GPC UK regional election pack
2019-22
Do you want to get involved?

Do you have a vision of how general practice should be run?

Nominations are sought for the election of voting members of GPC UK as regional representative for the constituencies below.

- Cambridgeshire/ Bedfordshire
- Hertfordshire
- North & South Essex
- Barking & Havering/ Redbridge & Waltham Forest/ City & East London
- Cumbria & Lancashire
- Wigan & Bolton/ Bury & Rochdale/ West Pennine
- Northern Ireland
- Ayrshire & Arran/ Borders/ Dumfries & Galloway/ Lanarkshire
- South & West Devon/ Cornwall & Isles of Scilly
- Hampshire & Isle of Wight
- Kent
- Surrey & Croydon
- East Yorkshire/ North Lincolnshire/ Lincolnshire
- Calderdale/ Kirklees/ Leeds/ Wakefield
- North Yorkshire/ Bradford (by-election)

PLEASE NOTE THAT TO BE CONSIDERED ELIGIBLE FOR ELECTION YOUR LMC MUST CONTRIBUTE THE VOLUNTARY LEVY TO THE GPDF

Nominations must be received by 12pm on Monday 4 February.

Please find enclosed:
- Information on getting involved
- Election details
- Nomination instructions
Getting involved with your representative body

Many GPs may not be aware of the role of the UK GPC. This guide is intended to provide you with information about the UK GPC and its relevance to your working life. It explains the role of the UK GPC, local medical committees and the election process.

Effective representation of the profession has always been important, arguably never more so than at present. To be effective, it is vital that the UK GPC is fully representative of the whole profession and this is where you have a part to play. Involvement with the UK GPC and your LMC is perhaps one of the most important ways in which you can influence the future development of your career.

The UK GPC, like any organisation, needs new faces and ideas. Any GP* can stand for election. We particularly encourage nominations from groups that are currently underrepresented on the UK GPC — women doctors, salaried and freelance doctors, doctors with disabilities and doctors from minority ethnic groups. New members receive support, induction and a warm welcome.

* subject to basic qualifying criteria – see page 4 and 10-11
A message from the GPC UK chair:

GPC UK needs new members

The BMA general practitioners committee represents all UK GPs - partners, salaried, locums and GP trainee doctors, whether members of the BMA or not. Our work is extensive, covering not just contract negotiations, but all aspects of general practice, from clinical and prescribing issues to shaping the future workforce, from developing IT and practice premises that are fit for purpose to engaging in government policy discussions about primary care.

To be truly effective it is important that the composition of the committee reflects the diversity, experience and interests of the whole profession. To achieve this, the more doctors we have standing for election to GPC UK the better. GPs working in England who are elected to GPC UK will also become members of GPC England.

The pressures facing general practice are clear and we need to work to change things for the better. To do this effectively we need GPs at all stages of their careers to be involved in our discussions, using their own and their colleagues’ experiences to shape the future for our profession.

We’ve developed an information pack about the GPC to give you more details about what would be involved. We give each new member a mentor to provide support, offer crèche facilities to parents with young children, and arrange induction sessions to familiarise new GPs with the way our committees work.

If you want to change things, you should consider joining us to help improve not only the lives of the GPs we represent, but also the services we are able to provide to our patients.

Please read the information pack and discuss it with your LMC or the GPC office. We would be happy to provide you with any further information.

Best wishes

Richard Vautrey
BMA GPC UK chair
The general practitioners committee and local medical committees

About GPC UK
- The GPC is the only fully inclusive, UK-based, organisation which represents all GPs.
- It has sole negotiating rights with the department of health and social care on issues affecting GPs.
- It works at national level on behalf of LMCs and their equivalents who determine, through an annual conference of representatives of LMCs, the broad policy framework within which the GPC works.

GPC in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales
- Members elected to GPC UK are entitled to sit as voting members on their national GPC.

