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1  What is the sessional GPs subcommittee?

The sessional GPs subcommittee is a subcommittee of the BMA’s General Practitioners Committee (GPC) and provides national representation for all salaried and freelance/locum GPs in the UK, regardless of whether or not they are members of the BMA. Members come from a range of backgrounds and careers and draw on their knowledge and experience to speak up and fight for a fairer deal for sessional GPs now and in the future.

2  What does the subcommittee do?

The sessional GPs subcommittee looks after all matters affecting the UK’s sessional GPs. For more detailed information on the subcommittee’s activity, please take a look at the sessional GPs webpage.

3  Why get involved?

Members of the subcommittee are able to help to influence the local situation for their fellow sessional GPs, as well as help shape BMA policy and have a say on national issues. In addition, getting involved with the subcommittee gives members an opportunity to network and share ideas and experiences as well as to raise issues of local and national concern with other sessional GPs.

4  Who sits on the subcommittee?

The subcommittee has 16 elected members. Election counting rules will be applied to ensure that a candidate will be elected from each of the subcommittee’s thirteen regions, and that there are at least two salaried GPs and two freelance/locum GPs on the subcommittee. The subcommittee’s regions are based on the BMA’s ten English regional councils, with one seat in each of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

5  How to get elected to the subcommittee

The subcommittee is holding elections for each of its 16 elected seats.

The eligibility criteria for standing for this election and membership of the subcommittee are as follows:

- Salaried or freelance/locum GPs will be eligible to stand for election if, for the 6 months before election, their NHS general practice work has been solely as a salaried and / or freelance GP (excluding work as a GP appraiser) and an average of at least 7 hours per week of NHS general practice work has been undertaken for that period*. Once elected, they must continue to meet these contractual status and working time requirements.

- The above requirements may be waived where a GP is prevented from meeting them by sickness, absence on maternity / adoptive leave or other exceptional circumstances. This exemption applies for a period of no more than 12 months, and in order to be eligible for subcommittee membership, the GP must have met the requirement for the 6 months prior to the sickness / maternity / adoptive leave period. The GP must have a reasonable expectation of returning to clinical practice and meeting the requirements, and intend to do so.
- Retainer scheme GPs can stand regardless of the number of hours per week that they work.

- Nominees may be BMA members or non-members

- Subcommittee members will be required to stand down if their circumstances change during their three year term, and they no longer meet the above requirements.

GPs who have qualified in the six months prior to the election may be covered by the exemptions if they can show a commitment to working as a sessional GP. Each case will be dealt with individually.

Election schedule and process

Nominations open: 12pm Thursday 28 March 2019
Nominations close: 12pm Thursday 18 April 2019

Voting open: 12pm Thursday 25 April 2019
Voting close: 12pm Thursday 9 May 2019

To nominate yourself or vote in the election, please login to BMA’s elections webpage.

To take part in the elections you must have a BMA website account. This can be created using the following link: https://www.bma.org.uk/about-us/website-help/website-registration. Please note that you do not need to be a BMA member to create a BMA website account.

For information regarding the election process and eligibility criteria, please download the election guide here.

If you have any queries regarding the election, please contact elections@bma.org.uk.

Terms of office

If elected, candidates will take up their seats on the subcommittee in July 2019 and will serve for three BMA sessions, from 2019-2020 to the end of 2021-2022 (BMA sessions end at the beginning of the BMA’s Annual Representative Meeting, held in late June or early July each year).

6 Chair and Deputy Chair

A Chair and Deputy Chair are elected by subcommittee members.

In addition to the responsibilities of subcommittee members (see section 7 below), some of the expectations and responsibilities of the Chair and Deputy Chair of the subcommittee are as follows:

