Committees play an important role at the BMA. They represent members’ views across branches of practice, specialisms, and professional activities and provide expert views and opinions to shape our strategies and policies.

2018-19
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/head of committee secretariat 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 as set out above. The information that you provide to the BMA will be processed in accordance with the data protection principles as set out in the General Data Protection Regulation and the UK Data Protection Act 2018.
General practitioners committee UK

About the committee
The General Practitioners Committee (GPC) is a standing committee of the BMA with full authority to deal with all matters affecting NHS general practitioners in Great Britain. It is the only body which represents all GPs, whether or not they are members of the BMA (about 80% are) and is recognised as the sole negotiating body for GMS GPs by the Department of Health. The name of the committee was changed from the ‘General Medical Services Committee’ in 1998. The committee has between 85 and 90 members, the majority of whom are elected directly by their colleagues on a regional basis.

- GPC UK
- GPC England
- GPC Scotland
- GPC Wales
- GPC Northern Ireland

GPC UK meets twice a year, GPC England meets four times a year, and GPC Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland meet up to four times a year. Much of GPC UK’s work is undertaken by policy leads, subcommittees and task and finish groups. Although the English, Welsh and Scottish GPCs are subcommittees of the national committee, they have autonomy on matters exclusive to the NHS in their countries. The Northern Ireland GPC is autonomous of the UK General Practitioners Committee, although it has close working relations with it.

The committee also has responsibility within the BMA for all matters affecting prison GPs as they are doctors performing primary medical services.

GP Trainees and Sessional GPs are also represented by specialist subcommittees who meet regularly and are represented on GPC UK.

GPC UK is represented on many national bodies and provides essential medical input which is firmly rooted in the experience of clinicians in general practice. As an autonomous craft committee of the BMA, GPC UK is required to take account of the views of the interests of other crafts (for example, junior and senior hospital doctors) when forming policy and vice versa. Other organisations are represented on GPC UK, this includes voting nominees of the Medical Women’s Federation, the Medical Practitioners Union, the
British International Doctors Association (formerly the Overseas Doctors Association), and non-voting nominees of other BMA craft committees, the Royal College of General Practitioners and the British Dental Association.

Negotiations with Ministers and Government officials are undertaken at national level, by GPC England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The nominated national negotiating teams help to ensure that any agreement reached in negotiations is acceptable to the profession as a whole and is capable of being implemented.

Terms of Reference
To deal with all matters affecting medical practitioners providing and/or performing primary medical services under the National Health Service Act 1977 and/or the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978 and/or the Health and Personal Social Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1972 and any Acts or Orders amending or consolidating the same and as from time to time extended to all or any part of the United Kingdom.

Constitution
A constituency entitled to appoint a representative to the committee shall be entitled to appoint an additional representative to be a member of the committee during any period for which a representative appointed by such group shall hold office as chairman of the committee.

Members ex officio
The Chairman and Deputy Chairman for the time being of the Conference of Representatives of Local Medical Committees called by the General Practitioners Committee of the British Medical Association. The Chairman of the Scottish General Practitioners Committee and the Chairman of the Welsh General Practitioners Committee.

Members Elected or Appointed by the Representative Body.

10 who are 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, or employed as a medically qualified secretary of a local medical committee, or employed as a general practitioner
under the doctors’ retainer scheme elected on a geographical basis.

The two sessions electoral requirement referred to above shall be waived where a GP would normally have complied with this requirement but was prevented from so doing by sickness or absence on maternity leave, has a reasonable expectation of returning to clinical practice sufficient to meet the requirement and intends to do so. This exemption is to apply for a period of not more than 12 months and not in two consecutive sets of elections.

Of the 10 members elected to the GPC by the RB, at least one will have their principal place of work in England, one in Scotland, one in Wales and one in Northern Ireland and the electorate for all 10 seats will be all voting members of the RB.

