“IT’S YOUR LMC”

The Nottinghamshire GPs’ Guide to the LMC and the services provided by Nottinghamshire LMC Ltd

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL MEDICAL COMMITTEE (LIMITED)

REPRESENTING AND SUPPORTING GPs
What is the LMC?

The Local Medical Committee (LMC) is a body recognised in statute as representing all local general practitioners working within the NHS. As the local representative committee of NHS GPs, the LMC is recognised in the NHS Acts and Regulations, as the body with whom NHS England must consult (through its Area Team) on issues affecting the administration of GPs’ contracts and remuneration, and the services they provide to patients.

The LMC represents all GPs within its geographical area of responsibility and also has many other professional and statutory responsibilities.

In 2007 the LMC established a company limited by guarantee (Nottinghamshire LMC Ltd) to whom it transferred the responsibility for carrying out almost all of its responsibilities, and for its staff.

The elected members of the LMC constitute the membership of the Company. The Company has five GP Directors, including the LMC Chairman, who is automatically Chair of Nottinghamshire LMC Ltd, and the Chief Executive, who is also the Company Secretary.

The role which Nottinghamshire LMC Ltd undertakes can be subdivided into three broad categories:

- **Representative** We represent the views of GPs to a variety of bodies, most notably CCGs and NHS England’s Area Team (Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire), but also to local authorities, social services, NHS Trusts, other contractor professions, patient representative bodies, MPs, national bodies such as the General Practitioners Committee of the BMA (GPC), General Medical Council (GMC), the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP), and local and national media. We also undertake negotiations on behalf of our constituent GPs, individually and collectively.

- **Advisory** We have always striven to keep GPs informed of local and national developments, circulating guidance on local issues and initiatives, and supplementing what is available nationally, where appropriate. We also provide advice on a wide range of subjects to practices and individual GPs.

- **Pastoral** We have traditionally looked after the interests of individual constituents needing advice or assistance. The Pastoral Services which Nottinghamshire LMC Ltd now provides includes assistance to GPs suffering ill health, or needing help in coping with any personal crisis, helping individuals or practices respond to patient complaints, and conciliating in intra or inter practice disputes (for further details of our Pastoral Network consult our website).

In summary the LMC (as represented by Nottinghamshire LMC Ltd) is:

- **A democratic body** elected by, and comprising, local GPs, representing the diverse interests which make up general practice locally.

- **A representative body** which canvasses the views of local GPs and represents them to CCGs and NHS England’s Area Team and other local and national organisations and which acts as a focus for debate on GP issues.

- **A statutory body** with rights and responsibilities defined in NHS Acts and Regulations, which serves as the local representative committee for all NHS GPs.

- **A professional body** concerned to promote quality and education and uphold standards of professional practice through encouragement and example in cooperation with other professional and educational bodies.

- **An independent body** which represents the interest of general practice alone and acts as its advocate, free of political constraints and of the need to satisfy other interests.

- **A source of advice** and support for all GPs in all matters affecting their professional lives and activities.

It is responsible for advising the Secretary of State, the Department of Health and NHS England with whom it negotiates GPs’ terms and conditions and their pay. The GPC is guided by policy decisions determined by the Annual Conference of Representatives of LMCs.

The LMC conference is the main policy-making body for the profession and the body to whom the GPC is directly accountable. Several hundred representatives from LMCs all over the country attend annual and special conferences, to debate motions which reflect local GPs’ concerns and aspirations. Nottinghamshire LMC is entitled to send four GP representatives to the conference.

The history of the LMCs

The LMC is arguably the longest-lived organisation operating in the NHS today. LMCs were established in 1912 to represent the local “panel” doctors paid by the state to provide a range of medical services to the population under the National Insurance Act of 1911. The Local Medical Committees were set up to represent the independent contractors who agreed to provide those services. When the NHS was established in 1948, LMCs were recognised as the representative voice of GPs. (Copies of A history of the LMC written by Chris Locke was published in 2013 and can be obtained via the LMC office.)
The names, personal profiles and contact details of all current members can be found on our website, together with a register of declared interests.