About LMCs and their equivalents
- Your LMC is an independent, self-financing body that represents your interests as a GP.
- It is a statutory body.
- LMCs offer helpful advice and guidance to GPs on a wide range of issues.
- LMCs are entitled to collect a ‘statutory levy’ from GMS GPs although some LMCs work on the basis of a voluntary contribution. These payments are tax allowable, and returned to GPs as expenses. PMS GPs and sessional GPs can also contribute to ensure involvement and representation and these payments too are tax allowable.

The elections process
There are three methods of election to the GPC:

1. Regional constituency elections
   - These are held triennially, with one third of the regional seats elected each year.
   - Each constituency comprises a group of (typically 2-4) LMCs.
   - There is one GPC representative per constituency.
   - To be eligible to stand, vote or nominate another in a constituency you must be one of the following:
     - A GP who provides personally, or performs NHS primary medical services for a minimum of 52 sessions distributed evenly over six months in the year immediately before election (the ‘two sessions’ requirement), and has contributed to the voluntary levy of an LMC, thereby supporting the work of the GPC on behalf of all GPs (please also see page 10-11).
     - A GP on the doctors retainer scheme and has contributed to the voluntary levy of an LMC in the constituency.
     - A medically qualified LMC secretary.
   - Contested elections are determined by the STV (single transferable vote) method.

2. LMC conference
   - Seven GPC members are elected through the annual conference of LMCs. One of these seats is reserved for a candidate who has never served on GPC before. The ‘two sessions’ requirement (as above) is a requirement for nomination. All GPs on the retainer scheme and medically qualified LMC secretaries are eligible, regardless of their level of commitment to providing or performing NHS general or personal medical services. Contested elections are determined by STV. Those elected will serve on the GPC for one year.

3. Annual representative meeting
   - Ten GPC members are elected through the annual representative meeting of the BMA and

* The LMC must then contribute to voluntary levy to the GPDF
the same ‘two sessions’ qualifying condition applies to candidates.

Membership
GPC members are expected to:
– Prepare for meetings.
– Complete written work (responding to consultations etc).
– Help develop guidance notes.
– Speak to the media (training will be provided).

New members
GPC UK is a large body which makes it potentially daunting for new members. An induction programme is therefore offered to all new members to help them play an active part in the committee’s affairs from a very early stage. The programme usually takes place at the start of the session and takes the form of a series of presentations from a member of the executive team, from other experienced GPC UK members and from members of the GPC and BMA staff to help explain the way the organisation functions and the resources which are available to the committee and its members.

In addition a mentor is assigned to each new member. The mentor will be a more experienced GPC member, often from the same region of the UK, tasked with helping the new member ‘learn the ropes’ and play an active part from a very early stage.

Policy leads, delivery teams and groups
GPC UK has a number of policy leads, which have replaced the previous policy-based subcommittees. They deal with the following areas:
– Clinical and prescribing.
– Commissioning and provider development.
– Contracts and regulation.
– Dispensing and pharmacy.
– Education, training and workforce.
– Information management and technology.
– Premises and practice finance.
– Representation of GPC.
– Workload management.

Policy group leads are appointed for three-year terms. Deputy policy leads are appointed annually. At the start of each session, GPC UK members are asked to list their preferred policy groups. These preferences are used to assign GPC UK members to policy groups.

The groups are encouraged to conduct their work online, although they may occasionally meet through the session.

Subcommittees
There are also two subcommittees of GPC:
– GP trainees.
– Sessional GPs.

The subcommittees will meet three times each year although the work arising from the subcommittees will be carried out throughout the year.
Frequently asked questions

How often does GPC meet?
GPC UK meets twice a year, normally meeting on the third Thursday of September and March.

GPC England meets quarterly, normally on the third Thursday of July, November, January and May.

GPC Northern Ireland meets quarterly, normally on the fourth Wednesday in September, January and April, and the third Wednesday in June.

GPC Scotland meets five times a year, normally on the first Thursday of September, fourth Thursdays of October, January and March, and the second Thursday of June.

GPC Wales meets four times per session, usually the last Thursday of every month in July, October, January and April.

Where are the meetings held?
Each national GPC meets at the respective national BMA offices. GPC UK meets at BMA House, London in September and in one of the devolved nations in March. In 2020 GPC UK will meet in Cardiff in March.