Otherwise Elected or Appointed

**Voting members**
Registered (other than provisionally registered) medical practitioners appointed as follows:- 56 practitioners (whether members of the Association or not) whose exclusive or predominant medical commitment is to 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, or medically qualified secretaries of local medical committees or GPs on the doctors retainer scheme, in such manner as the General Practitioners Committee shall from time to time determine, to be nominated or elected as follows:- 43 to be elected on a constituency basis from among general practitioners or LMC officers by all who contribute to the LMC voluntary levy. Candidates shall be LMC voluntary levy contributors or LMC officers; 7 to be elected by the Annual Conference of Representatives of Local Medical Committees; 1 to be nominated by the Medical Women’s Federation; 2 to be nominated by the Medical Practitioners Union; 2 to be nominated by the Registrars Subcommittee being members of that Subcommittee; 1 to be nominated by the Overseas Doctors Association. The two sessions electoral requirement referred to above shall be waived where a GP would normally have complied with this requirement but was prevented from so doing by sickness or absence on maternity leave, has a
reasonable expectation of returning to clinical practice sufficient to meet the requirement and intends to do so. This exemption is to apply for a period of not more than 12 months and not in two consecutive sets of elections.

Non-Voting members. Registered (other than provisionally registered) medical practitioners to be nominated as follows: 1 to be nominated by the Central Consultants and Specialists Committee; 1 to be nominated by the Committee for Public Health Medicine and Community Health; 1 to be nominated by the Junior Doctors Committee; 1 to be nominated by the Staff and Associate Specialists Committee; 2 to be nominated by the Council of the Royal College of General Practitioners.

1 representative appointed by the Council of the British Dental Association.

The committee shall have power to appoint up to 10 additional voting members to represent categories of GP contractual arrangement or classes of experience which, in the view of the committee, are not adequately represented.

The GPC has the following subcommittees:
- Sessional GPs
- GP Trainees
- Joint GPC/RCGP Liaison Committee

The GPC has the following policy groups
- Contracts and regulation
- Representation
- Information management technology and information governance
- Premises and practice finance
- Education, training and workforce
- Commissioning and provider development/working at scale including NHS England monitoring and delivery
- Clinical and prescribing
- Workload
- Prescribing and dispensing

At the beginning of each session members are asked to register their interest in a policy group that they will be part of for the year ahead. Members involvement in the group requires contribution to conversations via the listserv, deputising for the policy lead if required, engaging in the work (and work-planning) of the group, contributing to drafting responses to relevant consultations etc.
Your role as a committee member

There are a number of roles on committees with varying responsibilities depending on the position and the work of the committee. To find out more, please see our standard committee role profiles: [https://www.bma.org.uk/collective-voice/committees/committee-policies/bma-code-of-conduct](https://www.bma.org.uk/collective-voice/committees/committee-policies/bma-code-of-conduct)

Voting rights

All elected and appointed members have full voting rights. The chair of GPC UK is also entitled, in the case of equality of votes, to give a second or ‘casting’ vote. Some ex-officio members, invited members, co-optees and visitors do not have voting rights. Some ex-officio members and all observers do not have the right to vote at meetings, but can offer valuable advice to help members reach decisions.

Code of Conduct

Members are required to familiarise themselves with the BMA’s constitution as set out in the memorandum and articles of association and bye-laws of the Association. The code of conduct provides guidance on expected behaviour and sets out the standards of conduct that support BMA’s values in the work it does.

Our values

Values are at the heart of an organisation and help to distinguish it from others. They guide an organisation’s conduct, and its relationship with its stakeholders and the outside world. They guide us in our thinking and our actions, and enable us to set standards of behaviour against which we can assess ourselves. The BMA values underpin policies, objectives, procedures and strategies and provide an anchor and reference point for all things that happen, and express how we look, speak and act.

Our behaviours

We have taken the BMA’s values – expert, leading, challenging, committed and reliable – and with your help, turned them into behaviours to provide clarity on what we expect from each other as we go about our work and provide a consistent approach for discussing behaviour. They describe what we expect of each other, and what we don’t, as well as what is considered above and beyond. Our behaviours form part of our culture change to become a better BMA. Our aim is to adopt them in all we do.

It is our responsibility as BMA members to role model and promote positive behaviours and to challenge poor behaviours.
Behaviour principles are:

- Be professional
- Respect others
- Be representative
- Be kind
- Be accountable

Members must act within the memorandum and articles of the Association and bye-laws of the BMA and to promote the success of the Association for the benefit of its members, and exercise reasonable care, skill and diligence in all their duties.

