



Westminster update – September 2021

The last month has seen a number of new announcements affecting general practice and the wider health and care system.

Autumn and Winter Plan

Last week the Government launched its Covid-19 Response: Autumn and Winter Plan 2021, setting out measures to control the Covid-19 pandemic through the coming months, and further steps in the form of a ‘Plan B’ if initial measures do not work. For general practice this mostly means the continuation of the Covid-19 vaccination campaign for those practices whose PCN is participating in it, and the expanded winter flu programme. Reserve measures which may be deployed include mandatory mask wearing in indoor public spaces, vaccine passports for certain large venues/events, and asking people to work from home wherever possible.

Tax rise and additional spending

The Government will raise employee and employers National Insurance contributions each by an additional 1.5% from April 2022. From 2023 this will appear as a separate Health and Social Care Levy on employees’ P60s. The Government says the money raised for the first three years will initially be spent on clearing the backlog of hospital procedures built up during the pandemic, then invested in social care. There is currently no plan to increase GP practice funding to cover the additional employer’s contributions.

Health and Care Bill

The Government’s Health and Care Bill continues to progress through the House of Commons, with one notable amendment proposing to prevent individuals with interests in private healthcare from sitting on ICS boards. The amendment it was moved by the Government, and does not apply to independent contractor GPs.