

**Special Conference and PCN DES Briefing April 2020**

A special conference of English LMCs was held on 11th March, just before the country went into lockdown. It was called to enable discussion of the outcomes of the negotiations with NHS England and the subsequent 2020 GMS contract agreement.

The motions at the Special Conference focused on a wide range of contract related issues including pay transparency, partnership incentives, fellowships, premises, vaccination payments, continuity of care, out of hours care, care home premiums and the future development of PCNs.

A motion, passed in its entirety, was proposed by **Derby &** **Derbyshire LMC**, namely that the deadline for opting in or out of the PCN DES should be pushed back to October 2020 to allow time for detailed modelling, costing exercises, details of impact assessments etc to be published to inform practices and networks of the risk and financial viability of remaining in the DES.

*That conference is concerned that, despite a radical overhaul of the PCN service specifications, there remains a significant funding gap, and demands:*

1. *to know as soon as possible whether an impact assessment, including PCN level and practice level modelling, was carried out by the BMA prior to the agreement of the GP contract*
2. *that there is an urgent costing exercise undertaken which will better inform primary care networks as to the financial viability of signing up to the scheme*
3. *that the deadline for practices to sign up to the 2020 / 21 PCN DES be deferred until 1 October 2020 to allow time for all associated details to be published*
4. *a moratorium of one year on the implementation of all specifications within the DES to allow time for PCNs to begin to develop the required workforce, and to scope the required workload for feasibility and viability in the longer term.*

There was also an important themed debate on the ARRS, with motions being passed by the Special Conference on this area. An Emergency Motion was also agreed on the response required to support practices during the then still developing Covid-19 pandemic which has now pretty much been enacted in full.

GPC England is still considering how to take the resolutions forward during the coronavirus pandemic. Despite the fact that conference voted for the opt out deadline to be extended to the end of October, NHSE have confirmed that they are still adhering to the national deadline for opting out of 31st May.

Special Conference resolutions that were passed can be found here:

<https://www.bma.org.uk/media/2154/bma-special-conference-of-england-lmcs-resolutions-march-2020.pdf>

Since the original specifications were agreed the focus of the PCN DES has shifted towards practice support to increase their workforce and deal with the national emergency of COVID-19. There are definite benefits to working at scale and over the last few weeks there has been a fantastic response to the coronavirus pandemic by Derbyshire general practice. Practices have stepped up and worked collaboratively like never before and the landscape has changed. There has been widespread adoption of remote consultations and PCNs have been innovative in developing red hubs to assess those with symptoms of COVID-19. Closer working with the CCG has helped with speedy decision making on the ground. Lessons learned during the crisis can set the blueprint for a different way of working going forwards

I am sure that most GPs have had little time to consider the 20/21 GP contract update, but the LMC **would still advocate careful thought before signing up to the DES, primarily on account of the unanswered queries around the actual cost/benefit for practices particularly in relation to the national specification**

**We were disappointed to read in Simon Steven’s letter to the profession yesterday that NHSE intend to bring implementation of some of the care homes specification forwards to May 2020. (it had been postponed to October as a result of the coronavirus pandemic). Practices had therefore made the assumption there would be time for planning and implementing what is quite a prescriptive specification. It risks undoing the great strides that have already been made in Derbyshire with care homes and EOL and feels like a knee jerk reaction from the centre to mitigate the criticism they have received about care home deaths.**

**The LMC will update you as soon as we are in receipt of any further information although ultimately this must be an individual practice decision.**

We plan to hold a webinar with opportunity for Q&As in early May

Dr Kath Markus

DDLMC Chief Executive

30th April 2020