**Attendance:** Members should be able to allocate sufficient time to the Association to enable them to discharge their responsibilities effectively. Member role profiles provide further detail.

**Personal conduct:** Members are expected to maintain a high standard of personal conduct and to treat staff and other members with respect. In particular, members are required to promote and role model the behaviour principles outlined in this code of conduct. Doctors should display the same duty of care towards one another as they would towards patients and in the workplace.

**Election behaviour:** The BMA can only function with the contributions of those members who seek election as representatives. In order that elected representatives work together effectively, on standing for election, members agree to uphold the principles outlined in this code of conduct. Candidates will abide by electoral bylaws and respect other candidates. Members will not put undue pressure on other members, or staff to favour a particular candidate.

Members are recommended to read the complete BMA code of conduct.
The GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) came into force from 25 May 2018. It introduced wide-ranging and significant changes to UK data protection legislation.

The BMA will be open and transparent when processing and using personal information by following 6 principles as set out in the new GDPR/DPA act:

**Principle 1:** Personal data shall be obtained and processed fairly, lawfully and transparent.

**Principle 2:** Personal data shall be obtained only for the specified and lawful purposes and shall be processed for limited purposes.

**Principle 3:** Personal data shall be adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purpose for which it is obtained.

**Principle 4:** Personal data shall be accurate and kept up to date.

**Principle 5:** Personal data shall not be kept for longer than necessary.

**Principle 6:** Handled in a way that ensures appropriate security, including protection against unlawful or unauthorised processing, access, loss, destruction or damage.

The GDPR will increase the penalties for transgressions from a maximum of £500k under the previous law to up to £17m or 4 per cent of turnover, whichever is higher. It strengthens existing requirements, and places greater emphasis on demonstrating compliance, as well as introducing a number of new concepts.

Due to the complex nature of the new regime for data protection laws, the BMA cannot offer comprehensive legal advice on GDPR, but rather it help you navigate the legislation and point you in the right direction for guidance on the questions you may have. For further information please visit the BMA website on the following links:

- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uE3aLeBEAxI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uE3aLeBEAxI)
- [https://www.bma.org.uk/collective-voice/committees/committee-policies/committees-technology-tcs](https://www.bma.org.uk/collective-voice/committees/committee-policies/committees-technology-tcs)
Register of interests (declarations)
Members are required to complete the register of interests form which will be kept in the secretariat.

What is a conflict of interest?
A conflict of interest can be defined as a 'set of circumstances that creates a risk that an individual's ability to apply objective judgement or act in one role is, or could be, impaired or influenced by a secondary interest.' (National Audit Office “Conflicts of interest”, 27 January 2015).

Conflicts of interests occur where a person acting in a representative capacity (in this case, elected and appointed members, BMA directors and representatives¹ (hereafter referred to in the collective ‘member/s’), could be unfairly influenced by financial or other commitments into failing to represent his or her constituency adequately, or adequately discharge their responsibilities in their appointed position.

It is appropriate, therefore, that there is openness and transparency about other commitments that Members may hold. By ensuring that any potential conflicts of interest are disclosed and known to others, they are less likely to influence debates/votes in meetings etc.

The information provided by Members will be processed in accordance with data protection principles as set out in the Data Protection Act 1998. Data will be processed only for the purposes set out in this policy and not for any other purpose.

What type of information should I declare?
All Members must complete and return to the committee secretary a ‘Declaration of Interest’ form as soon as possible. Members will be responsible for notifying any changes in their registrable interests within fourteen (14) days of the change occurring to ensure that the register is kept updated.

Some guidance on the type of information which Members should consider declaring as potential conflicts of interest is set out below. It is important to note that this list is not exhaustive and it is impossible to list every potential situation or circumstance that could give rise to a conflict of interests. Members should therefore use their judgment to decide whether any of their interests should be disclosed.

Directorships and committee appointments: Both paid and unpaid directorships (including non-executive directors or senior employees) of any public or private company or other body, together with any roles or positions with other committees.
Alternative trade union membership external to the BMA: any membership of another trade union must be disclosed.

