

Introducing you to ...

Birmingham Local Medical Committee

Birmingham Local Medical Committee represents and supports general practice to ensure that GPs are properly valued and their skills properly utilised in serving the public.

Local Medical Committees (LMCs)

LMCs are the only organisations recognised by statute as the bodies representing all the NHS GPs practising in an area. Although there have been countless changes within the NHS and community care, the Local Medical Committees across the UK are the single element of continuity throughout all the re-organisations since the NHS was inaugurated with statutory functions set out by Act of Parliament.

LMC Elections

Birmingham LMC is made up of democratically elected GP members elected from among their peers in accordance with the terms of the LMCs' constitution. The electoral term is four years, with the next one commencing in October 2015. ***The LMC is seeking to increase the diversity of the committee to reflect the changing demographics of its constituents and any GP interested in standing for the LMC is welcome to contact us to find out more.***

NHS England

The recent Health and Social Care Act outlined the new structure of the NHS with the abolition of PCTs and SHAs and the establishment of Clinical Commissioning Groups accountable to NHS England which also has responsibility for commissioning all primary care services, including general practice, and some specialist services. Under the Act it is the NHS England which formally recognises the LMC as the local representative body.

Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs)

There are currently three CCGs in Birmingham: Birmingham South Central CCG, Cross City CCG and Sandwell and West Birmingham CCG. CCGs are made up of member GP practices, which are all contractually obliged to be CCG members. Birmingham LMC has made a significant contribution advising both constituent practices and their CCGs on the content of their legally-binding constitutions. The LMC will continue to liaise with GPs, their CCGs and NHS England Local Area Team to provide help, advice and support wherever appropriate across all areas of their responsibilities.

The responsibility for commissioning public health local enhanced services has been transferred to local authorities rather than CCGs and the LMC therefore also has a role in liaising with Birmingham City Council in respect of these services and other matters of relevance to general practice.

General Practitioners

The LMC plays a crucial role advising and supporting GPs and their practices in many different circumstances. For example it plays an active part in supporting GPs who are experiencing professional conduct procedures or local poor performance measures.

Birmingham LMC has a major role to play where a GP is unable to practice through ill health - not only in an advisory role but because the LMC has a statutory role in securing an expert opinion about continued fitness-to-practice.

This is very important in securing continued income for GPs, particularly if the practitioner is suspended because of ill-health or other reason.

The Birmingham LMC has a statutory role where a practitioner is under investigation by NHS England in certain areas of clinical practice. The LMC has a specific role in considering certain types of complaints by GPs about their colleagues.

Work of the LMC

Birmingham LMC is proactive in keeping abreast of all local and national issues affecting general practice as soon as they arise. We keep aware of NHS England Local Area Teams' policies and activities to ensure any issues affecting GPs and their practices are dealt with appropriately. Similarly we also liaise closely and work with the CCGs and local authority.

The LMC works with and liaises closely with the BMA General Practitioners Committee (GPC) in order to ensure that all national issues affecting general practice are quickly acted upon and important guidance disseminated locally as soon as it is available.

LMCs influence the policies of the GPC on a national level, particularly through submission of motions to the National Annual Conference of LMCs to which Birmingham LMC actively contributes.

Apart from the statutory functions, Birmingham LMC undertake a range of "pastoral care" functions advising individual GPs in difficulties and various other functions determined by the needs of GPs and their practices, which include:

- Advice on all areas related to GP contracts and funding (including essential and

enhanced services, QOF, premises funding issues)

- Advice on all issues related to CCG membership and engagement
- Care Quality Commission registration and compliance
- Appraisal and revalidation advice
- GP Performers list issues
- Retirement from practice (we are unable to give specific pensions advice)
- General advice on partnership agreements(we are unable to give formal legal or financial advice)
- Partnership disputes
- Sickness and absences
- Advice on fees for non- NHS work including the collaborative arrangements for local authority work
- Practice Manager Advisory Service.(NB whilst we may be able to give general advice on staffing and managerial issues we are unable to give specific or specialist employment advice)
- If there are issues affecting general practice you feel the LMC should be made aware of please let us know- phone us on 0121-454 5008 or email us using the facility on the website: www.blmc.co.uk

LMC funding

Birmingham LMC is funded by its GPs through the collection of levies on its behalf by NHS England in accordance with the Health and Social Care Act.

