

A GUIDE TO ROTHERHAM LOCAL MEDICAL COMMITTEE

WHAT ARE LOCAL MEDICAL COMMITTEES?

Local Medical Committees (LMCs) are statutory bodies, recognised by successive NHS Acts as the professional organisation representing individual GPs. The 1999 NHS Act extended the role of LMCs to include representation of all GPs, whatever their contractual status. LMCs represent the views of GPs to NHS England, Clinical Commissioning Groups, Public Health and any other appropriate organisations or agencies.

INDEPENDENCE

LMCs are independent, self-financing bodies with statutory functions to represent the interests of general practice alone and act as its advocate. They are not trade unions.

FUNDING

LMCs are funded by statutory contributions from GP practices in a contract with the NHS to provide General or Personal Medical Services and by practitioners registered with the LMC as Sessional GPs. In addition, GPs are asked to contribute to a voluntary levy, which is used to finance the LMC's contribution to the national General Practitioners Defence Fund. It is important that all GPs agree to support the voluntary levy scheme.

ELECTIONS

LMC elections take place regularly under terms stipulated in the LMC constitution. In Rotherham elections take place every three years according to the approved constitution. The current term commenced 1st April 2013. Any GP represented by Rotherham LMC and on the Medical Performers List in Rotherham can be nominated for election. A position is also reserved for a GP Registrar representative.

CORE VALUES

Rotherham LMC is committed to the values of equity, fairness, openness and equal opportunities. The LMC's aim is to represent and support GPs, ensuring that they are valued and their skills are properly utilised and to facilitate the smooth running of general practice.

REPRESENTATION

Wherever possible, Rotherham LMC works co-operatively with local agencies and organisations to ensure patients receive services and care in accordance with the profession's local and national priorities. Wherever necessary, the LMC defends the

position of local GPs where the views of others conflict with what we believe is in the best interests of patients and the profession.

Rotherham LMC represents and advises on all matters concerning: -

GPs as *professionals* including:

- Education and training – undergraduate, postgraduate and vocational training, continuing professional development
- Workforce planning
- Collaboration with the General Medical Council
- Collaboration with national professional bodies, e.g. British Medical Association, Royal College of General Practitioners
- Professionally led regulation and professional standards – ethical, conduct and performance, including clinical governance
- Liaison with consultant and hospital colleagues
- Occupational health issues, eg sick doctors
- Liaison with other professions allied to medicine

GPs as *commissioners* of services including:

- The LMC has the right to be consulted about the use of GMS resources by CCGs
- Relationships with Community and Acute Trusts

GPs as *providers* of NHS services including:

- GP contracts - both independent and salaried
- The NHS Directions – regulations
- Liaison with other agencies, including Social Services and voluntary services
- Local CCG and Health Authority policy
- The NHS England complaints process and disciplinary procedures

LOCAL REPRESENTATION

The LMC consists of ten GPs elected from Rotherham constituents on an area-wide basis. The LMC constitution allows for the inclusion of representatives of different types of doctor working in primary care. In addition, members are co-opted when appropriate. The LMC meets on the second Monday of each month usually with the exception of August. All local doctors providing primary healthcare services are welcome to attend meetings as observers. LMC representatives meet monthly with the CCG at specifically scheduled meetings to discuss GP/CCG interface issues. Rotherham LMC also works closely with the other LMCs in South Yorkshire to ensure that GPs are represented on a regional basis.

NATIONAL REPRESENTATION AND NEGOTIATION

LMCs represent local GPs' views nationally through the professional representative mechanisms outlined below:

- **Local voices:** GPs can submit proposals to their LMC at any time. Proposals are distilled from debate at the LMC over the course of the year for submission to the Annual Conference of LMCs.
- **National voices:** The 'parliament' for GPs is the General Practitioners Committee (GPC) which meets monthly throughout the year. The GPC is the standing

committee of the British Medical Association with full authority to deal with all matters affecting NHS GPs, whether or not they are BMA members. It is recognised by the Department of Health as the NHS GPs' negotiating body. Every part of the country has at least one spokesperson on the GPC to present its views and debate key issues. Throughout the year papers are produced for discussion at LMCs and from time to time the GPC consults all GPs directly through surveys and questionnaires.

· **National debate and policy setting:** GPC representatives and LMC representatives meet at the Annual Conference of LMCs. Proposals from individual LMCs across the country are debated alongside those from the GPC. The outcome of the debate determines the framework for the profession's negotiations at both national and local levels.

· **National negotiation:** This takes place continually between the Secretary of State and his/her team of negotiators and the profession's national negotiating team. The Secretary of State's team is supported by the senior civil service and the resources of the NHS. The profession's national negotiating team is elected annually by members of the GPC, and is supported by other professionals including public affairs and relations staff. The issues negotiated nationally mirror those at local level.

LINKS WITH OTHER BODIES

Rotherham LMC maintains an extensive network of formal and informal contact on behalf of GPs with bodies such as:

- Rotherham CCG
- Rotherham Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- South Yorkshire LMCs
- British Medical Association
- Local Government / MPs
- General Practitioners Committee
- Royal College of General Practitioners

HELPING INDIVIDUAL GPs

Rotherham LMC provides help and advice to assist GPs steer through the NHS.

Such help is available on all matters relevant to general practice including:

- GPs' remuneration
- GPs' terms and conditions of service
- Complaints
- Any disputes which may occur between GPs and NHS England
- Partnership affairs
- Completion of medical reports / certification
- Prescribing issues
- Premises

COMMUNICATIONS

Rotherham LMC regards communication between representatives and constituent GPs as essential and is ever striving to improve this. The LMC communicates with GPs in many ways including:

- Newsletters – distributed monthly to all represented GPs / Practice Managers
- LMC website – updating members with latest news at www.rotherhamlmc.org
- Professional meetings / seminars
- The medical press
- Information bulletins on major issues and summaries of national guidance
- Surveys, ballots
- Consultation with specific GPs

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