LMC meetings

Nottinghamshire LMC Ltd meets as a company six times a year in closed session and there are six ‘open’ meetings a year at the LMC offices. Open meetings are attended by GPs, practice managers, CCG and Area Team representatives and other guests. Constituency meetings take place occasionally in Bassetlaw and other localities. Dates of open meetings, their agendas and minutes are accessible via our website.

Responsibilities of LMC members

The elected members are at the heart of the LMC, and, as members of Nottinghamshire LMC Ltd, are responsible for making policy and directing the work of the secretariat who represent and support constituents on a daily basis. They also:

- Canvas the views of local colleagues and represent them in our discussions
- Represent the LMC in committees and working groups and in commenting on NHS policy documents
- Assist and advise colleagues seeking help and directing them to other Nottinghamshire LMC Ltd services where required
- Explain Nottinghamshire LMC Ltd’s views and policies to constituents and raise our profile among grass roots GPs

The secretariat

The Nottinghamshire LMC Ltd secretariat is the backbone of the organisation. It comprises four senior staff: Chief Executive and LMC Secretary – Chris Locke; Head of Liaison and Office Administration – Michael Wright; Head of Communications and Information Administration – Helen Shuker; Principal Executive Officer (Practice Liaison) – Dave Smith. They are supported by four office staff: Senior Information Officer – Zeb Brigham; Senior Finance Officer – Janet Chester; Executive Officer Personal Assistant – Amy Bolton; Executive Officer Committee Administration – Simon Jones.
Who do we represent?

The LMC is recognised in statute as the local representative committee for independent GPs but, we represent all categories of GP including salaried GPs, locums, retainees and GP specialist registrars.

Practice Managers

Practice Managers play an important role in the complex organisational structure of modern general practice, and are often the conduit through which the LMC communicates with GPs. Nottinghamshire LMC Ltd works closely with and supports the Nottinghamshire Practice Managers’ Committee, one of whose members serves as a co-opted member of the LMC and Nottinghamshire LMC Ltd. For more details about the membership and remit of the Practice Managers’ Committee, consult our website.

Salaried and Sessional GPs

To ensure their interests are properly represented the LMC has a Salaried and Sessional GPs Sub-committee to enable us to better engage with those GPs. The remit of the subcommittee is to consider matters of interest to Salaried and Sessional GPs, advise the LMC on how to address them, and to aid communications between the LMC and these doctors.

Salaried GPs can avail themselves of GP representation, courtesy of levy payments made by their employers. Freelance locums are invited to pay a modest annual fee in order to become part of the LMC “family”.

Consult our website for full details of what the LMC can do for salaried and sessional GPs.

GP Registrars

Nottinghamshire LMC Ltd offers training for GP Registrants on ‘Life after VTS’ and offers individually tailored advice on employment contracts, partnership agreements and performers lists.

Representation, workforce and education

In recent years following the NHS reforms announced in 2010, the LMC has taken it upon itself to represent the interests of GPs as providers in education, training and workforce issues. As such we created an inclusive representative forum called GPSET (officially the GP and Practice Staff Educational Training Board) and have represented GP practice interests in the Nottingham Local Education and Training Council (LETC), supporting GP representation in Health Education East Midlands.

Individual performance review & discipline

Following changes introduced by the Health and Social Care Act 2012, LMC representatives play a major part in the management of GP performance and discipline. A GP nominated by either Nottinghamshire or Derbyshire LMC sits as a voting member of the Performance List Decision Panel (PLDP), the body which decides on the Area Team’s behalf what action, if any, should be taken where serious concerns raised about a local GP’s performance or conduct. Both LMCs send representatives to meetings of the Performance Screening Group, which meets monthly to consider reported concerns and decides if investigations or referral to the PLDP is appropriate. Despite this the LMC is always able to offer support, advice and advocacy services to GPs who may find themselves subject to these procedures.

