

# Your committee Patient liaison group

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.

2017-18



The BMA can only function with the contributions of committee members. In order that BMA committee 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 a BMA patient liaison group member, 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 a BMA patient liaison group member.
- 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.
- You should uphold the confidentiality of your committee at all times. As a member of the medical profession and as an elected representative, you should behave in a professional manner at all times. You should always treat patients, colleagues and staff with respect. If you have a concern, raise it straight away with the chair of committee or with the committee secretary.

**In sitting on the BMA patient liaison group you agree to uphold these principles.**

## Patient liaison group

### About the committee

The BMA believes that the views of patients and the public are of critical importance to the BMA. The BMA promotes the delivery of the highest quality, patient-centred services in UK healthcare, and works to improve the health expectation and experience of individuals and of the UK population in general.

The PLG was established by BMA council, with its inaugural meeting in May 2004. Since then the group continues to work alongside other BMA committees to progress matters on behalf of patients. This is a two-way exchange of information working within the existing organisational structure to the benefit of both the BMA and patients. The PLG feeds into other committees via consultations, and inputs to committees and BMA council with patient-informed views.

### Mission Statement

#### Listening, learning, informing, improving

The BMA's Patient Liaison Group (PLG) is an internal reference group within the BMA. It provides patients' perspectives on matters of interest to patients and the profession. Working with other BMA Committees, the PLG contributes to a dynamic exchange of information and appraisal to ensure that patient perspectives constructively inform BMA policies.

PLG Members come from a range of backgrounds and draw on their knowledge and experience as patients, carers, advocates or professionals working in a range of health-related fields.

The PLG members are here to:

- Act as a critical friend on issues that concern patients
- Initiate constructive and robust challenges to decision making and policy development.
- Ensure BMA policy development processes and related activities include patients' perspectives, interests, and concerns.
- Help the BMA understand how its decisions will impact on patients and carers and raise awareness of the needs of all patient groups, especially the vulnerable and disadvantaged.

### Remit of the committee

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The PLG is composed of:

- 11 appointed patient/carer ('lay') representatives
- five doctor members, including
  - BMA council chair
  - three members elected by council
  - one appointed member who shall not have served on the UK or a national council or a UK standing committee, board or other BMA UK representative group in the preceding two years or be a candidate for election to such groups.

Lay members of the PLG can normally serve for a maximum term of five years, with reappointment on a yearly basis. Lay members who have served a maximum term of five years on the PLG would not normally be eligible for re-appointment or co-option after this term. The only exception would occur when a lay member was elected as PLG chair in his/her fifth year on the committee. In these circumstances, the individual concerned would be able to serve a two year term as chair.

Three doctor representatives, not necessarily members of council, are elected by council to serve a term of three years. They may stand for re-election for a further term of three years.

The doctor member who has not served previously on BMA UK committees may serve on the PLG for a maximum term of five years: an initial term of three years and re-appointment for one year on two further occasions. This doctor member is appointed by a panel of three comprising the chair, deputy chair and one ordinary member, with a ratio of two lay members to one doctor.

Election to the positions of chair and deputy chair is by nomination or self-nomination.

### Your role as a committee member

PLG lay members are expected to:

- attend three whole-day PLG meetings per session
- advise on matters of BMA policy from the perspective of patients, carers and the public
- contribute to BMA work areas and consultation responses on matters requiring a patient perspective
- put forward matters for consideration with regard to future BMA policy development
- be a PLG representative on another BMA committee to provide liaison – this is voluntary and there are limited places – it involves attending up to four extra meetings per year and contributing to discussions on that committee’s listserver

- promote the work of the PLG
- support the PLG lead (committee secretary) and other BMA executive and support staff in relation to the PLG’s work by responding to requests for information, for example, in a timely fashion.

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/joining-a-committee/role-profiles-for-bma-committees>

### Voting rights

All elected and appointed members may speak and vote on all matters considered by the group including the election of its officers and representatives to other bodies. A deputy member of the group assumes the same rights as the full member he or she is replacing, whereas observers and others invited to meetings do not have voting rights.

## 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.**

## Key committee dates

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

The patient liaison group meets on three formal occasions each year although members may also contribute to further meetings as representatives of the PLG. These roles are established by the secretariat.

- Monday 4th September 2017 – planning meeting
- Tuesday 19th September 2017
- Tuesday 6th February 2018
- Tuesday 29th May 2018

All meetings are held at BMA House and usually commence at 11:00am with an approximate finish at 4pm.

## Apologies for absence

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

## Work priorities

### Sustainability and Transformation Plans

As part of the Five Year Forward View, every health and care system in England has been asked to create their own local place-based plan for the next five years. These are referred to as Sustainability and Transformation Plans or more commonly as STPs. In November 2016, PLG produced a paper using feedback from PLG members on STPs which was shared with BMA committees and teams to inform BMA policy. PLG members were asked what they knew about STPs, whether they lived in an area where STPs had been published and whether there had been any patient or public involvement.

The feedback indicated that more information should be made available to patients and public about the plans and that opportunities should be created for service users to be involved.

In addition, the PLG chair spoke at NHS Providers' annual conference on how senior management in the NHS might communicate better with patients in the context of service reconfiguration and integration (e.g. Five Year Forward View, healthcare devolution and STPs).

### Devolution of healthcare

On May 2015, PLG organised a symposium which focused on patient engagement in the context of healthcare devolution.

