

SHEFFIELD LOCAL MEDICAL COMMITTEE

NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2010

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LOCUM GP PENSION CONTRIBUTIONS

In order for locum GPs' pension contributions to count towards the NHS pension, they should be paid within 10 weeks of the corresponding work being completed.

It has been brought to the GPC's attention that some practices may not have been paying locum GPs within this 10 week period for work carried out in their practice, leading to locum GPs missing the contribution deadline.

On looking into how this would affect locum GPs' pension contributions, although some PCOs are stricter on this than others, a PCO certainly can decide not to pension contributions sent outside of the 10 week limit.

Although it is the GPC's view that locum GPs would not be forced to opt out of the NHS pension scheme as a whole in this circumstance, they would lose out on pension benefits for that specific piece of work.

It is therefore important that practices pay locum GPs within this timeframe, and preferably much earlier than this.

Similarly, the LMC would encourage locum GPs to raise and submit invoices promptly to allow sufficient time for practices to process these within the 10 week limit.

TAXI DRIVER MEDICALS (DVLA GROUP II): EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

*Article submitted by
Clive Stephenson, Chief Licensing
Officer, Taxi Licensing,
Sheffield City Council*

At its meeting of 3 December 2009, the Sheffield City Council Licensing Board decided that it wished to expand the service provided to taxi drivers who are required to undertake and pass a DVLA Group II medical examination, either as a new applicant or on the grounds of age.

Sheffield City Council Licensing Board is seeking Sheffield GPs to express an interest in doing these medicals on behalf of the Council.

To express an interest and/or obtain further information please email:

taxi.licensing@sheffield.gov.uk

ACCESS TO PATHOLOGY RESULTS

*Article submitted by
Professor T J Stephenson,
Consultant Histopathologist and
Clinical Director of Laboratory
Medicine, STHFT*

After the agreement of a local data sharing arrangement between Sheffield PCT and Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (STHFT), the Sheffield ICE Programme Board has approved two projects:

- For GPs with a suitable practice system (which is about 80% of them) the ability to view results

on ICE for their patients which have been requested from within STHFT. This has been active now for a few months and has received a lot of positive feedback from GPs.

- The import of GP pathology results into the STHFT ICE system. This means that in the future STHFT Clinicians will be able to see them. Due to some issues around patient identification, this will be restricted to just patients already known to STHFT, which is about 90% of the total. This was tested w/c 14th December and went active w/c 4th January.

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USE OF PSYCHOTROPIC DRUG TREATMENTS

Article submitted by Peter Pratt, Chief Pharmacist, Sheffield Health & Social Care NHS Foundation Trust

Sheffield Health & Social Care pharmacy are happy to provide advice and information to GPs relating to the use of psychotropic drug treatments as part of our routine services.

Although our pharmacists also work within multidisciplinary mental health teams and may be able to respond to specific questions about an individual patient's medication – the first point of contact for queries about a specific patient and their medication should normally be through the patient's consultant, CPN or key worker.

If any GP requires information or advice relating to medicines use in mental health we can be contacted directly through our normal pharmacy and medicines information help line on:

Tel: (0114) 2718633 or (0114) 2718635

Fax: (0114) 271 8634

Email: peter.pratt@shsc.nhs.uk

The department is open Monday to Friday from 9am to 5.30pm.

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TAX HEALTH PLAN: DECLARATION OF UNDERSTATED INCOME

The GPC has recently issued the following notice to LMCs:

Medical Professionals are being encouraged under a new Tax Health Plan to tell HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) if they have understated income.

Those who contact HMRC by 31 March 2010 to make a voluntary disclosure will be able to put their tax affairs in order simply and on the best available terms.

After that date, using information it holds about how much is paid to them, HMRC will carry out targeted investigations aimed at medical professionals who have not come forward. Substantial penalties or even criminal prosecution could follow for those who have undeclared tax liabilities.

The Health Plan is the first initiative in a new HMRC campaign focused on professionals. It is designed to make it easy for customers to put their tax affairs right and keep them that way.