The role of Notts LMC Ltd Liaison Team

Notts LMC Ltd’s Practice Liaison Team benefits from extensive NHS experience and a wealth of skills in business planning, financial management and primary care IT.

The Team:

- Represents LMC on specific committees and working groups
- Helps practices keep up to date on local and national issues
- Researches answers to queries from practices, visiting them where requested
- Liaises with CCGs and the Area Team and represent practices in discussions with them and other bodies

Our Team have helped a great many practices resolve financial and organisational difficulties, and successfully supported and represented their interests.

What kind of advice can we provide?

Nottinghamshire LMC Ltd provides advice on: any and every aspect of GPs’ contracts, the prevailing NHS Regulations, and the Statement of Financial Entitlements; salaried contracts; patient lists; patients records; practice IT; superannuation; provision of services to patients; ethical responsibilities; medico-legal issues; complaints and disciplinary issues; partnership agreements; business planning; premises leases and service charges; fees and certification etc.

For legal reasons Nottinghamshire LMC Ltd does not offer advice on employment issues (other than salaried GP contracts) or clinical negligence (which are the province of the BMA and medical defence organisations respectively) though we can recommend other local ‘experts’, familiar with these areas. We do not offer advice on investments or personal finances. On almost everything else, Nottinghamshire LMC Ltd should be the GP’s first port of call for advice.

If you have a problem of any sort within the practice, I would recommend you contact the LMC Practice Liaison team for advice. They are extremely knowledgeable, informative, helpful, and responsive. They do a great job on our behalf.

Tony Oram, Chair of Nottinghamshire Practice Managers’ Committee
Pastoral Services

The LMC has always sought to offer support to constituents who find themselves in distress or difficulty, offering advice and counselling, acting where appropriate as the GP’s advocate, friend, representative or intermediary. The LMC’s Pastoral Support Network provides free, confidential, and personalised support service to individuals undergoing any kind of crisis and can refer to specialist services, liaising with other supportive agencies, where required. For further details see our Pastoral Services leaflet, or consult our website.

Partnership advice and conciliation

Nottinghamshire LMC Ltd’s Secretariat has considerable knowledge of partnership agreements, and in the absence of any universally accepted model partnership agreement, can offer advice on specific paragraphs and issues of contention. GP partnerships are subject to occasional stresses and strains, and like marriages, often benefit from conciliation service, through which we facilitate break-ups. Nottinghamshire LMC Ltd offers a conciliation service, through which we facilitate discussion and clarify issues, so that if a break-up is inevitable, it can be managed with a minimum of argument or disruption.

Dealing with complaints

Nottinghamshire LMC Ltd has considerable experience in advising GPs and practices on how to respond to patient complaints, and know when the assistance of other forms of support e.g. that of medical defence organisations, is required. We can also call upon the services of a number of GPs with extensive experience in advising and representing GPs faced with complaints, and, where face to face meetings with a complainant, or formal conciliation, may be required, we can nominate GPs to act as intermediaries or as independent GP advisors.

Added Value Services

Through our subsidiary company, Practice Support Services Ltd, Nottinghamshire LMC Ltd is able to offer a range of additional or ‘added value’ services, for which we charge a nominal fee (at rates which compare favourably with those of commercial organisations). Income from such work helps to subsidise the core services all practices receive from us. These services comprise our patented practice diagnostic, media training, IT training and signposting to other ‘experts’. For further details see our website.

Statutory Levy

The LMC is an independent body, paid for exclusively by GPs themselves through a levy of their remuneration. This is known as the ‘statutory levy’ for GMS practices (for whom it is mandatory) and the ‘administrative levy’ for PMS practices (for whom it is voluntary). It is based on an amount per patient calculated to bring in sufficient income to cover the running costs of Nottinghamshire LMC Ltd. Practice mandates obtained in 2004 authorised the LMC to increase levies on an annual basis by an amount equivalent to NHS inflation but, mindful of the financial pressures on practices we have only increased levies as and when necessary and there have been no increases since 2010.

