Doctors working in justice and immigration settings

FMC news
Issue 1 July 2016

Catch up on all the latest news, views and resources for doctors working in:
- police custody
- prisons
- immigration removal centres
- sexual assault referral centres
- forensic pathology
- forensic psychiatry
- crematoria
- coronial services

Get involved

Want to know what the BMA does for you?
We are always keen to speak to new people and understand what issues there are for members working in the above settings. There are also opportunities to join the forensic medicine committee so please do contact us at info.fmc@bma.org.uk with any queries or suggestions. If you're interested in what the committee does, why not join our visitors' scheme where you can attend and observe one of our meetings.

Do you work in prison?
There is a new email discussion forum for prison GPs run by the BMA for both members and non-members. It’s a great place to raise queries and share best practice: you are not alone! To participate contact Karen Day kday@bma.org.uk.

Do you work in immigration removal centres?
The BMA is very keen to know more about doctors working within immigration and the challenges this setting brings. We are in the process of developing joint guidance with the Faculty of Forensic and Legal Medicine for all healthcare professionals dealing with victims of torture and would value your unique perspectives. If you’re interested in contributing to this contact us at info.fmc@bma.org.uk.
Not a member?

There has never been a more crucial time to join. Find out how the BMA can support you in your job and the many other benefits we can offer:

Employment advice – Experience the benefits a BMA membership offers with specialist advice on issues such as contracts, pay and discrimination

Career development – Get the support you need to progress in your career from an organisation that understands your unique needs and the daily challenges you face

Work-life support – Gain access to resources, advice and support to help you get peace of mind and rest assured that help is at hand whenever you need it.

Events – Save the date!

GPC: Prison GP conference
27 January 2017
To register interest for this event, please contact confunit@bma.org.uk

FMC: Secure environments conference
7 September 2017
For all doctors that work in justice and immigration settings. To register interest please contact confunit@bma.org.uk

News

Police Custody Healthcare
Our campaign to see an improved and consistent standard of healthcare within police custody equivalent to the NHS has been longstanding and we had hoped this was to be achieved through the intended transfer of the commissioning of clinical forensic healthcare into the NHS. The home secretary’s announcement at the end of last year that this was not going ahead brought significant disappointment and frustration from all who had been involved. The BMA council chair wrote to seek further reasons for this but the response has brought us little reassurance.

Despite this significant setback we will continue working with NHS England and other stakeholders to ensure the work that has been achieved, namely a national service specification for commissioners, is completed and embraced by the Police and Crime Commissioners, who will be responsible for commissioning healthcare within police custody.

Death Certification
After considerable delay a consultation on the proposed new Medical Examiner system for scrutinising and certifying death in England and Wales has been published. The BMA has provided a response and will continue to liaise with the wider group of stakeholders and the Department of Health. This will have an impact on all doctors currently certifying the death of patients and those involved in working with local crematoria and coroners.

Police cells as ‘places of safety’
We are busy briefing MPs on our views of the Policing and Crime Bill as it proceeds through parliament. If successful it will bring in new legislation banning the use of police cells a ‘places of safety’ for under 18’s and significantly restricting its use for adults us who are being assessed under the Mental Health Act. Changes to the Mental Health Act will also include:

- Reducing the maximum duration of detention for the purposes of an assessment under the Act
- Widening the current definition of a place of safety to increase local capacity and flexibility.
- Extending police officers’ powers to act quickly to detain and remove people experiencing a mental health crisis from any place other than a private dwelling (for which a warrant would still be required).
– Requiring police officers to consult health professionals before detaining someone under the Act’s provisions.
– Clarifying that assessments under the Act can take place in a private dwelling.

**Coroner post mortem fees**
We submitted a response to the Ministry of Justice’s review into the Coroner and Justice Act 2009 urging the government to review its fees for coronial post-mortem examination and inquest attendance. The response was informed by the feedback provided by over 230 members through a survey which was circulated earlier this year. In the submission we highlighted the short- and long-term impact that lack of proper remuneration for this service is having on the sustainability of the service. You can read the submission [here](#).

**Do you know the difference between professional vs expert witness work?**
From time to time you may be asked to provide evidence obtained in a professional capacity and even attend court. Find out more about what it’s like working as a professional and expert witness and important guidelines to follow when doing so.

**Contract checking**
Are you applying for a new role? Are you moving from the NHS to a private provider? The BMA offers a free contract checking service for members. You can get your contract checked by our employment law experts before you sign it. Find out more about the contract checking service [here](#).

**Resources and courses**
Here are just a brief selection of the resources that may interest those working in secure environments and other relevant fields:

- **Royal College of GPs – working in secure environments**
- **SMMGP – Supporting good practice in drug and alcohol treatment**
- **Faculty of Forensic and Legal Medicine**
  

**Pain in Secure Environments – courses**
Day courses in managing pain in the secure environment are run by the Royal College of Anaesthetists, emphasising the limitations of opioids, and the importance of physical therapy and unmet emotional needs [Pain in Secure Environments | The Royal College of Anaesthetists](http://www.nta.nhs.uk/uploads/persistentpain.pdf). If you are unable to attend the courses, advice can also be found here [http://www.nta.nhs.uk/uploads/persistentpain.pdf](http://www.nta.nhs.uk/uploads/persistentpain.pdf)