

Dear colleagues

Online consultation contractual changes survey

On 1 October 2025, GP practices in England became contractually obliged to make online consultation tools available to patients throughout the practice's contractual core hours (Monday –Friday 8am-6.30pm).

GPC England agreed these contractual changes in February 2025 but with the important proviso that 'necessary safeguards' would be in place prior to the 1 October implementation date.

Over the following months the GPC England Team met NHSE and DHSC many times, to explain our significant concerns about these changes, including their potential workload impact, and the need to develop safeguards including ways to prevent patients from erroneously submitting urgent requests or queries online. We also emphasised the need for practices to be able to temporarily suspend online access if overwhelmed by demand or struggling with capacity, such as during periods of staff sickness. However, these concerns have not been properly addressed and instead totally inadequate 'safeguards' have been suggested by NHSE and DHSC.

As a result, on 1 October, GPC England announced a dispute with the Government over these unsafe contract changes. GPC England wants to understand the impact of these changes on GP practices. This will help us in terms of ongoing negotiations with government and making progress with our dispute.

The survey should take no more than 10 minutes to complete and will close on Weds 12 November. Your responses are confidential and will be anonymised for analysis

Thank you very much for your engagement.

Complete survey <https://www.research.net/r/onlineconsultsurvey>

England dispute over contract changes

At a time when many practices are struggling, we would remind colleagues that support for any practice in relation to the contract changes and more information and guidance about the dispute, including [template letters to ICBs](#) about safeguarding measures, is available here: [Campaigning around GP contracts in England](#).

Being in dispute does **NOT** mean practices can ignore the contractual changes being implemented on 1 October 2025, nor can GPC England, or LMCs, recommend or endorse such an approach. Declaring a dispute is akin to declaring compliance with the new contractual requirements in the [25/26 contract agreement in March 2025](#), but "under protest". Therefore, practices **must**:

- have an online consultation tool, which is available to registered patients throughout core hours (8am – 6.30pm), to allow them to make **non urgent / routine** appointments requests, medication queries and administrative requests and
- ensure GP Connect (Update Record) write access functionality is enabled.

We have also updated our [FAQs for 1 October 2025 online consultations](#)

Many LMCs have also circulated information to practices. GPC England and many LMCs are aware that both NHS England and ICBs may be undertaking assurance measures.

As we prepare for further escalatory options, please encourage any GPs or GP registrars who are not BMA members to [join](#) so that they may vote in any potential future ballot, and ensure your own membership information is up to date.

GPC England is now considering our options and what our next steps should be. The national Conference of England LMCs takes place next week on 7 November. The safety of our patients and working in the best interests of you and your team is our first concern.

Access all the guidance: [Campaigning around GP contracts in England](#)

Guidance for practices, LMCs and GP trainers on the Resident Doctors' strike

Guidance for practices, LMCs and GP trainers has been published ahead of the five-day strike announced by Resident Doctors, starting on 14 November. This provides advice on how practices can support their GP registrars and manage strike days. [Read the guidance](#)

Letter to DHSC about dispensing practices and EPS

GPC England has [written](#) to the Minister of State for Care, Stephen Kinnock, to highlight concerns in relation to dispensing GP practices and the need for equity and fairness for patients served by such remote, predominantly rural and coastal practices.

We raised concerns about lack of financial support for the Electronic Prescription Service (EPS) in dispensing practices, in comparison to Pharmacy contractors, and software costs of the EPS.

We have called on the DHSC and NHS England to agree sustainable funding for dispensing practices, so that they won't decline in the same way that many other rural public services have done.

e-Dec deadline reminder

This year's annual eDEC (electronic declaration) has been circulated to all practices; completing this is a contractual requirement with a closing date of 21 November. Colleagues should note there are a number of questions within the eDEC that relate to the on-line consultation implementation and should ensure when completing these that they align with details on the practice website, other patient facing material, and any information requested by commissioners.

LMC England Conference 2025

The [Agenda](#) for the 2025 LMC England Conference at The Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester, on Friday 7 November, has now been published. This will be an important opportunity for representatives from all England LMCs, who have contributed to the motions under debate, to share their views, concerns, and aims for the future.

For more information see here: [Local medical committees](#)

Please send any queries to info.lmconference@bma.org.uk

FourteenFish survey

The FourteenFish Consult tool - a platform integral to GP specialty training - was withdrawn on 14 October. Despite the clear dependence of registrars and supervisors on this system, the withdrawal has gone ahead without a suitable replacement being in place.

GPC England shares the serious concerns raised by the GP Registrars Committee (GPRC) and that this situation is completely unacceptable. The sudden loss of a core training tool has left many trainees and educators without the resources they rely upon for safe and effective learning.

We fully support the GPRC's call for the RCGP to take urgent and transparent action to restore functionality through a secure, integrated replacement- and to ensure that this comes at no additional cost to registrars.

We know this disruption has caused real frustration, uncertainty, and additional workload pressures across training practices. We are pressing for clear answers and accountability from those responsible and will continue to do so until a sustainable solution is delivered.

If your practice has been affected by the withdrawal of FourteenFish Consult, please encourage your GP Registrars to share their experiences using this [form](#).

GP wellbeing resources

A range of wellbeing and support services are available to doctors, and we encourage anybody who is feeling under strain to seek support, such as the BMA's [counselling and peer support services](#), [NHS practitioner health service](#) and non-medical support services such as [Samaritans](#). The organisation [Doctors in Distress](#) also provides mental health support for health workers in the UK. We have produced a [poster with 10 top tips](#) to help support the wellbeing of you and your colleagues.

The [Cameron Fund](#) supports GPs and their families in times of financial need and the [RCGP](#) also has information on GP wellbeing support.

Visit the BMA's [wellbeing support services page](#) or call [0330 123 1245](#) for wellbeing support.

- 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](#)
- See the latest update on X [@BMA_GP](#) and read about [BMA in the media](#)

GPCE bulletin: [Online consultation survey](#) | [GPCE in dispute](#) | [guidance for resident doctors' strike](#)

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