The Statutory Levy (for GMS practices) and the Administrative Levy (for PMS practices) fund the work of the LMC on behalf of its GPs and practices. These levies allow all practice partners and employed GPs working within a practice, to benefit from the

LMC's advice and support. Freelance locum GPs can also be represented by the LMC by signing up to a levy mandate and paying an administrative levy.

As well as the statutory/administrative levies practices may choose to sign an additional voluntary levy. This funds Birmingham LMC's contribution to the work of the GPC through the General Practitioners' Defence Fund (GPDF) as well as small payments to certain medical charities which have historical links to Birmingham general practice. Payment of the additional voluntary levy allows GPs to vote in and to stand for regional elections to the GPC.

LMCs and Non Principals

As Local Medical Committees are the only statutory representative bodies for all GPs be they self-employed, salaried or freelance, all GPs should associate themselves with an LMC. They are democratic (elected by and comprising of local GPs); professional (concerned to provide quality in patient care and uphold standards of professional practice); independent (funded by GPs themselves to support general practice) and are a source of advice and support to all GPs on all matters affecting professional activities.

Running expenses are funded by levies from the GPs in their area. Levies usually amount to a fraction of 1% of a GP's income and are fully tax deductible business expenses. Salaried GPs employed by practices will be covered by the levy paid by their employing GPs. Locum GPs may be served and represented by the LMCs upon payment of a sliding scale fee, dependant on their incomes.

LMCs perform a wide range of important functions and are highly influential bodies

They are involved with the administration of GPs' NHS contracts and the planning and provision of services; advise NHS bodies both locally and, via the GPC, at national level; have input into training and education and, most importantly, advise and give pastoral care to individual doctors who may be experiencing problems.

Why, then, should non principals become involved with and subscribe to their LMCs?

Here are some of the reasons:

- To be heard at local level and influence decisions that affect their working lives
- To receive advice / representation in the event of issues arising in the course of their work
- To be kept informed of organisational changes within general practice
- To receive expert advice on how to respond to patient complaints
- Help on how to deal with ever increasing NHS bureaucracy.
- To reflect the changing demographic and increasing diversity of Birmingham's GP workforce

Practice Managers' Association

The BLMC received widespread support from GPs and Practice Managers to form the "Birmingham Practice Managers Association" (BPMA): Practice Managers are a key element in the work of general practice and it is important that they are supported from both a professional and organisational perspective.

Wendy Loveridge is an experienced Practice Manager who manages the Association, arranges training for Practice Managers and is available to answer queries and to support Practices in their role of practice management. The BLMC has extended its role into supporting the business and management of general practice to increase income opportunities for Members. The long term objectives of the Association is to create regular business development sessions and setting up skill enhancement opportunities in business planning, resource management, budgetary control and service level agreements on top of GMS contract requirements such as QOF.

The BPMA encourages networking opportunities and provides advice and information to Practice Managers, thereby ***Supporting the Business of General Practice.***

What next?

The LMC will continue to seek opportunities, both nationally and locally, to represent GP's views and provide up-to-date advice and support as the profession moves through political changes, recognising that they seek to deliver the best care possible for patients.

The LMC is...

- **DEMOCRATIC** -comprising elected local GPs
- **REPRESENTATIVE** -regularly canvassing the views of local GPs and representing General Practice to CCGs, NHS England the local authority and secondary care providers; representing local GPs nationally through the GPC.
- **STATUTORY** -with rights and responsibilities defined by Act of Parliament
- **PROFESSIONAL** -concerned with promoting quality in patient care and upholding standards of professional practice
- **INDEPENDENT** - funded by GPs to support GPs and practices
- **SUPPORTIVE** - offering advice and support on all matters affecting professional activities

BLMC Contacts...

Chairman — Dr Michael Downes
Vice Chairman—Dr Bill Strange
Treasurer — Dr Aamir Syed
Executive Secretary — Dr Robert Morley
Business and Liaison Manager — Julie Mason
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