Other remunerated work: Any paid employment or other sources of income outside their normal medical work. Examples might be paid consultancy or advisory positions with government departments, pharmaceutical companies or the medical press, articles sold to the paramedical press, or remunerated speaking engagements. Also included should be work for companies active in other healthcare fields, NHS Trusts, health authorities, any NHS commissioning body or health boards and endorsements or appointments which could be used by other organisations for marketing purposes.

Gifts, benefits and hospitality: This includes any substantial gift or material advantage received by a member which in any way relates to his/her membership of BMA committees. This would include trips or visits arising out of membership, where the cost has not been wholly borne by the member or the BMA. Gifts of less than £500 in value and other benefits of less than £500 in value would be exempt, as would events to which all members are invited.

Shareholdings or other positions: Declaration of the name of any public or private company (including any not-for-profit), business, partnership or consultancy active in the field of healthcare or certain other sectors where a conflict of interest might arise (e.g. retail financial services, STM (scientific, technical and medical) publishing) in which the member holds significant shareholdings, interests or control. Significant in the context of shareholdings is defined as either (a) greater than 1 per cent of the issued share capital of the company or body, or (b) less than 1 per cent of the issued share capital but more than £25,000.

Indirect social/business relationships and family interests: These would include any close association with an individual who has a financial interest, a non-financial professional interest or a non-financial personal interest (and any other interests) of close family members/friends/business partners that might be considered relevant to an individual’s position as a member of any BMA committee.

Appointments which could lead to a commercial conflict of interests.

Potential conflicts arising from the possession of confidential information.
Miscellaneous and unremunerated interests: This includes other interests which do not fall clearly within any of the above categories, for example, an active role within a political party, membership of societies such as the Freemasons or of other organisations. Membership of, or work for, other bodies such as charities or trusts which could possibly influence a member’s position with regard to his/her BMA associated activities should also be included, as well as membership of UK Governments or Department of Health committees/working groups (or their equivalents in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland) on which the member is not a designated BMA representative.

**Members are recommended to read the complete BMA conflicts of interest policy.**

How the committee meets, dates of meetings, conferences and apologies for absence

The BMA’s year begins at the end of its Annual Representative Meeting; therefore the first GPC meetings take place in July (GPC England).

The GPC has a number of specialist policy groups and appoints ad hoc task groups where necessary on occasions.

GPC UK meets twice a year, usually on the third Thursday of the month in the Council Chamber at BMA House. Full day meetings begin at 10.00am and usually end before 5.00pm; in any event, standing orders prevent meetings continuing after 6.00pm.

At the first meeting of GPC UK, some time is dedicated for policy groups to meet and discuss issues specific to that policy area.

Seats in the Council Chamber are allocated by the secretariat at the beginning of the session and members will be allocated a seat at each meeting. Members are asked to sit in their allocated seat to assist the secretariat when taking questions for the Chair during the meeting. The lunch break usually starts at 1.00pm and lasts for 45 minutes to 1 hour. There are no formal breaks. Mineral water is available in the Council Chamber. Members often meet in the Princes room prior to meetings.

Reimbursement for travelling costs, subsistence and an honorarium are payable to members of GPC, the attendance sheet on the table inside the Council Chamber must be signed. (Please note that this arrangement does not apply to those representatives to the GPC that come from other BMA craft committees, i.e. JDC, CCSC, PHMC and SASC — your own
Your committee – General practitioners committee

craft committee will reimburse you for any travel and subsistence costs incurred. There are also separate arrangements for visitors through the BMA visitors’ scheme.

The meeting is also attended by members of the BMA policy directorate, communications and engagements directorate and the BMA legal team as well as other staff as required.

The meetings of GPC UK for the session will be held on:
– Thursday 20 September 2018
– Thursday 21 March 2019

GPC England
– Thursday 19 July 2018
– Thursday 15 November 2018
– Thursday 17 January 2018
– Thursday 16 May 2018

GPC Northern Ireland
– Wednesday 26 September 2018
– Wednesday 23 January 2019
– Wednesday 24 April 2019
– Wednesday 19 June 2019

GPC Wales
– Thursday 26 July 2018
– Thursday 25 October 2018
– Thursday 31 January 2019
– Thursday 25 April 2019

GPC Scotland
– Thursday 23 August 2018
– Thursday 25 September 2018
– Thursday 17 January 2019
– Thursday 28 March 2019
– Thursday 20 June 2019

Apologies for absence
It is very important that you advise the secretariat in advance if you are unable to attend a committee meeting.

