

Patient Investigations for Mental Health Trusts

The LMC has been concerned for many years that GPs are expected to provide blood tests and ECGs on patients attending outpatients to see consultant psychiatrists. We are pleased to report that South Staffordshire Healthcare Trust has now agreed that this is no longer the role of GPs and should be undertaken by the consultants.

Agenda for Change

A joint GPC/RCN letter regarding nurses in general practice and agenda for change is attached.

Your practice nurse colleagues may well have already discussed this letter with you. It should be noted that the compulsory implementation of agenda for change by practices is not GPC policy.

Ambulance Service and Out of Hours

There are several “teething” problems arising with the introduction of the new Out of Hours services. The LMC is keen that we work with the ambulance service to sort these out but we would advise you to raise important concerns with your PCT directly.

Open-But-Full Lists

The Department of Health has accepted that some practices will be full when more patients would dilute the care of others. Unfortunately some practice lists are alternating daily between open and full. This situation is illegal and wrecking the system for all of us. The LMC advises practices to engage in a constructive dialogue with their PCT.

Please note that we cannot discriminate according to registration with another practice. We can only discriminate on the basis of geography.

You should also remember that we are obliged to see temporary residents and the payment is now within the Global Sum. It is suggested by the LMC that the first practice requested to see the temporary resident does so provided the patient is in their geographical area.

Practice Based Commissioning

Your PCT should have sent you the Department of Health paper “Practice Based Commissioning... Engaging Practices in Commissioning” published on 5th of October 2004. The GPC has advised that GPs enter into discussions with colleagues about practice based commissioning and consider the implications together with the possibilities for practices to group together to commission services for their patients. The LMC discussed this at our meeting on 2nd December and suggest you look carefully at the potential benefits and pitfalls for each practice.

The GPC guidance is attached.

Child Care Initiatives

The LMC would like to remind you that you are entitled to take part in any of the child care initiatives that your PCT enjoys. Your work life balance co-ordinator from the PCT should have liaised with your practice about the availability of the child care voucher scheme. Each practice has to make the arrangements directly with Busy Bees who are based in Lichfield. Practice staff can also access the holiday play schemes and after schools clubs which are discounted.

MTRAC

MTRAC is seeking nominations to its GP panel. There is a monthly meeting on the last Thursday of every month at the Birmingham Medical Institute starting with lunch from 12.00pm and meeting usually from 1.30 to 3.30pm. There are eight sessions per year, avoiding half term and other likely school holidays. Expenses are paid and a modest loss of earnings payment.

If you are interested in prescribing and would like to sit on this committee please contact the LMC for further details.

Staffordshire GP Support Scheme

This scheme still exists for GPs and dentists in South Staffordshire. It is an occupational health support scheme which is completely confidential and provides direct access to helper GPs, psychologists, psychiatrists and counsellors. It is able to help and support with stress, distress, careers, substance abuse or general unhappiness.

Please contact the LMC for a booklet containing information.