NEW LEGISLATION – IMPACT ON GPs

---------------------------------------------------------------------------GPs could see a spike in requests to provide reports, medical letters or certificates for schools as a result of new legislation, passed without consultation with GP bodies.

The Children and Families Act 2014 - due to come into force in September - places a statutory duty on schools to have formal arrangements in place for pupils with medical conditions, and supporting guidance for schools highlights GPs as an example of a health professional to approach in developing medical arrangements and training staff.

A Department for Education consultation on the guidance reveals that no GP representatives were consulted about the potential impact of the regulation, and the BMA have expressed their ‘disappointment’ that the changes have been so poorly communicated.

The GPC will now write to the DfE to clarify any additional work implications, and have warned that the legislation has the potential to exacerbate problems in the relationship between parents and GPs.

The legislation was highlighted by YORLMCs ltd - Airedale, Bradford, North Yorkshire and the City of Yorkshire – who posted in their newsletter that GPs should not take on any work unpaid following concerns from members.

The legislation states: ‘The appropriate authority for a school to which this section applies must make arrangements for supporting pupils at the school with medical conditions.’

The supporting guidance, which directs schools on how they should interpret the regulations, says: ‘Healthcare professionals, including GPs and paediatricians - should notify the school nurse when a child has been identified as having a medical condition that will require support at school. They may provide advice on developing healthcare plans.’

It adds: ‘School nurses can liaise with lead clinicians locally on appropriate support for the child and associated staff training needs.’