

The new GMS contract explained

Focus on....

How to access information

This guidance note has been produced by the General Practitioners Committee to help GPs and Local Medical Committees manoeuvre around the new contract documents and information sources more easily. It is one of a series of guidance notes on the new contract and will be updated as new documents are produced. Although this 'focus on...' is England specific, much of the information it covers is relevant UK-wide. Separate 'focus on...' documents will soon be available for Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

NB. Some of the URLs within this document may be subject to change: the version available online will be revised regularly and should therefore be fully up to date.

THE MAIN DOCUMENTS

→ *Pre-ballot*

1. New GMS contract 2003 'Investing in General Practice'

The main contract document ("blue book") was sent to all GPs throughout the UK in February/March 2003. This can also be found online at the following address:

www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/Content/investinggp

2. Letter on the Minimum Practice Income Guarantee (MPIG)

A copy of this joint letter, from the GPC and NHS Confederation, was sent to all UK GPs on 17 April 2003 and can be found at the following website address:

www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/Content/mpigletter

3. New GMS contract 2003 'Investing in general practice' – supporting documentation

The second "blue book", sent to all GPs throughout the UK in May 2003. This can also be found (and downloaded) online at the following address:

www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/Content/Contractsupportingdocumentation

The supporting documentation was sent with a second joint letter, clarifying any final issues, which can be found at the following website address:

www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/Content/jtletter300503+

The above 3 documents make up the bulk of the pre-ballot documentation.

→ *Post-ballot/implementation phase*

4. NHS (GMS Contracts) Regulations

The GMS Contract Regulations (SI 2004/0291) are available on the HMSO website at the following address:

www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2004/20040291.htm

5. Standard GMS contract

The standard contract can be found at the following website address:

www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/OrganisationPolicy/PrimaryCare/PrimaryCareContracting/GMS/GMSArticle/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=4125638&chk=8KR2IL

This link also contains all historic documents.

6. GMS Statement of financial entitlements (SFE)

The SFE takes the form of Legal Directions and replaces the Statement of Fees and Allowances ('Red Book'). It sets out in detail the way in which payments will be calculated and made to practices – part 4 of the SFE details those payments that have been directly transferred from the 'Red Book'.

The SFE can be found at the following website address:

www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/OrganisationPolicy/PrimaryCare/PrimaryCareContracting/GMS/GMSArticle/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=4133079&chk=kg6E1d

This link also contains all historic documents.

7. Delivering investment in general practice: implementing the new GMS contract ("Guidance")

Published online by the DoH in December 2003, this document provides detailed guidance on the above 3 documents and can be found at the following website address:

www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidanceArticle/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=4070242&chk=tokzna

The guidance was drafted by the DoH and agreed between the GPC, the NHS Confederation and the DoH. It is not a 'stand-alone' document and must be read in conjunction with the source legal documents, i.e. the regulations, the standard contract and the SFE.

8. GMS Transitional and Consequential Provisions Order 2004

Details of the transitional arrangements are available from HMSO (SI 2004/0433) and can be found at the following address:

www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2004/20040433.htm

9. GMS and PMS Transitional and Consequential Provisions Order 2004

The second transitional order (SI 2004/0865), which also covers transitional arrangements for PMS pilot agreements, can be found at the following address:

www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2004/20040865.htm

10. Primary Medical Services (Sale of Goodwill and Restrictions on Sub-contracting) Regulations 2004

A letter to the profession from the Chairman of the GPC, dated 25 March 2004, regarding the partial end to the ban on the sale of goodwill in England can be found at the following address:

www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/Content/saleofgoodwill250304

The Goodwill Regulations (SI 2004/0906) can be found online through HMSO at the following address:

www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2004/20040906.htm

11. Primary Medical Services (Directed Enhanced Services)(England) Directions 2004 ("DES directions")

The DES directions place new legal duty on PCTs to implement the six schemes. Applying to both GMS and PMS, the DES directions can be found at the following address:

www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/07/54/62/04075462.pdf

12. NHS (Performers List) Regulations 2004

The Performers list (SI 2004/0585) replaces the former principal and supplementary lists for both GMS and PMS doctors. Some 'frequently asked questions' are available on the DoH website at the following addresses:

www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/07/68/12/04076812.pdf

The DoH issued guidance, primarily for PCTs, in August, 'Primary Medical Performers Lists: Delivering Quality in Primary Care'. It advises on the management of primary medical performers lists, including admission of doctors to the lists, conditional admission of doctors to the lists, suspension, contingent removal of doctors from the lists, and doctors' disqualification for inclusion in any list. The guidance can be found through the following website address:

www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidanceArticle/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=4087622&chk=8/3C28

The list regulations can be found online through HMSO at the following address:

www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/Publications/PublicationsLegislation/PublicationsLegislationArticle/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=4078967&chk=eGcLTi

13. NHS (GMS Contracts) (Prescription of Drugs etc) Regulations 2004

The Prescription regulations reaffirm the drug restrictions on the NHS (previously schedule 10 of the drug tariff), are available from HMSO (SI 2004/0629) and can be found at the following address:

www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2004/20040629.htm

14. NHS (GMS - Premises Costs) (England) Directions 2004

Chapter 4 of the DoH Guidance for GMS GPs included the principles to recognise Contractors' costs incurred to provide premises suitable for the delivery of new GMS services. Specific details of the arrangements to be used to calculate and make payments accordingly are set out in the Premises costs directions, which can be found at the following website address:

www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/07/68/20/04076820.pdf

In addition, a general guidance note on the premises allocation policy can be found at the following address:

www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/06/88/30/04068830.pdf

15. PMS "Sustaining innovation through new PMS arrangements" ("PMS guidance")

The PMS guidance was most recently updated on 18 March 2004 (the original version was published online by the DoH in December 2003) and is available at the following website address:

www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidanceArticle/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=4066930&chk=nezOjB