See below for contact details. In line with council by-laws, if any elected or appointed member of GPC is absent from three successive committee meetings, that member shall (except in cases of illness or for some reason approved by the chair of the committee) be deemed to have resigned their membership, and a casual vacancy arise.
Role of the committee secretariat

Committee services provides support for all the committees and conferences for which the policy directorate is responsible, including all the branch of practice committees and a wide range of other committees from medical managers to the patient liaison group.

The Head of committee secretariat work directly with the committees and their chairs providing high level support, maintaining an overview of the committee’s work and taking forward policy work not covered elsewhere. Your head of committee secretariat is responsible for:

– helping you develop your work plans, working with policy colleagues to ensure that these plans fit with BMA policy priorities
– commissioning work to support those priorities
– making sure that you have the opportunity to contribute to relevant policy development and
– preparing for meetings making sure that they are effective, run smoothly and that agreed actions are progressed.

Our committee support team undertake all the associated committee administration, for example preparing agendas and action notes, diary management, room bookings and maintaining committee list-servers.

We also have an Equality, Inclusion and Culture team which partly works with our team and partly with professionalism and guidance. Within the committee services function, the purpose of the equality, inclusion and culture team is to ensure that the BMA’s democratic structures are transparent, fair and increasingly reflective of equality and inclusion principles.
Key contacts

Get in touch with members of the unit if you have any questions or queries.

**Nikki McIntosh**  
Head of Committee Secretariat  
T 020 7383 7447  
E nmcintosh@bma.org.uk

**Jacqueline Connolly**  
Deputy Head of Committee Secretariat  
T 020 7383 6759  
E jconnolly@bma.org.uk

**Catharina Ohman**  
Senior Policy Adviser  
T 020 7383 6446  
E cohman@bma.org.uk

**Kathryn Reece**  
Policy Advice and Support Officer  
T 020 7383 6434  
E kreece@bma.org.uk

**Karen Day**  
Committee Support Officer  
T 0207 383 6618  
E kday@bma.org.uk

**Angela Kyle**  
Head of Committee Services  
T 0207 383 6014  
E akyle@bma.org.uk
Key priorities for the committee for the 2018-19 session

GP Funding and negotiating the contract: GPC is pushing for increased funding for general practice across all nations.

The GMS contracts are negotiated regularly, and the GPCs of the respective nations negotiate for increased funding to ensure general practice is a viable and sustainable service within the NHS.

GP Workload: GPs across the country are burdened with a heavy workload.

GP Workforce: We want to see general practice grow, not just in terms of GPs but also all the other staff that work in and with practices.

Working collaboratively: GPs can work collaboratively to sustain their practices and better manage their workload.

Helping you participate

Going paperless
We recognise that we have a responsibility to promote and adopt organisational policies that support sustainable practices and improve health. We would be grateful for your support in supporting these environmentally friendly practices. All meeting papers will now be available electronically. Hard copies will be available (and posted out) on request.

Skype for Business – video conferencing facilities
For some meetings you may find it easier to join via Skype for Business video conference from your home or workplace. Video-conferencing and webcam facilities are available at BMA house, regional centres, and in the Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland offices. For more details about how to connect, see the In your area section in your pack. If you would like to video conference into a meeting, please talk to your committee secretariat or staff contact.

Skype for Business:
– lets you connect with co-workers or business partners
– start conversations with IM, voice or video calls
Your committee – General practitioners committee

– see when your contacts are available online, in a meeting, or presenting
– Skype for Business is industrial-strength security for meetings
– broadcast online to a large audience
– present your screen during meetings or give control to others
– use Skype for Business in other Office programs to chat, call, or join a meeting with a click.

Childcare
We have a family-friendly fund to help all our members participate fully in current expenses-qualifying activities. We can provide care facilities for children under 5s, 5-14 year olds, and dependants (adults and 14-18 year olds requiring care) through the BMA family friendly fund. With a minimum of four weeks’ notice, care can be provided for approved BMA meetings, either at BMA House, or elsewhere to minimise disruption. In order to apply for care you must complete a copy of the care requirements form, which will be available from committee staff or the BMA conference unit.

