

## Content

DDRB report .....	1
DDRB report and PMS practices .....	1
Enhanced services expenditure .....	2
Future meetings of GPC .....	4
Get Ahead: The Essential GP Trainee Skills Day .....	4
GPC meeting .....	1
GPC regional election results .....	4
Guidance on preventing child accidents in the home .....	4
Media coverage report .....	5
Negotiations update .....	2
NHS Next Stage Review procurements .....	3
Revalidation .....	3

## 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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://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

# Appendix 1

## GPC Media Coverage Report – March 2009

The two biggest stories in the media concerning GPs this month both originated from the BMA. The BMA called for the abolition of prescription charges in England the day before the government announced that charges were to go up again. It received widespread coverage in the print and broadcast media, both nationally and locally.

The BMA also led the call among health organisations for the controversial Clause 152, in the Coroners and Justice Bill, to be scrapped. Again, this was widely covered and also received favourable mentions in newspaper editorials.

Other significant media stories included a call for a tax on chocolate which came from the Scottish LMC conference and also received extensive coverage.

The press office produced two online video clips with Dr Laurence Buckman, which included our response to this year's DDRB award and also announced the launch of a GPC consultation which asks how GPs can improve their front of house services.

### **BMA mentions in the national and regional media for March**

	<b>National</b>	<b>Regional</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Print:</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>Broadcasts:</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>58</b>

<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>National broadcast</b>	<b>National print</b>
Electronic patient records / confidentiality	5	7
Rating GP surgeries	1	2
Call for prescription charges to be scrapped	11	11
Health checks for over 40s	-	1
GPs should cut back on sick notes	-	1
GP extended hours	-	2
Doctors to discuss end of life option	-	1
GP surgeries to open in supermarket	-	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>26</b>

<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>Regional media</b>
Chocolate tax	32
Prescription charges	30
IT	7
Polyclinic	4
Obesity	4
NHS Admin	2
Recession	1

Accident	1
Practice Visit scheme	1
Emergency	1
Fees	1

**Press Releases issued:**

3/3/09 Healthcare professionals call on government to re-think data-sharing proposals  
5/3/09 BMA calls for abolition of all prescription charges  
31/3/09 BMA launches consultation on how to improve GP services  
31/3/09 BMA responds to review body report on doctors' pay

**Letters to Press from GPs include the following:**

Date	Signatory	Publication	Subject of letter
20/3/09	Dr Laurence Buckman	Pulse	Smoking cessation targets

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**Scotland**

**3 March to 15 April 2009**

**General Practice in Scotland: the way ahead:** In March, SGPC published its consultation document *General Practice in Scotland: the way ahead*. This 'white paper' style document has been circulated to MSPs, Community Councils, NHS managers/clinical leads, government officials, special interest/patient representative groups etc. The intention is to produce a more detailed document that builds on the consultation responses that will set out a range of recommendations for a long term strategy for general practice. Following initial media coverage of the launch of this event, the Public Affairs Office is now in the process of securing 'comment piece' style articles to publicise the document as well as encouraging local media activity by LMCs to complement any local consultation work they are undertaking.

**BMA Mentions in the Scottish Press**

*We do not currently have a monitoring service to pick up on broadcast mentions. The following includes BMA quotes or interviews relating to GP and public health issues.*

Subject	Scottish Press	Scottish Broadcast
Tax on Chocolate - SLMC Conference	21	25
Alcohol misuse	4	
Reducing Patient List size – SLMC Conference	2	
Longer GP appointments	3	
SLMC Conference – general	2	
General Practice: the way ahead	1	
No Smoking Day	3	
SLMC – Dean Marshall's speech to conference	2	
Assisted dying	1	
Ban on tobacco displays/promotion	3	1
Drug & Alcohol Services	3	
NHS Compensation (No Fault)	2	

HPV Vaccine	1	
Human cost of alcohol misuse report	9	6
Private sector providers of NHS GMS	2	
Dispensing doctors	2	

#### Press Releases issued:

3 March	BMA Scotland launches ground-breaking consultation on the way ahead for general practice (Dean Marshall)
11 March	Help us achieve a smoke free Scotland for our children (Peter Terry)
12 March	A lack of evidence based policies threatens general practice, warns GP leader (Dean Marshall)
26 March	BMA response to Audit Scotland report on drugs and alcohol services in Scotland (Peter Terry)
2 April	The human cost of alcohol – doctors speak out (Peter Terry & Andrew Thomson)
6 April	BMA Scotland calls for halt on community pharmacy applications (Dr Dean Marshall)
8 April	BMA Scotland urges politicians to be bold on tobacco control in face of 'scaremongering' tactics of cigarette producers and retailers (Peter Terry & Dean Marshall)

#### Articles:

Date	Author	Publication	Title
17 March	John Garner	Scotsman	Bridging the great divide between hospitals and GPs.
14 April	John Garner	Scotsman	Hats off to nurses' headgear: they were uniformly good.