16. NHS (PMS Agreements) Regulations 2004

The PMS regulations are available from HMSO (SI 2004/0627) and can be found at the following address:

www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2004/20040627.htm

17. PMS Agreements (Payments for Specific Purposes) Directions 2004

These Directions concern conditions and rates of payments in relation to the NHS Golden Hello Scheme, the Flexible Careers Scheme, the Returners' Scheme, the Doctors' Retainer Scheme, and Prolonged Study Leave, effective from 1st April 2004. They can be found online at the following address:

www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/08/29/30/04082930.PDF

18. GMS contract revision guidance – from April 2006

This document gives an overview of the changes to the General Medical Services (GMS) contract for 2006/07.

www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/Content/revisionnGMSFeb20062

New DES Directions and amendments to the SFE following revisions to the GMS contract can be found here:

www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/Content/NewDEs0706

OTHER VALUABLE SOURCES OF INFORMATION

19. Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

The new contract related FAQs, produced by the GPC secretariat can be found through the following website address:

www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/Content/Hubgeneralpractitionersfaqs

20. 'Focus on...' guidance notes

Produced by the GPC secretariat, the 'Focus on...' series summarises the key topics relating to the new GMS contract and are sent via email to LMCs, then posted on the website.

The following 'Focus on...' guidance notes have been produced to date:

- access 2006/07
- agenda for change and practice staff (Dec 2005)
- assessment of GP pensionable earnings (Mar 2005)
- cash to accruals conversion factor (Jun 2004)
- choice and booking DES (Mar 2006)
- choice of nationally accredited systems (Feb 2004)
- community hospital GPs (Jul 2005)
- disease prevalence (May 2004)
- dynamising factor (Mar 2005)
- enhanced services (Mar 2004)
- exception reporting (Feb 2004 – updated Apr 2005)
- financial monitoring of enhanced services (Mar 2004)
- funding for information management & technology (Apr 2004)
- funding for the new GMS contract (Oct 2003)
- GMS indicative contractor budgets (Feb 2004)
- health service body status (Jan 2004)
- nature of the contract & partnerships (Sep 2003)
- out of hours (Jun 2006)
- patient registration (Apr 2004)
- payments of influenza and pneumococcal vaccinations (Mar 2006)
- pensions: an overview (Sep 2004)
- pension flexibilities (Sep 2004)
- personal medical services (Jan 2004)
- postgraduate education (Jul 2004)
- practice staff under the new contract (Aug 2004)
- premises costs (Feb 2004)
- preparing for implementation (Jan 2004)
- private practice (June 2004)
- QMAS (Oct 2004)
- quality & outcomes framework (Feb 2006)
- quality payments (Oct 2003)
- review of the quality & outcomes framework (May 2004)
- revisions to the GMS contract (Mar 2006)
- role of LMCs (Aug 2004)
- salaried GPs (Jul 2006)
- sale of goodwill (Jun 2004)
- seniority payments (Jan 2006)
- SFE changes 2006-07
- standard and default contracts (Mar 2004)
- superannuation contributions (Sep 2004)
- temporary residents (Jun 2004)

- towards practice based commissioning DES (Feb 2006)
- vaccinations and immunisations (Apr 2004)

The GPC is continuing to update and produce new guidance.

21. Partnership agreements guidance

This guidance was prepared by the GPC in consultation with the BMA's regional offices and legal advisors and the GPC's legal advisors. It was made available online in May 2004 and is intended to help GPs to identify matters they may wish to cover under a partnership agreement when practising either under the new GMS contract or under PMS. It can be found at the following address:

www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/Content/partneragreefeb06

22. GPC news

Following each monthly meeting of the GPC, the secretariat produces a circular summarising the main topics of debate, including issues surrounding the new GMS contract. GPC news is sent via email to LMCs then posted on the website at the following address:

www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/Content/Hubcommitteewnewsgeneralpractitioners

NB. You will need to be logged on to access GPC News, either as a BMA member or registered 'guest user' (see www.bma.org.uk).

23. PMS agreements: GPC guidance

The GPC produced guidance for PMS GPs in September 2004, which mainly covers the changes to PMS resulting from the new GMS contract. The guidance can be found at the following website address:

www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/Content/pmsagreements0904

NB. You will need to be logged on to access this guidance, either as a BMA member or registered 'guest user' (see www.bma.org.uk).

24. Appraisal

Guidance from the DoH relating to funding for appraisal, as agreed with the GPC and NHS Confederation, was published online on 25 October 2004 and can be found via the following address:

www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/09/14/41/04091441.pdf

A summary by the GPC secretariat of the recently finalised appraisal funding arrangements can be found at the following website address (for logged on BMA members or 'registered users'):

www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/Content/gpcnews221004#GPappraisal

Guidance setting out the national appraisal scheme for GPs by the DoH was published online in March and updated in August 2004. The guidance can be found at the following address:

www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/03/47/23/04034723.pdf

NORTHERN IRELAND, SCOTLAND AND WALES

Northern Ireland

Further guidance on contract implementation in Northern Ireland can be found at the following address:

www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/gp_contract

Scotland

Further guidance on contract implementation and legislation in Scotland can be found at the following address:

www.paymodernisation.scot.nhs.uk/gms/index.htm

Wales

Further guidance on contract implementation in Wales can be found at the GMS Implementation Project website at:

www.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/home.cfm?orgid=480