The symposium convened representatives from BMA branch of practice committees, patient organisations, royal medical colleges and advocacy groups. Patients living in Greater Manchester and Hackney gave their perspectives on how devolution is working there and how much public and patient involvement and consultation has taken place in these areas. Based on these constructive discussions PLG has produced two checklists – one for devolution site leads and one for patients.

The aim of these checklists is:

1. to empower patients to be better informed about access to healthcare and help them influence service delivery.
2. to support devolution site leads by providing them with a best practice tool on how to work in partnership with patients to design services that reflect and deliver what people need.

## Helping you participate

### Role of Committee Services

Committee services are responsible for providing support to all the committees and conferences which are covered by the policy directorate.

Committee secretaries work directly with the committee and their chairs, providing high level support, maintaining an overview of all the committee's work and taking forward policy work not covered elsewhere. The committee support team undertake all associated committee administration from carrying out research and policy matters to preparing agendas and action notes. The team also respond to members enquiries, support diary management, travel and rooms bookings and coordinating and monitoring committee listservers.

LMC liaison responsibility also falls within the team and is led by a senior policy adviser.

## Key contacts

### Angela Kyle

Head of Committee Services  
T 020 7383 6842  
E [Akyle@bma.org.uk](mailto:Akyle@bma.org.uk)

### Matt Lasham

Committee Manager  
T 020 7383 6020  
E [mlasham@bma.org.uk](mailto:mlasham@bma.org.uk)

### Sophie-Odile Sauerteig

Committee Secretary  
T 020 7383 6416  
E [SSauerteig@bma.org.uk](mailto:SSauerteig@bma.org.uk)

### Rosemary Hammond

Committee Support and Advice Officer  
T 020 7383 6553  
E [rhammond@bma.org.uk](mailto:rhammond@bma.org.uk)

### Kim Fowler

Committee Support Manager  
T 020 7383 6140  
E [kfowler@bma.org.uk](mailto:kfowler@bma.org.uk)

### Committee Support Team

E [committeesupport@bma.org.uk](mailto:committeesupport@bma.org.uk)

### 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.

### Video conferencing facilities

For some meetings you may find it easier to join via 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.

### 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 14 years and adults and children requiring care. If you require care for a dependent you must request this four weeks before the event or meeting. For more information or for an application form contact [committeesupport@bma.org.uk](mailto:committeesupport@bma.org.uk).

See [www.bma.org.uk/about-the-bma/equality-and-diversity/care-guidelines](http://www.bma.org.uk/about-the-bma/equality-and-diversity/care-guidelines) for the full guidelines and conditions.

### 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

Please let us know your dietary requirements and what we can do to make our meeting fully accessible to you. You can email [committeesupport@bma.org.uk](mailto:committeesupport@bma.org.uk).

## How to claim expenses, attendance allowance 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 new 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.

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.

Please contact Sophie Odile Sauerteig 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

[www.bma.org.uk/about-the-bma/how-we-work/concur-training-committee](http://www.bma.org.uk/about-the-bma/how-we-work/concur-training-committee)

### Attendance allowance

PLG lay members are entitled to claim an attendance allowance of £75 per meeting, rising to £200 after attending 12 meeting days from the beginning of the BMA's political year.

To claim attendance allowance you will need to complete a BMA claim form. These can be provided for you at meetings attended at BMA House. If you are attending a meeting outside of BMA House and you wish to claim attendance allowance, you will need to inform the secretariat so that a form can be sent to you. Attendance allowance claims can only be accepted within 21 days of the meeting date. Payments will be made directly into your bank or building society accounts.

## Key links and other useful information

### Committee webpages

<http://bma.org.uk/plg>

### Publications

All of the publications are available on our website at

<http://bma.org.uk/plg>

### Listserver address

[PLG-L@LISTSERV.BMA.ORG.UK](mailto:PLG-L@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

There are two types of defamation – libel and slander. Libel is the publication in permanent form of a defamatory statement, such as written form and electronic communications, whereas slander is its publication in transitory form, such as spoken, unrecorded word. Defamation works in the same way online, and website hosts can also be held responsible for hosting defamatory statements. When making any reference to an individual or organisation the BMA legal department should be consulted.

## Conflict of Interest

### 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 representatives<sup>1</sup> (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 (eg 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.**

### **BMA listserver guidance and terms and conditions of use**

Each BMA committee has a listserver, an email function that distributes an email to each contact registered with it. Examples of what is appropriate to use the listserver 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 listserver is judged to have been used inappropriately the committee chair has the right to remove access to the listserver.

### **BMA committee expenses and honoraria business rules**

You can claim back expenses you may incur in order to attend BMA committee meetings. You are entitled to claim up to £35 for dinner expenses and up to £205 for accommodation, per night. You can also reclaim locum costs at a limit of £550 per day.

Honoraria payments are payments made by the BMA to members for their voluntary services. You qualify for honoraria payments for each BMA meeting you attend once you have attended 12 meetings in a session. Payments are £250 per day, and you can claim by making sure that you sign and tick the relevant

column on the committee attendance sheet from your thirteenth meeting onwards.

### **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.

### **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.

### **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.

### **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.

### **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 sufficiently important to merit both chairs. You can read more detailed guidance on co-chairship online.

### **Care guidelines for BMA members**

We can provide care for 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.

### **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.

**British Medical Association**

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[bma.org.uk](http://bma.org.uk)

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