How is the GPC supported?
The GPC, its policy leads and subcommittees are supported by a professional secretariat.

Are expenses paid for attending meetings?
A daily rate is payable to members of the GPC or its subcommittees for attending:
- meetings of the GPC;
- meetings between representatives of the committee and outside bodies;
- meetings of outside bodies when representing the committee.

Is child-care available?
Costs of childcare are reimbursed for committee members. Examples include: an additional amount paid to a usual carer because of an earlier start and/or later finish; paying for childcare on a day when the parent would otherwise be looking after the child/children him/herself. A free crèche is also available.
Improving representation

Sessional (salaried and freelance) GPs
A sessional GP is any GP who is working in a non-partner role; you might be a CCG lead, an LMC secretary, a freelance or Chambers locum, or a salaried OOH GP. Sessional GPs comprise an important and vital part of the workforce and our numbers continue to increase year on year. Being a sessional GP is a positive career choice and we are a diverse group with wide ranging portfolios and many different skill sets. And yet as a group we remain significantly under-represented both nationally and locally.

As a profession we have continued to undergo substantial change, and although these changes affect all GPs, the impact upon sessional GPs can vary in important ways compared to contractor and principal GP colleagues. The GPC is the only body representing all UK GPs, and increasing sessional GP representation on this body cannot be overemphasised. Standing for election as a regional GPC or BMA representative is one of the most important ways in which sessional GPs can and should become involved in the decision-making processes that affect their future.

The future shape of the NHS and our place within it depends on us, so stand for election and ensure that the sessional GP voice is heard.

Zoe Norris
BMA sessional GPs subcommittee chair

BIDA (British International Doctors Association)
GPC has been working hard to explore measures which would lead to proportionate membership of ethnic minorities in the committee. It’s a tough job and GPC are still far away from their goal but are working on it constantly. The best solution however lies in our hands, we need to understand the process, actively engage in it and become part of GPC. This would give us an opportunity to take part in discussions and contribute to the future of general practice and primary care in a way which is sensitive to our needs and the needs of our patients. We not only owe it to ourselves but to the future generations who are looking up to us. So if you feel that you can contribute please consider standing in the elections and make sure that you vote in the next election.

Preeti Shukla
BIDA representative on GPC
**MWF (Medical Women’s Federation)**

The Medical Women’s Federation is a longstanding organisation which reached its centenary in 2017.

It is based at BMA House and exists to promote and support women in the profession, and women’s issues in health more widely, to which end it has biannual conferences and runs an essay prize for students and an elective bursary.

It also acts to influence the profession in matters regarding women and in this role provides a member to sit on a number of committees including the GPC. This is an elected position which has been contested strongly in recent years.

Women, despite becoming a majority at medical school and also as juniors and in general practice are woefully underrepresented at senior levels in consultant posts, as academic professors and in medical politics. In terms of representation, GPC is increasingly well balanced, both in terms of gender and ethnic diversity especially as the women in the room are often outspoken.

MWF hopes that with an increasing membership in 2019 and its international outlook and affiliation to the Medical Women’s International Association (MWIA) we will continue to contribute to that female presence. One of our members will become President of the MWIA this year. If anyone is interested in joining, or would like to know about the process of standing when the election cycle starts again in 2019, please contact me directly.

**Sarah Matthews**

MWF representative on the GPC
BMA GPC UK

Election of regional representative 2019-2022

Nomination of members
Nominations are sought in the election of voting members of the GPC of the BMA as regional representatives for the following constituencies:

- Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire
- Hertfordshire
- North & South Essex
- Barking & Havering, Redbridge & Waltham Forest, City & East London
- Cumbria & Lancashire
- Wigan & Bolton, Bury & Rochdale, West Pennine
- Northern Ireland
- Ayrshire & Arran, Borders, Dumfries & Galloway, Lanarkshire
- South & West Devon, Cornwall & Isles of Scilly
- Hampshire & Isle of Wight
- Kent
- Surrey & Croydon
- East Yorkshire, North Lincolnshire, Lincolnshire
- Calderdale, Kirkles, Leeds, Wakefield

There is also a by-election for the North Yorkshire, Bradford representative (elected for the 2019-2020 session).