For more information or for an application form contact info.gpc@bma.org.uk

See bma.org.uk/about-the-bma/equality-and-diversity/care-guidelines for the full guidelines and conditions

Baby friendly policy
Breastfeeding is supported at BMA House and other BMA offices, including in the public areas of BMA House and during meetings. There are also private areas available that include appropriate facilities that you are able to request. Additional breaks are also available during meetings if you are breastfeeding.

Prayer room
A prayer room is available at BMA House and the national offices. If you would like access to the prayer room please ask your committee secretariat or staff contact who can provide you with further details.

Catering
Members who have special dietary requirements should especially confirm their attendance at least 5 days in advance, so that the secretariat can liaise with Catering accordingly. Please let us know your dietary requirements and what we can do to make our meeting fully accessible to you. You can email info.gpc@bma.org.uk
How to claim expenses and honoraria

Expenses
You are eligible to claim expenses incurred when attending committee meetings. This includes costs of travel, subsistence and accommodation. Payments are made directly into your bank or building society accounts.

We have introduced a web-based expenses system called Concur, which replaces committee expense claim forms and the Global Expenses system. The website can be used on all current web browsers and is also available on most smart phones and tablet devices. If you have any queries regarding Concur please contact John O’Connor on 020 7383 6458.

We do not provide mobile telephones or land lines, but if you incur significant call costs on BMA business, you can submit a copy of your itemised phone bill highlighting the costs incurred on our behalf of and we will reimburse you.

When claiming BMA honoraria, please write under the ‘Description of Meeting or Claim’ column, on the non standard BMA honoraria form the following information:

Date and details of the meeting and also the time you are claiming for, as per the criteria below:

The standard daily rate is only payable for meetings which require the recipient to be absent from, or unavailable at, their normal place of work for a period of 6 hours or more. For shorter periods the rate is reduced pro rata:

- Over 6 hours absence 100% £525.00
- 3 to 6 hours absence 50% £262.50
- 1 to 3 hours absence 33% £175.00
- 1 hour or less 0% £NIL

Please contact Nikki McIntosh at nmcintosh@bma.org.uk or your policy staff leads at info.gpc@bma.org.uk to get approval for expenses for other committee related activities, such as attendance at conferences or stakeholder meetings. You can find more information about how to claim expenses on our website.
Concur quick reference guide
bma.org.uk/about-the-bma/how-we-work/concur
training-committee

Concur
Any BMA member who does not have a Concur account already can apply for one via the members section of the BMA website link below, information on using Concur is provided with each new user account.

Link to Concur application on BMA Website
https://www.bma.org.uk/about-us/how-we-work/committee-expenses

Honoraria
Members of GPC UK, GPC(E), SGPC and GPC(W) and their subcommittees are eligible to claim honoraria and expenses for the meetings which meet the criteria below.

Wherever possible meetings should be attended by use of video or tele conferencing facilities; this reduces the travel and subsistence costs. If members require familiarisation with the tele conferencing facilities this can be arranged by contacting the GPC Committee Secretariat.

Any claims submitted later than 60 days will be referred to the treasurer and may not be paid. Illegible, inaccurate or incomplete forms will be returned to the claimant unpaid.

Eligible meetings comprise:
- A meeting of GPC UK, GPC(E), SGPC or GPC(W)
- A meeting of a BMA committee to which you were appointed by GPC UK, GPC(E), SGPC or GPC(W)
- Attendance at an external group to which you were elected or appointed by GPC UK, GPC(E), SGPC or GPC(W) about which you have notified the relevant secretariat member
- A meeting arranged by a member of the secretariat and policy lead
- A meeting scheduled to last for more than one hour

The standard daily rate of honorarium is £525 per day for 2018 - 2019. No honorarium is payable to those in receipt of fixed reward contracts unless the contract specifies that the holder is entitled to claim additional payments, which require the prior approval of the Treasurer.

