

27th June 2018

All LMC Members

THE OPTIONS FOR REPLACING THE CURRENT LMC SECRETARY

In this paper the option numbering comes from the Decision Brief already circulated, the Executive having already decided that Option 4 and Option 2 are the ones to consider in detail.

INTRODUCTION

Preliminary meeting. There was a meeting on Tuesday 19th June (Chairman, Treasurer and all Office Staff) to discuss the implications of recruiting either a lay secretary or a medical secretary to replace Mike Forster when he retires on 31 March 2019. General points:

- The crux of the matter is affordability. The LMC increased its levy this year but is still heading for an intentional £30K excess of expenditure over income in order to bring the surplus down to a proper level. However, in future the budget must balance. This should affect the planning for replacing the current Secretary.
- The Executive would prefer to recruit a medical secretary. A copy of the current Secretary's contract (generalised) is attached. Note:
 - Though it requires the Secretary to live 'conveniently close to the LMC Office' this should not necessarily be in his successor's contract, although a knowledge of Gloucestershire would be an advantage.
 - The contract expects the Secretary to work 'no more than 37½ hours a week'.
- The title of the job should continue to be 'Secretary'.
- There must be a few months' trial period to ensure that the right choice has been made. The Chairman stressed that he would always accept direct expressions of concern from anyone if things were not going well.
- In the attached outline job description note that many of the responsibilities/duties shown rarely require action while some require much action very frequently.
- The current Secretary could be available in April 2019 for an extended handover period if required. If no suitable candidate can be found to replace him he would be prepared to continue in post for a few months, but not permanently.
- The change of Secretary presents an opportunity to review the division of work within the Office.
- Shelina would be pleased to provide support to a new Medical Secretary.

Executive meeting. The Executive met on 21st June to consider the matter further and has agreed to put this paper to all LMC members.

OPTION 4 – APPOINT A MEDICAL SECRETARY WITH SUPPORT FROM OFFICE STAFF

Duties. A medical secretary's role would be part-time. The duties are listed in the second column of the table in Attachment 2 – outline job description). The Executive, after discussion, believes that 20 hours a week on average would be sufficient. The financial implications are considerable. Note that in 2005 a previous Medical Secretary on a 20-hour contract cost the LMC £53,000 a year (though this was without NIC and pension contributions as he was paid gross.)

Hours per week	Hourly rate	Annual cost before NIC	NIC (approximated at 5%)	Pension contribution at 14%	Possible total annual cost to the LMC
20	£50	£52,000	£2,600	£7,280	£61,880
25	£50	£65,000	£3,250	£9,100	£77,350
20	£60	£62,400	£3,120	£8,736	£74,256
25	£60	£78,000	£3,900	£10,920	£92,820

Table 1: Illustrative costs of a Medical Secretary before expenses

Support. Depending on the candidate's skills (especially keyboard skills and command of MS Office packages) and abilities (minute-taking in particular) the requirement for practical support will vary and is currently hard to predict.

Impact on the budget. The budget must balance going forward. For comparison, if the current Secretary were being paid without salary sacrifice and was making NICs at the same approximated rate his line in such a table as above would look like:

Hours per week	Hourly rate	Annual cost before NIC	NIC (approximated at 5%)	Pension contribution at 14%	Presumptive total annual cost to the LMC
37.5	£29.69	£57,900	£2,895	£8,106	£68,901

Table 2: Current Lay Secretary's costs before expenses on same basis as Table 1

Recruitment.

- Advertising. Advertising should be on our website, on the LMC Listserv, in our Newsletter and via as many of the local LMCs as can be managed.
- Timings. Worst case, if a candidate is a full-time partner they may well be obliged to give 6 months' notice to leave the practice (or to drastically reduce their patient-facing commitments). If they are to start in April they would therefore need to give notice in October 2018, which means the LMC must start advertising in mid-July aiming for interviews in September.
- Interviews. Agreed that time should be allowed for each candidate to have a coffee and a chat with the office staff before being called down to formal interview, and that the office staff's impressions of each candidate would be taken into account in making the final decision. The interview board would consist of the Chairman, Treasurer and one other.

