**SLMC Update - June 2017**

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# Negotiating issues and contracts

## Update on negotiations

On 3 May SGPC and the Scottish Government published a letter and a joint document updating the profession on the direction negotiations are taking, building on the documents published in November and including the announcements made by the Cabinet Secretary at the SLMC conference in March. These documents, along with those published in November, are available in the SGPC pages of the [BMA website](https://www.bma.org.uk/collective-voice/committees/general-practitioners-committee/gpc-scotland).

The chair of SGPC provided an update on negotiations at the UK LMC conference held on 18 and 19 May. A webcast of this presentation can be found here:   
<https://bma.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcast_interactive/285407/start_time/7072000>

## GP earnings and expenses review

In November 2016 it was announced that an independent review of GP pay and expenses would be carried out and Deloitte was subsequently appointed to carry out this work. In February 2017 a feasibility study was completed using data from 21 volunteer practices. This was followed by a full review using a larger, representative sample of practices which took place during April and May 2017. Many thanks to those practices who took part. SGPC and Scottish Government will now use this information to inform contract negotiations.

# Workforce

## GP vacancy survey

Since March 2015 SGPC has issued regular GP vacancy surveys which provide a snapshot of the recruitment difficulties facing practices, allow us to monitor trends over time and across the country, and help inform discussions with Scottish Government. The latest survey closed on 29 May and 514 practices took part. The results showed that 133 practices had 171 GP vacancies, and 73% of these vacancies had been open for at least 6 months. This means that 26.5% of responding practices have at least one GP vacancy. This figure varies from area to area, with some parts of the country reporting a vacancy rate of more than 50%.

# Information management and technology

## GP websites

NHS 24 is carrying out a project to create a standard GP website template for practices in Scotland to use on a voluntary basis. The website will include standard NHS 24 information, will encourage patients to see the most appropriate health professional and will include practice-specific information such as opening times. A Project Group with GP and practice manager representation met for the first time on 10 May to help shape the product to the needs of general practice. This group will continue to meet regularly and report back to SGPC and Scottish Government.

## Information sharing short life working group

An Information Sharing Short Life Working Group has been established by Scottish Government to agree a code of practice for the safe and appropriate sharing of information across boundaries of care in Scotland’s Health services. SGPC is represented on this group and has attended the first three meetings held since 30 March. The outcomes of this group will feed into ongoing negotiations with Scottish Government.

# For information

## Scottish Ambulance Service

At the March SGPC meeting several issues were raised relating to the Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS). These included GP practices being used as a place of safety, technicians arriving instead of a 999 ambulance, patients being dropped off at practices instead of being taken to A&E departments, and 999 calls being deflected to practices when the SAS service was busy. SGPC raised these issues with the SAS Chief Executive and Medical Director on 6 June. We would encourage LMCs to submit any further examples of similar issues (anonymised but where possible with complaint reference numbers) to the SGPC secretariat for discussion with SAS.

## PQL payments

It was reported that Practice Quality Lead (PQL) payments were not paid in April 2017. SGPC raised the issue with NSS who confirmed this was an error and the issue would be rectified. All practices should now be receiving the increased PQL payment to cover 2 sessions per month.

## Damages Order

The Damages (Personal Injury) (Scotland) Order 2017 was laid in Scottish Parliament on 27 March: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2017/96/pdfs/ssi_20170096_en.pdf>. The Order describes a change to the discount rate applied to personal injury claims in Scotland, following similar changes in England. SGPC are in discussion with Scottish Government and the medical defence organisations about the implications of this change.

## Verification of death

A letter from the Chief Nursing Officer about the verification of death by any registered healthcare professional (trained and competent to do so) was issued on 20 April. The letter has been published on the Scottish Government website: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Health/Policy/BurialsCremation/Death-Certificate>.

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| **LMCs are reminded they can contact Gillian Simpson in SGPC secretariat for more information on any of these issues (**[**gsimpson@bma.org.uk**](mailto:gsimpson@bma.org.uk)**).**  **Any emails for the SGPC negotiating team should be submitted to** [**info.gpscotland@bma.org.uk**](mailto:info.gpscotland@bma.org.uk) **– your ideas about achievable measures to reduce pressure on general practice are always welcome. We can’t respond to every email but all emails are read and considered by the team.** |