The standard daily rate is only payable for meetings which require the recipient to be absent from, or unavailable at, their normal place of work for a period of 6 hours or more.
For committee meetings, standard honoraria claims are made by ticking the attendance sheet at the meeting. The claim is then processed automatically. For meetings which qualify for non-standard honoraria, attendance must be approved in advance by the committee secretariat or, in the case of policy leads, the policy function staff lead before honoraria can be claimed.

These meetings are likely to be when you are acting on behalf of the BMA as a representative of one of the GPC committees in your capacity as a member of that committee or deputising for the chair at formal meetings with representatives of external organisations and bodies but may also include significant pre-arranged meetings with the secretariat.

For all of these meetings a non-standard Honoraria claim form (available from the committee secretariat) must be completed and claimed within 60 days of the meeting.

**Pension**

For the time being pension deductions will not be made until the BMA has taken professional advice. Once the position is clarified details will be made available.

You should ensure that you indicate on the meeting attendance form that you wish to claim an honorarium for that meeting by ticking the honoraria column. Payments will be made directly into your bank or building society accounts. You can find more information about how to claim honoraria on our website.


**Preferential hotel rates**

We have negotiated special discounts at hotels near regional headquarters in London, Scotland and Northern Ireland for use by BMA members, BMA and BMJ staff. You can see the list of hotels available for each region and details on how to book on the BMA website.

Key links and other useful information

https://www.bma.org.uk/collective-voice/committees/general-practitioners-committee

https://www.bma.org.uk/advice/employment/gp-practices

https://www.bma.org.uk/collective-voice/committees/general-practitioners-committee/lmc-conference-uk

Committee webpages

Policy Group Workplans
https://www.bma.org.uk/collective-voice/committees/general-practitioners-committee/gpc-policy-groups

Publications

Saving General Practice

BMA

BMA listserv guidance and terms and conditions of use
Each BMA committee has a listserv, an email function that distributes an email to each contact registered with it. Examples of what is appropriate to use the listserv for include circulating documents or drafts for comments, while inappropriate use would include complaints about services to members or the actions of BMA departments. In cases where the listserv is judged to have been used inappropriately the committee chair has the right to remove access to the listserv.

Listserver address
GPCUK@LISTSERV.BMA.ORG.UK
Key policies

Dignity at work policy
We try to ensure that all members of staff have a safe, healthy and fair working environment. We do not tolerate bullying or harassment of any kind. Bullying may be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, unfairly criticise or injure the recipient. Harassment includes unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic, conduct of a sexual nature, or less favourable treatment for rejecting or submitting to unwanted conduct. You can read further details online, including what to do if a complaint is made against you and contact details for confidential support.

Defamation statement
The BMA requires all its committees to be issued with a statement on defamation at the first meeting of each political session and similar statements are provided to members of its Annual representative meeting each year.

An individual making a public statement on behalf of the BMA and its committees needs to be aware of the potential pitfalls of the law of defamation. In general, a defamatory statement is one which “tends to lower an individual’s reputation in the eyes of right thinking members of society, or which would cause him to be shunned or bring him into hatred, ridicule or contempt, or which tends to discredit him in his profession or trade.”

There are two forms of defamation - libel and slander. Libel is the publication in permanent form of a defamatory statement. Slander is its publication in transitory form. So, to give examples, typically slander is spoken unrecorded word, whereas libel includes the written form such as hard copy or electronic communications, but also spoken words that are recorded, for instance in video form, or even in a
voice recording such as potentially on a voicemail. An individual can bring proceedings for libel in the absence of any proof of loss. Proceedings for slander, however, can only generally be brought if loss can be shown although there are limited exceptions such as the slander of an individual in his profession.

There are a number of defences to a claim of defamation these include:-

(a) truth – being able to show that what was said is true or substantially true;
(b) honest opinion – a statement of genuinely-held opinion on a stated factual basis;
(c) public interest defence – a defendant can avoid liability if the truth of a statement cannot be proved but if it can be established that publication was responsible and in the public interest;
(d) qualified privilege – a partial defence where the defendant can prove that the publication was in the public interest (there are two forms of qualified privilege – statutory and common law); and
(e) absolute privilege – a complete defence applying to statements made in certain situations e.g. in Parliament, between solicitor and client, statements to the police in a criminal investigation.

An action for defamation can only be brought in the High Court. Legal aid is not available and proceedings are notoriously expensive.