The Health Plan will operate in two stages:

- From 11 January to 31 March 2010, medical professionals can register their intention to make a voluntary disclosure with HMRC.
- By 30 June, those who have registered must have made their disclosure as well as arrangements to pay all tax interest and penalties due.

In order to notify your intention to make a disclosure:

- Ring HMRC on 0845 600 4508, or
- Use the e-form available via the link on the HMRC website:

<http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/tax-health-plan/>

If HMRC receives a full and accurate disclosure of any income on which tax hasn't been paid, along with payment, by 30 June, those who qualify can expect a reduced penalty of 10 per cent.

The LMC Executive would advise any practice that is at all unsure about the implications of this notice, to contact their accountant, as a number of local accountants are producing guidance on this issue.

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NHS CHOICES: BMA BRIEFING

Further to the article in the December LMC newsletter urging practices to regularly check and update their profiles on the NHS Choices website, the LMC has now been made aware of a BMA Briefing Note on NHS Choices.

The Briefing Note clarifies the current functions of the site and plans for its future development, including issues such as:

- Find, compare and rate services;
- How patients use NHS Choices;
- General Practice, hospital and PCT profiles;
- Other NHS Choices information and services;
- Plans to develop NHS Choices in the future;
- BMA involvement.

A copy of the briefing can be downloaded from the BMA website via:

http://www.bma.org.uk/images/nhschoicesbriefingdecember2009_tcm41-193275.pdf

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BMA 2010 RESEARCH GRANTS

The BMA awards grants and prizes to encourage and further medical research. Around 10 research grants

are administered under the auspices of the Board of Science, all funded by past bequests to the BMA. Grants totalling approximately £500,000 are awarded annually.

Applications are invited from medical practitioners and/or research scientists and are for either research in progress or prospective research.

Subject specifications for each grant vary. For example, in 2010, research areas include heart disease, cancer, inflammatory bowel disease and schizophrenia.

The 2010 research grants are now available to apply, with an application deadline of 12 March 2010.

More information on the grants on offer in 2010 and details of how to apply can be found on the BMA website at:

http://www.bma.org.uk/about_bma/awards_grants/researchgrants.jsp

BETTER ACCESS TO NEW DRUGS: CONSULTATION

GPs are invited to take part in the Department of Health (DH) consultation on the criteria and process for the Innovation Pass pilot, which will launch in 2010.

The pilot will make selected innovative medicines available on the NHS for a time-limited period, while further evidence is gathered on their benefits and cost effectiveness.

After the three-year pilot, the drugs will be appraised by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE).

Further information about the pilot can be accessed via:

<http://nds.coi.gov.uk/Content/detail.aspx?NewsAreaId=2&ReleaseID=409044&SubjectId=15&DepartmentMode=true>

The consultation can be accessed via the DH website at:

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Consultations/Liveconsultations/DH_109236

The consultation closes on 8 February 2010.

REVIEW OF NHS CHILDREN'S SERVICES

GPs are invited to submit their views to a review of children's services.

Sir Ian Kennedy has been commissioned by NHS Chief Executive David Nicholson to explore the obstacles to sustained improvement in the provision of care for children, and to consider what can be done to develop the NHS's contribution to safeguarding children. He will be looking at areas such as:

- the care of children outside specifically paediatric settings;
- health visiting and community services;
- the pathways of care;
- primary care including A&E;
- arrangements to safeguard children;
- the management of the transition to adult care;
- how the NHS works with its partners to support children;
- how the NHS responds to the needs of families as well as individuals.

Sir Ian will use the feedback to publish a report by March 2010.

Further information can be found at:

<http://nds.coi.gov.uk/content/detail.aspx?NewsAreaId=2&ReleaseID=407552&SubjectId=2>

Comments should be emailed to:

childrensservicesreview@dh.gsi.gov.uk

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

Email:
administrator@sheffieldlmc.org.uk

Fax: (0114) 258 9060

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Sheffield S7 1LE

Articles for the February 2010 edition of the LMC newsletter to be received *by Monday 8 February 2010*.