General practitioners committee

DO YOU WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

DO YOU HAVE A VISION OF HOW GENERAL PRACTICE SHOULD BE RUN?

PLEASE FIND ENCLOSED:
INFORMATION ON GETTING INVOLVED
ELECTION DETAILS

YOUR VIEW COUNTS
Many GPs may not be aware of the role of the GPC. This guide is intended to provide you with information about the GPC and its relevance to your working life. It explains the role of the GPC 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 GPC is fully representative of the whole profession and this is where you have a part to play. Involvement with the GPC is perhaps one of the most important ways in which you can influence the future development of your career.
A message from the GPC UK Chair:

The GPC wants and 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 profession. To achieve this, the more doctors we have standing for election to GPC UK the better.

General practice faces many threats and challenges but there are also opportunities to change things for the better. To do that we need hear the voices of GPs at all stages of their careers and who can use 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 the committee works.

The GPC remit covers all the areas of work affecting all GPs. 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.

I would urge anyone even vaguely considering election to read the information pack thoroughly and discuss it with your LMC or the GPC office.

Best wishes

Richard Vautrey
BMA GPC UK chair

Prison GP representation

As a GP whose varied roles include sessions at HMP Exeter I experience first hand how wider NHS policy impacts on my ability to deliver high quality care in the locked environment. The BMA recognises the enormous challenges that face GPs working within the justice system, the huge contribution we make to the care of many of the most vulnerable in society, and the need for those GPs to be represented at the highest level.

The GP committee of the BMA has a reserved seat, with full voting rights, for a GP working in prisons and this election is your opportunity to represent your colleagues. It also affords the chance to inform the wider profession of matters they would otherwise be ignorant of, and to influence policy to help improve care and conditions in prisons.
The post is not reserved for those with leadership experience, and an encyclopaedic knowledge of regulations is not required. The ideal candidate would be passionate about care in prisons, have a desire to improve the working experience for doctors and be an effective communicator.

Dr Mark Sanford-Wood
BMA GPC UK deputy chair & prison GP

The general practitioners committee and local medical committees

About the GPC

- The GPC is the only fully inclusive, UK-based, body which represents all NHS GPs.
- It has sole negotiating rights with the Department of Health 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 and the Strategic Health Authority and Primary Care Organisation must consult it on issues that affect you.
- 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.

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 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 negotiating team, from other experienced GPC 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**

The GPC 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.
- GPFV implementation (GPC England only).
- Regulation.
- Information management and technology.
- Premises and practice finance.
- Representation of GPC.
- Workload management.

The process for appointing policy leads and deputy policy leads is currently under review. At the start of each session GPC UK GPC members are asked to declare their interests. These interests will be used to assign members to policy groups. The groups are encouraged to conduct their work online, although they may occasionally meet through the session. At the start of the session the group will be asked to elect a core delivery team, to assist the policy lead on work.

**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.
FSEC (forensic and secure environments committee)

The GPC prison GP representative also holds a seat on the BMA FSEC. The forensic and secure environments committee represents the following roles and provides a UK-wide voice on issues affecting these doctors in their working lives. The committee also leads negotiations in fees for forensic physicians and forensic pathologists.

The committee represents, among others:
- Forensic physicians (also known as forensic medical examiners) – working in custodial settings and Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARC)
- Forensic pathologists working for the Home Office
- Crematorium medical referees
- Medically trained coroners
- Forensic psychiatrists
- GPs working in prisons.

The committee meets three times a year. Dates for the 2018-19 session have not been set yet.

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 2019 GPC UK will meet in Belfast 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;
- LMC conferences; and
- 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.
COMPLETION OF NOMINATION FORMS

Instructions to candidates

Election of a GPC representative for prison GPs 2018-2021

Nomination of members

The GPC will be holding an election to nominate a representative of prison GPs providing NHS primary medical services in prisons and other secure environments for a 3 year term commencing in July 2018.

Candidates must be:
• A GP providing NHS primary medical services in prisons and other secure environments