#### Letters

Date	Author	Publication	Title
13 March	Peter Terry, Jack Law (Alcohol Focus Scotland), Bruce Ritson (SHAAP)	Scotsman	Existing licensing legislation is enough to support debate on alcohol
17 March	Peter Terry, Jack Law (Alcohol Focus Scotland), Bruce Ritson (SHAAP)	Courier	11p on alcohol could save lives, say campaigners

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## Wales

#### Press releases issued

Gwent GPs raise concerns over the running of the Welsh Ambulance Service – Welsh LMC Conference motion  
 Doctors urge re-think over planned name change for North Wales NHS Trust - Welsh LMC Conference motion

#### GP media work

Issues Welsh GPs have commented on in the media in March include; cross border health care, shortage of young GPs, no smoking day, concerns over the Welsh Ambulance Service

#### Blog

The Public Affairs team has used BMA Cymru Wales' blog to highlight the following issues and BMA policy; binge drinking, free prescriptions, better regulation of sunbeds, patient safety, shortage of young GPs, violence against NHS staff.

**Media coverage**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Welsh Press</b>	<b>Welsh Broadcast</b>
Doctors urge re-think over planned name change for North Wales NHS Trust	1	
Potential shortage of GPs in South Wales	1	
High asthma rates in Swansea	1	
No smoking day	1	2
Cervical cancer – Jade Goody	1	
Cross-border Welsh Affairs committee report	1	2
Gwent GPs raise concerns over the running of the Welsh Ambulance Service	1	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>

## **GPC Parliamentary and Assembly Activity Report**

### **WESTMINSTER**

The Parliamentary Unit in London keeps in contact with MPs across all the political parties.

#### **MP-GP practice visit scheme**

In October 2008, the BMA's Parliamentary Unit sent an invitation to every MP in the House of Commons inviting them to visit a GP practice in their constituency. So far, 218 MPs have contacted the BMA expressing an interest in the initiative. The Parliamentary Unit has helped set up more than 100 MP visits to local GP practices and many more are underway. Feedback has been very good with many MPs expressing a greater understanding of general practice as a result of the practice visit.

Practices interested in hosting a MP visit should contact Susan Solanki, BMA Parliamentary Liaison Officer at [ssolanki@bma.org.uk](mailto:ssolanki@bma.org.uk)

#### **Debate on the National Dementia Strategy**

MPs debated the National Dementia Strategy in the House of Commons on Wednesday 1st April 2009. A number of GP-related issues were raised, including GPs' ability to diagnose dementia, the prescribing of anti-psychotic drugs, funding and research. To read the debate, please go to: [www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmhansrd/cm090401/halltext/90401h0001.htm#09040159000001](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmhansrd/cm090401/halltext/90401h0001.htm#09040159000001)

#### **Health Select Committee inquiry on Patient Safety**

On Thursday 19th March 2009, the Health Select Committee heard evidence from the Health Ministers Lord Darzi and Ann Keen, as well as the Chief Medical Officer, Sir Liam Donaldson as part of its ongoing inquiry into Patient Safety in the NHS. A wide range of issues were covered, including targets, the EWTD and safety training for health professionals. To read the transcript of this evidence session, please go to:

[www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmselect/cmhealth/uc151-v/uc15102.htm](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmselect/cmhealth/uc151-v/uc15102.htm)

#### **Legislation**

The BMA continues to brief on:

##### ***Health Bill***

The Health Bill contains a number of measures on a NHS constitution, quality accounts, direct payments, innovation prizes, tobacco control, pharmaceutical services and disclosure of information by HMRC in relation to GP and dentists' income. The BMA has been briefing MPs on the Bill and the BMA's briefing can be viewed at:

[www.bma.org.uk/news/lobbying\\_campaigning/Healthbill0b.jsp](http://www.bma.org.uk/news/lobbying_campaigning/Healthbill0b.jsp)

##### ***Coroners and Justice Bill***

The BMA is extremely concerned by measures to allow unprecedented levels of information sharing. This Bill as originally drafted would have stripped patients and doctors of any rights in relation to the control of sensitive health information. The BMA welcomes the Government's recent decision to remove Clause 154 from the Bill (the clause was previously known as 'Clause 152'). There was opposition to this proposal from all sides and the Ministry of Justice is right to allow for further analysis of the provisions outside of the confines of this Bill. The BMA's briefing on this issue can be viewed at: [www.bma.org.uk/news/lobbying\\_campaigning/Coronbill0b.jsp](http://www.bma.org.uk/news/lobbying_campaigning/Coronbill0b.jsp)

##### ***Welfare Reform Bill***

The BMA supports moves to help those dependent on drugs to access treatment and to facilitate their entry into the workforce. However, the BMA is concerned that proposals in the Bill relating to the collection of information on a claimant are too far-reaching. A briefing is being prepared in advance of the Bill being debated in the Lords on 29th April

BMA Parliamentary Unit  
April 2009

## **SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT**

The BMA Scotland public affairs officers keep in regular contact with key MSPs from all of the political parties.