Candidates must be:
- GPs who contribute to the voluntary levy of an LMC in the constituency and who provide personally or perform NHS primary medical services for a minimum of 52 sessions distributed evenly over six months in the year immediately before election or
- GPs who are on the doctors retainer scheme and who contribute to the voluntary levy of an LMC in the constituency
- A medically qualified secretary of a LMC in the constituency.

Nominations should be completed online at elections.bma.org.uk.

To take part in elections you must have a BMA website account. This can be created using the following link: bma.org.uk/about-us/website-help/website-registration.

You do not need to be a BMA member to create a BMA website account.

Please note that alongside each nomination, confirmation must be received from a representative of the candidate’s LMC that the candidate contributes to the voluntary levy. This confirmation is part of the candidate’s nomination and must be received by the nomination deadline for the completed nomination to be accepted.

LMC representatives should email Dominic Norcliffe-Brown at elections@bma.org.uk with their stated confirmation that the candidate in question pays the voluntary levy.

If you have any questions, please contact Dominic Norcliffe-Brown at elections@bma.org.uk.

* The LMC must then contribute to voluntary levy to the GPDF
Completion of nomination forms

Instructions to candidates
14 of the GPC regional constituency seats are up for election this year. Successful candidates will be elected for a three year period from July 2019 to June 2022. A list of these constituencies, specifying the LMCs covered is attached. There is also a by-election for the North Yorkshire, Bradford representative. The successful candidate will be elected for one year.

At the date of publication of this election pack, a review into optimising the structure and function of the GPC and GPDF is underway. Although it has been agreed that the current three year term will remain, candidates are advised it is possible that terms, constituencies and roles of representatives might be modified within the three year term.

1. To be eligible to stand or vote in a constituency, you must be one of the following:
   - a GP engaged exclusively or predominantly in providing personally or performing NHS primary medical services for a minimum of 52 sessions distributed evenly over six months in the year immediately before election (Tuesday 12 March 2019) and contributes to the voluntary levy of an LMC in the constituency (please see next page).*
   - a GP on the doctors’ retainer scheme and contributing to the voluntary levy of an LMC in the constituency *
   - a medically qualified LMC secretary.

2. Your online nomination should be completed by you. This includes confirming you meet the above eligibility criteria as well as stating your area of residence and work. You may also upload a picture of yourself. A confirmation email will be sent once this nomination has been completed. You may edit it at any point up to the nomination deadline. You may complete an online nomination here: elections.bma.org.uk. You will need a BMA website account to nominate yourself. This can be created using the following link: bma.org.uk/about-us/website-help/website-registration. You do not need to be a BMA member to create a BMA website account.

3. Ask an LMC secretary, chair or treasurer in the constituency in which you are standing to confirm that you contribute to the voluntary levy. * They may do so by emailing Dominic Norcliffe-Brown at elections@bma.org.uk. This must be completed by the nomination deadline.

4. If you are a medically qualified LMC secretary candidate, please ask another officer of your LMC to confirm that you contribute to the levy on your behalf. Should your certifying LMC officer contribute to the levy of a different LMC, confirmation should be received from a relevant officer, after checking with the other LMC that your certifying officer contributes to the current voluntary levy.

5. It is also your responsibility to ensure the nomination is completed by the stated deadline (12pm Monday 4 February), including the confirmation from your LMC officer. Nominations received after this time will not be accepted.

6. As part of your online nomination, you may also submit a 250 word statement in support of your candidature. The word limit will be strictly enforced, and statements of more than 250 words will be truncated at the end of the last sentence within the 250 word limit. Numbers, years, acronyms and abbreviations are counted as a single word each.

* The LMC must then contribute to voluntary levy to the GPDF
Eligibility for election – payment of the voluntary levy

It is a pre-requisite to standing for or voting in a regional election to GPC that the nominees and certifying LMC officers must contribute to the LMC voluntary levy (unless they are a medically qualified secretary) which contributes to the work of the GPC, as well as the nominee working a pre-requisite number of two sessions a week in the area covered by the LMC. These pre-requisites are clearly stated in the BMA byelaws.