Where it is necessary to mention individuals or organisations, great care should be taken to ensure that no gratuitous or unsustainable comment is made, this being so whether the discussion is on or off the record. Great care must also be taken to ensure that where an issue regarding an individual or organisation is the subject of rumour, it is not given weight or authority by being publicised by the BMA to the detriment of that individual or organisation’s reputation. Similarly unsubstantiated comment should not be made about individuals and organisations.

Internet Postings
There is a common misconception that because of the informal and accessible nature of the Internet, different rules apply. The position is, quite simply, that the author of material posted over the Internet is every bit as liable in defamation as the author of off-line material.

Publication of defamatory material takes place once it has been posted on the Internet. It is not necessary for an aggrieved person to prove that anyone has actually
read the material. There is the added danger that the material can be accessed anywhere in the world enabling anybody who is aggrieved to sue in that country as well as here.

Website hosts may also be liable, along with the author, for publishing defamatory material if they have been made aware of its presence on a website and have failed to remove it within a reasonable period of time. People who hide behind anonymous postings will find that the website hosts can be required to disclose the identity of the author. If in doubt the BMA’s Legal Department or other professional lawyers should be contacted for advice.

**Electronic Communications**
Under the current Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA), which has been replaced by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the UK Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018), data subjects are entitled to request the disclosure of information held on them by the BMA. The DPA, GDPR and DPA 2018 extend not only to electronic files (including external and internal email correspondence and including activity tracking) but to manual files as well. Subject to exemptions, the BMA is legally obliged to provide the information requested. To avoid the risk of a claim for defamation, it is extremely important that all recorded information relating to individuals is accurately and properly expressed. Anything which could be regarded as offensive, insulting and defamatory must be avoided unless approved by the BMA’s Legal Department or other professional lawyers.

The best practical advice is that any reference to an individual or an organisation should be made in measured terms after a careful appraisal of the evidence available with legal advice being sought where appropriate. If this advice is followed there should be no difficulties with respect to defamation.

**Anti-corruption and anti-bribery policy**
We take a zero-tolerance approach to bribery and corruption, and do not make or accept facilitation payments, also known as ‘kickbacks’, of any kind in return for a business advantage. Corruption is dishonest and fraudulent conduct, which often involves bribery. Bribery is the inducement or reward offered, promised or provided in order to gain any commercial, contractual, regulatory or personal advantage.
Time off for trade union duties and activities
Employees who are representatives of a recognised trade union have the legal right to be permitted a reasonable amount of paid time off work to enable them to carry out trade union duties. The code of practice for trade union duties is different in Northern Ireland than the rest of the UK. Further details, including a list of key documents that you may need to secure paid time off work, are available online. ([https://www.bma.org.uk/advice/employment/leave/trade-union-leave](https://www.bma.org.uk/advice/employment/leave/trade-union-leave))

Whistleblowing guidance
Whistleblowing is a term applied to a situation where an employee, former employee or member of an organisation raises concerns to people who have the power and presumed willingness to take corrective action. You are protected in law from harassment and bullying when you raise a concern, and we can support you in addition to local support structures. A more detailed guide to whistleblowing, including case studies, is available online. ([https://www.bma.org.uk/advice/employment/raising-concerns/guide-to-raising-concerns](https://www.bma.org.uk/advice/employment/raising-concerns/guide-to-raising-concerns))

Equal opportunities policy
We are committed to equality in the provision of services to our members and stakeholders. This ensures that all members, those applying for membership, and other service users will receive the highest possible standards of service from us, irrespective of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, civil partnership status, age, disability, chronic illness, religion or belief. You can read further details on our equal opportunities policy online. ([https://www.bma.org.uk/about-us/equality-diversity-and-inclusion](https://www.bma.org.uk/about-us/equality-diversity-and-inclusion))

Co-chair guidelines
Co-chairing of committees can be an effective way of sharing a heavy workload and harnessing the strengths and expertise of two people. In the event of a co-chairship both chairs should only attend committee meetings and negotiation meetings of the committee they are chairing. Attendance at other committees, external meetings and conferences, both internal and external, should be shared unless they are sufficiently important to merit both chairs. You can read more detailed guidance on co-chairship online.