



BMA/GPC Update December 25 – Important Information

The following provides updates from the BMA on several key work areas currently in place. These are provided for your information and should be shared with key clinical staff.

GP Contract 2026/27 Consultation

Over the past few weeks, the BMA have been meeting with the DHSC to consider and respond to the initial proposals for the next GMS contract. They spent a significant period of time feeding back on their proposals, robustly articulating the need to protect and promote practices and GP workforce needs to ensure a sustainable and equitable general practice that serves patients and their communities. This verbal feedback will be followed by detailed written responses and further meetings with them in the new year.

Unusually, the BMA have made available to General Practice the high level papers and counter proposals presented to the DHSC. They can be accessed on the [BMA GPC England contract webpages >](#)

These proposals build on their historical contract asks around the need to restore resourcing levels for general practice and the GP unemployment crisis, and complement several key publications developed to support the profession and practices, working towards hope, safety and stability.

The [safe working guidance](#) supports and enables practices to prioritise their delivery of safe, high-quality patient care, within the regulatory and professional expectations of the GMS/PMS contract. [Patients first – GPCE's vision for general practice](#) outlines the essential changes that need to happen to stop the loss of local practices, retain experienced NHS GPs in their surgeries, and to fund practices to take on more GPs and more practice nurses to deliver more appointments. The [value of a GP paper](#) sets out the intrinsic value and importance of GPs in affording and securing the nation's healthcare for the next generation.

Following on from this week's 2026/27 contract consultation at DHSC, GPC England Chair, Katie Bramall [recorded a podcast](#) which covers the BMA's thoughts on the process and next year's contract for GPOnline's 'Talking General Practice'.

OpenSAFELY Update

Reminders have been sent by NHSe and the ICB to all practices that are yet to activate OpenSAFELY, this is a contractual requirement. This has the full support of the BMA and the RCGP.

OpenSAFELY provides vital research for the NHS and delivered public good during the COVID pandemic. The platform is now available for studies beyond COVID. Practices remain data controllers of the underlying GP data, whilst NHS England remains data controller of the results of studies and oversees all access and governance.

Sexual Misconduct in the Workplace – Update

This month has seen the publication of an update to the NHS England [guidance](#) on actions to prevent sexual misconduct in the workplace. There are actions recommended in this update for all NHS employers, and these are important for GPs and their practice teams to be aware of.

[Chaperoning policies](#) should be reviewed considering the updated guidance. While there is a clear statement that practices should be able to set their policy according to their needs, and recognition of the challenges we can face in

primary care, the BMA reiterate the need to ensure that all chaperones are formally trained and used for any intimate examination. The guidance is clear that in the event of a patient declining a chaperone, a risk assessment should be made as to the clinical safety of the patient and the risk of compromise of professional standards, and postponing the examination may well be a reasonable outcome.

ICBs are tasked in the update to ensure all primary care providers are signed up to the [Sexual safety charter](#) with a deadline of 2 February 2026 to contact providers to offer support in completing the assurance checklist in this document.

Covid and Flu 2026/27 and UKHSA Guidance Updates

NHS England has published a [joint COVID and flu specification for 2026](#). This moves the COVID vaccination programme to a practice level, removing the need for COVID vaccinations to be delivered via a PCN. However, practices will still be able to deliver just the flu programme. The BMA continue to raise with NHS England the impact that the lack of uplift to item of service payments is having on the viability of both programmes, with a high risk to General Practices continued participation in the flu programme in future years.

The UKHSA has produced [further guidance](#) with regards to consent processes and non-registered healthcare professionals in the provision of vaccination. This is following the concerns raised with them over the [updated minimum standards in vaccination training](#) and the significant uncertainty that it caused, particularly around the role of HCAs in vaccination clinics. The BMA are continuing to discuss this issue with the UKHSA and other relevant bodies to develop more expansive guidance.

The above update **does not change** the previous advice provided by the LMC, which can be found [here](#)

Useful Links

You may find the following links to BMA information useful:

- The [BMA's GP campaign webpage](#)
- GPCE [Safe Working Guidance Handbook](#)
- Read more about the work of [GPC England](#) and practical guidance for [GP practices](#)