### Political party conferences

Labour Party Conference & Lib Dem Conference (both March 2009):

During these conferences I met with 13 MSPs to discuss in particular "the Way Ahead" consultation. Feedback from MSPs from both parties was largely positive and we secured a number of follow-up meetings as a result.

Scottish Labour is currently consulting on its own health policy and were keen to remain in contact throughout the process of our consultation to see what can be incorporated in their own policies.

The Lib Dems passed a motion supporting a ban on tobacco vending machines in Scotland. This motion had been placed on the agenda by a party member who is also an active retired BMA member. A joint lobbying campaign with BHF and Cancer Research UK saw this motion passed by conference and thus becomes Lib Dem policy.

### General Practice in Scotland: the way ahead

Following the launch of our consultation, the Lib Dems issued a press release supporting the consultation saying that: "Liberal Democrats believe that healthcare professionals should lead the debate on how we provide 24 hour local health care. The BMA's consultation document, drawn up by GPs, is a welcome step in that direction and we look forward to contributing to the debate."

The Scottish conservatives lodged a series of parliamentary questions arising from this report.

Meetings with key MSPs have been arranged between Dean Marshall and the key opposition party health spokesperson and will take place later this month.

In May the BMA will host a parliamentary briefing event to discuss the key elements of the consultation with MSPs.

Locally, some LMCs have organised events to discuss the document with NHS officials, GPs, patient representatives and MSPs.

### QOF

Following the publication of the BMA Briefing paper on the QOF, we have been meeting with various special interest organisations and patient groups to discuss their views on QOF and to raise awareness of possible future changes to the QOF as they may apply in Scotland. Meetings have been organised between Dr Dean Marshall and the following organisations: British Heart Foundation, Asthma UK Scotland, Cancer Research Scotland, Alzheimer Scotland, Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland, Patients' Association Scotland and the Stroke Association Scotland.

### Legislation

The Health Committee is about to begin its stage 1 consideration of the Tobacco and Primary Medical Services (Scotland) Bill. This legislation proposes to further restrict the display and promotion of tobacco products (including a ban on tobacco vending machines). In addition, the Bill includes measures to remove the clause in NHS legislation which allows private companies to provide NHS GP services. The BMA has submitted written evidence and hopes to be invited to give evidence on both parts of the bill. However the Conservatives and Labour Party has indicated its opposition to the GMS section of the bill.

The BMA will be hosting a parliamentary briefing event in May to discuss the tobacco element of this bill.

The Scottish Parliament has passed the Health Board (Membership & Elections) Bill which will introduce pilot elections for members of health boards, commencing in 2010. This legislation is perceived to improve accountability and engagement of the public. However, the BMA opposed this legislation as it believed that there were more effective ways to engage the population and did not believe that it would improve accountability. We did, however, secure some improvements such as full parliamentary scrutiny of pilots before a national roll-out.

More general parliamentary activity

There has also been a series of health related debates (BMA briefings were issued) in the Chamber including:

- Conservative debate on the NHS and the independent healthcare sector
- Conservative debate on Alcohol Strategy
- Government debate on Scottish Futures Trust (PFI Alternative)
- Government debate on Waiting Times

The Petitions Committee has reviewed evidence submitted to it regarding a petition calling for changes to the regulations for community pharmacy applications. The Committee believes there is a case to be answered and has written to the Scottish Government seeking more information. The Committee will consider this petition again in May. The BMA has been briefing to generate support for this petition.

Alcohol Misuse

In April BMA Scotland published a new report "the human cost of alcohol: doctors speak out". This report highlighted the health consequences of misusing alcohol and included quotes from doctors working in the NHS describing their experiences of treating patients who misuse alcohol. This report has been well received by politicians and the Lib Dems, Labour and SNP all published news releases welcoming the report. The BMA previewed this report to MSPs at a special parliamentary briefing event which was well attended by key MSPs.

A motion based on the report has been tabled by SNP MSP at Westminster and after recess, a motion will also be tabled in the Scottish Parliament.

For more information on this or any other political activities in Scotland, please contact:

Gail Grant  
Senior Public Affairs Officer

01509444519.2593(e)-108756(i)-1.4128(n)-1.35771(l)-0.943445(i)11.44(T)4.09733(i)-0.943445(m)

#### Briefing AMs

John and Lucy briefed Dr Dai Lloyd, Plaid Cymru AM, about EWTD, ahead of a debate in Plenary on how EWTD would affect firefighters.

#### Conferences

##### Party Political conferences

In March John and Lucy attended Plaid Cymru's and the Welsh Conservative Political Party Spring Conferences.

##### Welsh LMC Conference

John, Lucy and Richard attended this year's Welsh LMC Conference in Swansea

#### RCGP briefing

John and Richard attended an RCGP briefing at the Assembly on the central role of the GP in the evolving NHS in Wales

#### Blog

The Public Affairs team has used BMA Cymru Wales' blog to highlight various issues including a potential shortage of young GPs, violence in the NHS, medical students issues.

BMA Wales

April 2009