate in the DESs and, if not, they need to contact the DOH, emailing the GPPS mailbox at GPPatientSurvey@dh.gsi.gov.uk by **30 November 2007**. Further details of the information that needs to be included in the email can be found in the letter.

Practices should also be aware that Apollo Medical Systems software is **not** being used this year to support the extraction of sample data. GP practices do not therefore need to take any further action if they want to participate in the Access Survey, other than signing up to the DES with the PCT.

Practices who do not wish to receive questionnaires should email their names and NHS numbers to the DOH mailbox by **30 November 2007**. Again, further details of the information that needs to be included in the email can be found in the letter.

We would remind practices to use the appropriate Choice Read Codes in order that patients can be included in their Choice Questionnaire.

READING MATTERS – REQUESTS FOR MEDICAL REFERENCES

The LMC is pleased to report that, following negotiations with the Operations Manager and Project Manager at Reading Matters, GPs will no longer receive requests for medical references for volunteers.

Reading Matters undertook a major review and revision of its Child Protection Policy and Volunteer Recruitment Procedures. This included a review of the references required for anyone applying to become a Reading Matters volunteer.

As part of the recruitment process, Reading Matters needs to verify that applicants have the necessary medical fitness but they now aim to do this by a process of interview and asking each applicant's referees to verify this to the best of their knowledge. As part of their revised recruitment and checking procedures, Reading Matters will be requesting volunteer applicants to supply two referees. However, there will no longer be a requirement for a medical reference and applicants will not be asked to provide details of their GP.

This revised procedure is currently being piloted, with a view to roll out across all Reading Matters branches at the beginning of January 2008. However, following negotiations with the LMC, it has been agreed that this change should be adopted with immediate effect.

PIROXICAM

This non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) was discussed at a recent Area Prescribing Committee (APC) meeting, in view of drug safety advice from the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and the Commission on Human Medicines (CHM).

Prescribing advice for systemic formulations of Piroxicam is being amended in view of its safety profile (particularly with the risk of serious gastrointestinal and skin reactions) compared with other NSAIDs.

New general prescribing advice suggests that only specialists and GPs with a special interest should start new patients on this drug and only as a second line.

It may be that GPs would wish to scan the prescribing records on their computers to identify any patients on these drugs and review them with the practice pharmacist.

A copy of the MHRA/CHM guidance can be downloaded from the MHRA website at:

http://www.mhra.gov.uk/home/idcplg?IdcService=SS_GET_PAGE&useSecondary=true&ssDocName=CON2032518&ssTargetNodeId=1100

INCLUSION IN MEDICAL DIRECTORIES

The LMC has been made aware that several organisations distribute mail shots inviting practices to have their details included in a variety of different unofficial medical directories.

A number of practices around the country have signed up to such medical directories and are now receiving threatening letters demanding payments or court action.

The LMC Executive has significant reservations about practices signing up to these organisations and would advise practices to exercise extreme caution and ensure that they read all documentation fully prior to signing.

A recent example distributed to the LMC made reference to an entry to the directory being free of charge whilst the small print stated that completion and return of the form would incur a cost of €83 per year.

MENTAL CAPACITY ACT

The General Practitioners Committee (GPC) has recently issued a questions and answers guidance document on the Mental Capacity Act 2005. Issues covered by the guidance include:

- To whom does the act apply?
- What changes does the act introduce?
- How will capacity be assessed?
- Implications for GPs.

A copy of the guidance can be accessed via:

- the GPC website (login required) at:
[http://www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/AttachmentsByTitle/PDFmentalcapacity/\\$FILE/Mental+Capacity+FAQs+-+Sept+2007.pdf](http://www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/AttachmentsByTitle/PDFmentalcapacity/$FILE/Mental+Capacity+FAQs+-+Sept+2007.pdf)
- the Other Guidance section of the LMC's website at:
<http://www.sheffield-lmc.org.uk/guidance.htm>

FOCUS ON SALARIED GPs

The GPC's Focus on Salaried GPs guidance, which was revised in August 2007, was further revised in October 2007.

The guidance now includes a detailed legal view on what counts as continuity of service, as well as on calculating entitlements to maternity pay, sick pay and redundancy pay for those employed under the model salaried GP contract.

A copy of the guidance can be accessed via:

- the GPC website at:
[http://www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/AttachmentsByTitle/PDFFocusSalariedGps0604/\\$FILE/Focus+on+salaried+GPs+-+revised+October+2007.pdf](http://www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/AttachmentsByTitle/PDFFocusSalariedGps0604/$FILE/Focus+on+salaried+GPs+-+revised+October+2007.pdf)
- the Other Guidance section of the LMC's website:
<http://www.sheffield-lmc.org.uk/guidance.htm>

HEALTHCARE ASSOCIATED INFECTIONS AND DEATH CERTIFICATION

All GPs should have received a letter from the Chief Medical Officer

(CMO) dated 3 October 2007 on this issue.

The purpose of the letter is to reinforce the message that death certification is a significant responsibility for doctors and should reflect a careful consideration of all the events that led up to and may have caused or contributed to the person's death.

It has been suggested that some doctors are reluctant to put information about healthcare associated infections on certificates or may even have been discouraged from doing so.

A copy of the CMO's letter can be accessed via the Department of Health website at:

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationandstatistics/Lettersandcirculars/Professionalletters/Chiefmedicalofficerletters/DH_079104

SAFER MANAGEMENT OF CONTROLLED DRUGS

The Department of Health (DOH) has recently produced interim guidance documents with regards to the safer management of controlled drugs.

There are changes in the legislation to the controlled drug record and the supply of schedule 1, 2 and 3 controlled drugs for use in the community.

Practices should be aware of this guidance; however it has not been drafted in the most reader friendly format!

Copies of the guidance can be downloaded from the DOH website at:

Safer Management of Controlled Drugs: Changes to Record Keeping Requirements

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_079574

Safer Management of Controlled Drugs: Changes to Requirements for Requisitions for the Supply of

Schedule 1, 2 and 3 Controlled Drugs

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_079574

NHS PENSION SCHEME REVIEW

A paper has recently been published which sets out the final terms of the agreement reached between NHS employers and NHS staff side at the Pensions Review Steering Group.

The agreement sets out a two scheme structure for active members of the NHS Pension Scheme, with new entrants joining the New NHS Pension Scheme and existing members staying in a revised version of the current Pension Scheme.

A copy of the paper and other associated documents can be downloaded from the NHS Employers website at:

<http://www.nhsemployers.org/pay-conditions/pension-review.cfm>

Please forward any articles, comments etc for inclusion in the LMC newsletter to the LMC office via:

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Articles for the December 2007 edition of the LMC newsletter to be received by **Monday 10 December 2007.**