- Uphold and abide by the BMA behaviour principles and code of conduct
- Ensure effective working relationships between the officers and members
- Work in partnership with the BMA secretariat and staff
- Facilitate change and work to address conflict within the committee/council
− Act as figurehead and spokesperson as appropriate
− Represent the BMA and the committee/council and the specialty/grade in discussions with stakeholders
− Keep up to date with developments
− Review committee/council governance, performance and skills
− Facilitate succession planning
− Plan, set the agenda and prepare for meetings with others as appropriate
− Run meetings in accordance with governance guidance and BMA policy
− Ensure matters are dealt with in an efficient and orderly manner
− Bring impartiality and objectivity to meetings and decision making
− Maintain order during meetings, establish a finish time and prioritise items for discussion
− Ensure a fair and balanced discussion, giving every member an opportunity to contribute – including visitors as appropriate
− Aim to reach collective decisions and agreed action points, summarising these for members at the end of each agenda item and at the end of the meeting
− Ensure notes of meetings are accurate and timely and actions are taken and reported
− Ensure that regular reports to BMA council reflect the committees’ work and position
− Encourage members to contribute to consultation responses
− Contribute to and help guide list server discussions
− Take action as necessary, and in consultation as appropriate, and make decisions on behalf of the committee between meetings
− Mentor less experienced committee/council members

The full role profile is available on the BMA website.

7 Responsibilities and expectations of subcommittee members

Some of the main responsibilities and expectations of subcommittee members are as follows:

− Uphold and abide by the BMA behaviour principles and code of conduct
− Prepare for meetings to enable you to participate fully in the debates
− Consider the views of any group of the profession which you may be representing When representing the membership report their views and report back to them to ensure all parties are kept fully informed
− If you are unable to attend the meeting, notify a deputy (if there is one) so they may attend the meeting and send apologies to the secretariat with your deputy’s contact details
− Take actions arising from the meeting
− Take part in consultation exercises, meeting deadlines for comments
− If asked, attend meetings or conferences on behalf of the committee and write a report of the event to present to the committee
− Work in partnership with the BMA secretariat and staff
− Contribute to listserver discussion
− Help raise the profile of the BMA, committee and the specialty/grade, where appropriate drafting content
− Assist the BMA secretariat and staff with the organisation of training seminars/workshops
− Mentor less experienced committee/council members
The full role profile is available on the BMA website.

8 Executive Committee

At the first meeting of each session, the subcommittee will appoint an executive committee to handle matters referred to it by the subcommittee or any matters where immediate consideration or action would be advantageous to Sessional GPs. The executive committee will comprise the subcommittee Chair, Deputy Chair and two further elected members, in addition to a representative of the GPC Executive team. The executive committee will meet regularly, and will both be accountable to the subcommittee and report regularly to the subcommittee on its activities.

9 Subcommittee meetings

There are normally four meetings per year and they are held at BMA House, London and start at 10.00am. The amount of business on the agenda will determine what time the meeting finishes, but is usually by mid-afternoon. Members can join subcommittee meetings via teleconference and videoconference.

It is expected that members will send apologies to either the Chair or Secretariat if unable to attend a subcommittee meeting.

Agendas and minutes

Agendas and additional papers for subcommittee meetings are sent to members a week before each meeting. Members of the subcommittee can propose agenda items and should do so by sending notice of suggestions to either the Secretariat or Chair within two weeks of the meeting.

Subcommittee agendas will remain confidential unless the chair and the secretariat authorises disclosure. Subcommittee decisions and recommendations will normally remain confidential.

Expenses

Travel and subsistence expenses are reimbursed, subject to the provision of receipts, to ensure that members do not incur any financial costs as a result of attending subcommittee meetings. An honorarium payment is also made available.

If members need to begin their journey before 6.30am in order to attend meetings, they are entitled to travel the day before the meeting and be reimbursed for an overnight stay. Local hotel rates for subcommittee members (who are also BMA members) are available.

Childcare

We are able to provide childcare facilities at BMA House for members of the subcommittee when attending meetings. Please contact Secretariat at least three weeks in advance of the meeting so that the necessary arrangements can be made. In addition, if members have arranged childcare locally in order to attend a subcommittee meeting, the cost will be reimbursed.
10 Relationship to GPC

The GPC UK is the only fully inclusive, nationally based, organisation which represents all GPs, whether BMA or non-BMA members, independent contractors, sessional GPs and GP trainees. It is funded from Local Medical Committees (LMCs) and the BMA. There are also GPCs for England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales which focus on issues specific to those nations.

The GPCs have sole negotiating rights for GPs in negotiations with NHS employers. They work on behalf of LMCs who set the policy of the GPC by way of annual conference resolutions or decisions taken at GPC meetings.

The subcommittee has delegated authority to act and negotiate on issues that wholly or primarily affect sessional GPs. Four members of the subcommittee, ordinarily the members of the executive committee, will have seats on the GPC UK.