

Heartbeat

December 2015



The end of the year approaches with its customary haste, which, despite previous experience, always manages to take me by surprise.

Amid the festive preparations, it is a good time to stop and reflect on the year's challenges and achievements, so in this month's newsletter we have included a look back at some of the highlights of 2015. We also offer a glimpse of how 2016 seems to be shaping up.

It has been a great year working with you all, and I hope that next year our services will help you to be even more effective in your working lives.

This brings sincere good wishes for a Joyous Christmas and a Happy New Year, and I look forward to speaking to you in 2016.

Dorothy, LMC Chair



Special LMC Conference

We wrote to you a couple of weeks ago highlighting the BMA's intention to call a special conference of representatives of LMCs, to address the unsustainable pressures on general practice.

[The conference being held on Saturday 30 January 2016](#) will focus on the urgent and immediate actions that the Government needs to take. It will also identify the medium and longer-term measures that are needed to turn around this workload and workforce crisis, to ensure that GPs can continue to deliver a safe and sustainable service in the future.

This is an opportunity for the profession to stand together and collectively make our voices heard. It has been over a decade since the last such event (2003), which suggests the gravity of the current situation.

Thanks to all those who submitted responses to our call for suggested motions for the conference committee; we will be going through them this week and submitting them by Thursday 18th December.

LMC Buyers Group

The LMC Buying Groups Federation is an initiative which offers free membership to Local Medical Committees across the UK and their constituent GP practices.

They offer an extensive range of products and services for GP practices on which they have negotiated excellent discounts and currently have 23 approved suppliers.

To find out more and to register visit their website.

www.lmcbuyinggroups.co.uk/members/register



2015 Highlights

Local practice engagement

As part of our new LMC Communications and Engagement Strategy (March 2015), we made it a real priority to enhance our engagement with practice colleagues this year.

Not only did we launch a new LMC website with a CEO blog, and a new monthly e.newsletter for practice colleagues (Heartbeat), but we also visited over 30 practices. We met Practice Managers and GPs and discussed topical issues including: PMS premium reviews, partnership issues, disputes with NHS England and CCGs and GP Federation working.

We hope these conversations and new communications and engagement channels have proved beneficial to you, because the LMC has found them to be invaluable in learning first-hand what your biggest issues and concerns are.

We aim to continue undertaking practice visits in 2016, as well as enhancing the channels that we engage with you through. Let us know if you would like to be top of our practice visit list by contacting Julie Hughes, Business Manager by email: Jhughes@cheshirelmc.org.uk who can arrange a visit to discuss something specific, or maybe you just want us to just drop in and say hello!

Sessional GP Engagement

In November William Greenwood, CEO, had a really interesting meeting with sessional GPs in West Cheshire. He discussed the role of the LMC and its benefits to local practices, as well as highlighting the LMC's plans for 2016/17.

A range of topics were discussed including: professional support, local training sessions, and the current ever changing provider landscape in general practice.

We always welcome ideas on how we can improve our support to you, so meetings like this are invaluable to us.

Contact Dr Dorothy King doctor@pdgh4king.plus.com Dr Jeanne Gibson, or William Greenwood WGreenwood@cheshirelmc.org.uk by email if you would like to share any ideas with us, or want to invite the LMC to your local meeting

Stakeholder Engagement

The LMC, in particular William Greenwood, has spent much of his time this year leading senior level discussions with the four local CCGs, two Public Health teams and NHS England.

The regular programme of face to face meetings has aided positive discussion and negotiation with stakeholders regarding PMS Premium reviews and co-commissioning. All of these discussions will continue into 2016 to ensure that improvements in working practices for local general practice colleagues can be gained.



Changes to the LMC

This year saw some substantial changes in the LMC office.

We said goodbye to Vivienne Ellis, the LMC's previous CEO and to Val Hughes, the Office Manager; both of whom left us due to retirement after many years of dedicated service.

Also, the LMC office moved premises in October from Chester to Crewe – highlighting a new approach to working, as well as providing an opportunity for a more cost effective office management.

The LMC elections in March 2015 saw the introduction of two new members: *Dr Mark Brennan (Wilmslow) and Dr Ceridwen Churchill (Knutsford).*

National

Comprehensive spending review

The Chancellor, George Osborne, [announced](#) that NHS England would benefit from front-loaded investment of £3.8bn for frontline services in 2016/17.

While new money for the NHS continues to be welcomed, GP representatives have yet to learn what the investment will mean in real terms for general practice - although it seems to link to the Government's commitment to deliver a seven-day health service.

GP leaders have vigorously argued this year for new resources to address the immediate pressures on core GP services, and their ability to meet the clinical needs of patients. Not to redirect scarce funds to serve a politically motivated agenda,

given that NHS England's own [independent evaluation](#) has shown there is little demand to deliver routine weekend appointments.

The seriousness of the position continues into 2016, with the special conference that has been set up for January.

Coming up in 2016...



Enhanced practice engagement and support

The LMC plans to continue to enhance its level of communication, engagement and support with practice colleagues in 2016. A scheduled programme of meetings is intended to enable the LMC to have various opportunities to engage with practice colleagues and gather vital business intelligence.

This intelligence – views, beliefs, experiences and suggestions will help to guide the LMC in its ongoing discussions with the local CCGs and NHS England, to ensure that representation is accurate and effective.

The LMC also intends to continue to support the development of general practice infrastructure in Cheshire; again ensuring that local views and opinions are heard and listened to, when new systems and ways of working are suggested and developed.

Development programme for GP Federations

An exclusive development programme for new and aspiring leaders of provider organisations will get underway in February for Cheshire GP Federations.

The LMC funded programme (for those taking a leadership role in the primary care organisations of tomorrow) will bring together groups of like-minded individuals for eight half day sessions, to learn and share experiences, with the support of external experts.

GP Federations have already been approached for nominations to attend the sessions, further details of which, will be sent out to the nominees shortly, including dates and session details.

Support for Practice Managers

The past year has seen many changes amongst our Practice Manager colleagues. We have already met some of our new colleagues during practice visits. In 2016 we want to consider how we might help all our Practice Manager colleagues in more practical ways. In particular, we are considering delivering some practical workshops or learning sets.

We would also like to engage more with the local Practice Manager groups. As a first step, we would like to invite you to send us your collective ideas on what might be valuable or helpful. Please send all your ideas to Julie Hughes, Business Manager, by email: Jhughes@cheshirelmc.org.uk

Regional level support

The LMC also wants to look at the opportunities and benefits of establishing a joint forum of 'regional' LMCs with Liverpool, Wirral, Mid Mersey and Sefton LMCs in 2016.

This new arrangement would not mean that the current LMCs - recognised by statute - would be diminished. Instead, it is hoped that a larger LMC footprint would enable a potentially stronger LMC voice, with more gravitas in terms of responding to future national issues - an idea that historically might have been a really negative and contentious suggestion.

Here's to a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year! See you in 2016

William, Julie and the LMC Members

Merry Christmas!

