Focus on GP trainee occupational health vaccinations

March 2015
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It has come to the attention of the BMA’s GP Committee (GPC) that some GP trainees working in a general practice settings are being asked to pay for occupational health vaccinations. The GPC view is that under no circumstances should GP trainees or any other doctors in the NHS be required to pay for vaccinations where they are involved in direct patient care.

**Immunisation against infectious diseases**

This is outlined in Public Health England’s ‘[Green Book](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/immunisation-against-infectious-disease-the-green-book)’ on immunisation against infectious diseases (pages 83-90), which states:

‘Employers need to be able to demonstrate that an effective employee immunisation programme is in place, and they have an obligation to arrange and pay for this service’ (page 83).

**Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) regulations**

The [Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2002/2677/regulation/6/made) also requires an assessment to be made (by an employer) of a range of hazardous substances, including ‘biological agents’, in order that suitable ‘control measures’ can be implemented to minimise the risk. Where a risk has been identified and where effective vaccines are available these should be used as a method of control. The employer is required to make provision of the vaccines to staff who are not already immune.

**Health and Safety at Work**

Section 9 of [The Health & Safety at Work Act 1974](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1974/37) requires that vaccinations needed to mitigate infection risk are provided free of charge to staff.

**Seeking a contractual mechanism**

The BMA is lobbying to make the provision of occupational health vaccinations obligatory for employers through the new Doctor in Training contract. This is still currently under discussion. In the meantime, GPC does not believe GP trainee should pay for their own occupational health vaccinations. Anyone who requests that you do should be directed to the regulations mentioned above.

If instances should arise where GP trainees are charged for these vaccinations in any part of the UK, please let the GPC know by emailing Alex Ottley, Senior Policy Executive within the BMA’s NHS Primary Care Division, via [aottley@bma.org.uk](mailto:aottley@bma.org.uk)

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