The (National) Voluntary Levy

In addition to the Statutory/Administrative levy, which is used exclusively for the LMC’s upkeep, the LMC also collects a political levy which pays for the national GP Defence Fund and the administration of our national negotiating committee, the GPC. This is known as the voluntary levy. The rate at which practices are charged is determined by the GPC. The LMC is, however, entitled to use any excess collected to defray its own administrative expenses. NB: All LMC levies are a fully tax allowable expense.

The LMC levy is a form of practice insurance which guarantees that effective local support and advice is only a phone call away. It represents excellent value for money.

Dr Khalid Butt, Treasurer, Nottinghamshire LMC Ltd

Additional Income

- Anxious to keep levy payments to a minimum, Nottinghamshire LMC Ltd has actively sought to defray its running costs and by generating income through our ‘for profit’ subsidiary, PSS. PSS earns income from:
  - Payments for Secretariat services to other LMCs
  - Commercial sponsorship of conferences, seminars, etc.
  - Payments from practices for various ‘added value’ services
  - Commissions from the LMC Buying Group

Dr Christine Johnson, Chair of the Notts LMC Salaried and Sessional GPs Sub-committee

Additional Support

How is the LMC Funded?

PSS is a wholly owned subsidiary of Nottinghamshire LMC Ltd. It was established in 2008 to ensure that income from non levy related activities did not compromise Nottinghamshire LMC Ltd’s “non profit making” status. Nevertheless, Nottinghamshire LMC Ltd benefits from income from PSS in the form of staff cost recharges, and occasional dividends. Copies of its accounts are available on request, or can be viewed on our website. The Directors of Nottinghamshire LMC Ltd constitute the Directors and Members of PSS. Chris Locke is the Company Secretary of both.

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Dr Christine Johnson, Chair of the Notts LMC Salaried and Sessional GPs Sub-committee
Communications

The LMC produces a range of publications for its constituents including a monthly e-newsletter ‘GP Practice News’, a quarterly printed newsletter ‘Between the Lines’, guidance documents called ‘Brieflets’ and an annual report. The LMC website – www.nottinghamshirelmc.co.uk – is regularly updated with the latest guidance, news and events. The website can also be used by practices to advertise vacancies. All our publications can be found on our website.

Praise for our publications

“GP Practice News is a great digest of what is happening nationally, regionally and locally. Perfect for a busy practice manager!”

“The LMC website is a really useful information resource for any practice manager or GP looking to keep up with all the changes going on within the NHS.”

“The LMC’s newsletter is the best laid out document I read (and I have to read plenty!). Straightforward fonts with easy to read titles, and all without having to open extra boxes!”

Local GPC representative

If you want to make the GPC aware of your views directly, your local GPC representative is Dr Peter Holden. Dr Holden regularly attends our open meetings but he can be contacted directly at his surgery address which is: The Surgery, 8 Imperial Road, Matlock, Derbyshire, DE4 3NL. Telephone: 01629 593245 or via email: pjpholden@dsl.pipex.com

Contact Us

Normal office hours for the LMC are between 9am and 5pm - Monday to Friday. The office is closed on Bank Holidays and between Christmas and the New Year bank holiday. Messages can be left for the LMC on our answer phone or we can be contacted by fax or email. The LMC telephone number is 0115 977 1341, the fax number is 0115 998 6715 and the email address is office@nottslicm.co.uk

If you need help or advice urgently outside office hours, consider contacting your local LMC Representative. Contact details of all LMC members are available on our website: www.nottinghamshirelmc.co.uk

How to find us

5 Phoenix Place
Nottingham
NG8 6AA

Your LMC Needs You!

Are you anxious to make a difference and eager to influence events taking place within your local health community? Elections to the LMC take place every two years, but there are periodic vacancies which are usually filled by the Committee with volunteers. The LMC welcomes new members and new ideas. Why not get in touch?
The LMC is the only constant for General Practice... the only organisation with a memory.

Dr Greg Place, Chairman, Nottinghamshire LMC Ltd