With the introduction of the new GMS contract, the levy became practice-based. Under this arrangement all doctors working within a practice that pays, whether partners or sessional GPs, will be covered by the practice voluntary levy and be eligible for election or to vote.

Sessional GPs are all those GPs who are not GP partners, including salaried GPs, flexible career scheme GPs and locum GPs. Under the practice based arrangement they have the same opportunity to stand for or vote in elections in the constituency in which the practice where they predominantly work is located. They will need to ensure that they complete at least two sessions a week in voluntary levy paying practices to meet the eligibility criteria, or contribute independently to the LMC voluntary levy (see details below). In the BMA byelaws the two session requirement is expressed as ‘providing personally or performing NHS primary medical services for a minimum of 52 sessions distributed evenly over six months in the year immediately before election.’ In the situation where a locum works in many practices, some of whom pay the voluntary levy and some that do not, they will need to ensure that at least two of those sessions a week are in a voluntary levy paying practice in order for them to be covered by the practice voluntary levy. The locum GP can otherwise contribute independently to the levy, as set out below.

The levy arrangements will allow sessional doctors to fully participate in the democratic processes of the GPC provided that the practice pays the voluntary levy. In the infrequent situation where the practice does not pay, it will be possible for individual sessional GPs to contribute independently to the LMC voluntary levy. This will ensure their eligibility to stand or vote if they are outside of a voluntary levy paying practice. Doctors working outside of GMS or PMS practices altogether, for instance in APMS or an OOHs provider, are likely to need to pay an individual levy as many APMS and OOHs organisations do not contribute to the LMC levy.

When certifying a candidate’s right to stand for election, an LMC secretary, chair or treasurer should ensure that any doctor standing is contributing to the voluntary levy, either through working in a voluntary levy paying practice or paying it independently. Where the candidate is a locum, the LMC secretary, chair or treasurer should ensure that the practice in which they predominantly work is also within their constituency.

Any queries in relation to this should be directed to Dominic Norcliffe-Brown at elections@bma.org.uk.

* The LMC must then contribute to voluntary levy to the GPDF
Memorandum of understanding

The BMA can only function with the contributions of those members who seek election as representatives. Thank you for making the commitment to help represent your colleagues. In order that elected BMA representatives can work together effectively the following principles are important.

– When you are speaking to or communicating in the broadcast, print or social media as an elected BMA representative, or are identified as such, you should honestly represent the views of the BMA.
– When speaking in a personal capacity you should explicitly ask not to be identified as an elected BMA representative.
– Committee officers should coordinate media engagements with the press office.
– You should declare conflicts of interest to your committee chair / committee secretary as appropriate.
– You should uphold the confidentiality of your committee when requested. If in doubt, ask the chair of committee.
– As a member of the medical profession and as an elected representative, you should behave in a professional manner at all times. Robust debate is sometimes essential in forming policy, but you should always treat patients, colleagues and staff with respect.

In standing for election you agree to uphold these principles.

Canvassing guidelines

Canvassing for votes is an integral part of an election. However, candidates must not use BMA resources to canvas voters and should not send unsolicited communications to them, but they can use social media to encourage votes. Candidates should think carefully about using other networks to support their candidacy.

Here are some dos and don’ts of canvassing:
– Do role model BMA behaviours at all times in the election process
– Do highlight your strengths and experience
– Don’t post negative comments about rival candidates
– Do contact the secretariat immediately if you believe other candidates are behaving inappropriately
– Do discourage heckling during any hustings or on social media
– Don’t put pressure on people to vote for you or ask others to do the same
– Don’t make promises you can’t keep – you will be held to account in the next round of elections

GPC regional elections 2019 timetable
– 12pm Monday 14 January 2019: Nominations open
– 12pm Monday 4 February 2019: Nominations close
– 12pm Tuesday 19 February 2019: Voting opens (in contested constituencies)
– 12pm Tuesday 12 March 2019: Voting closes
– Results will be announced soon after voting closes on Tuesday 12 March