Medical Secretary – Advantages.

- Medically experienced, and therefore automatically given more credibility as an LMC representative.
- Will need to refer to the Chair and Exec less frequently for advice.
- May be able to perform some of what the Chairman now does.
- Will be able to represent the LMC as a GP, and thus could save on attendance by, and expenditure on, Exec members at meetings.
- May allow for a reduction in the number of Exec officers, but there are other reasons for not doing that.

Medical Secretary – Disadvantages.

- May not have the skills needed to take Minutes etc.

- For that reason, and also being strictly part-time, there is a risk that the Office Manager and Assistant may be presumed upon to do work that the Medical Secretary should be doing.

OPTION 2 – REPLACE LAY SECRETARY AND OFFICE ASSISTANT

Duties of the Secretary. Outlined in the attached job description (left-hand column).

Time taken. Considerable flexibility and a willingness to work from home are essential. There are 3 options:

- If the current staffing pattern in the Office continues, the job would realistically take the equivalent of 5 mornings and 2 afternoons a week with an extra half day required occasionally (say, 30 hours a week as a planning figure).
- However, if the Office Assistant were present in the office for three mornings a week then part of what the current Secretary does could be done by the Office Assistant. On that basis a replacement Lay Secretary could be budgeted at 25 hours a week.
- As a more radical but less attractive alternative, if there were no Office Assistant a full-time Lay Secretary could take the majority, and the Office Manager the remainder, of the Office Assistant's duties. Whether this option makes economic sense is questionable.

Secretary's Remuneration package. Assuming that the candidate is still of an age where pension contribution and NIC apply the costs to the LMC on the various options above look like:

Hours per week	Hourly rate	Annual cost before NIC	NIC (approximated at 5%)	Pension contribution at 14%	Possible total annual cost to the LMC
25	£30	£39,000	£1,950	£5,460	£46,410
25	£35	£45,500	£2,275	£6,370	£54,145
25	£40	£52,000	£2,600	£7,289	£61,880
30	£30	£46,800	£2,340	£6,552	£55,692
30	£35	£54,600	£2,730	£7,644	£64,974
37.5	£25	£48,750	£2,438	£6,825	£58,013
37.5	£30	£58,500	£2,925	£8,190	£69,615

Table 3: Potential costs of hiring a Lay Secretary (before expenses)

Impact on the budget. It would appear that this option could be cheaper than the other, depending on the number of hours and the rate of pay negotiated.

Recruitment. If there were no acceptable (and affordable) candidate as a medical secretary then a lay secretary could be sought. Assuming the candidate would have to give three-months' notice to their current employer this would mean advertising in October/November for interviews in December. That advertising can, of course, follow the same route but should also include radio and newspaper advertisements to target non-medical candidates.

Lay Secretary – Advantages.

- Should have comprehensive business management skills.
- May bring outside experiences and ideas to improve our service to GPs.

Lay Secretary – Disadvantages.

- May lack experience or insight into NHS politics and general practice – can gain that knowledge over time but will require proportionately more support from the Exec in the first few months.
- Will need to spend time meeting practices and learning how they 'tick'.

Who would we be looking for in a Lay Secretary? Recruiting for aptitude and attitude we should nevertheless look for an individual who:

- People skills.
- Communication skills, verbal and written.
- Has reasonable keyboard and computing skills.
- Can show experience at Executive/Director level.
- Can work on their own also
- Ideally should have NHS experience with a good understanding of General Practice.

OPTION 3 – COMBINE OFFICE MANAGER AND SECRETARY ROLES

As a worst case we have to face the risk that no acceptable, affordable candidate presents themselves for the Secretary's role. Though not accepted by the Executive as one of the preferred options, a potential fall-back solution would be for Shelina, with a few extra hours a week and supported by an Administrative Assistant on three full mornings a week, to provide a workable solution until a more permanent arrangement can be made.

PROPOSAL

The LMC is asked to endorse that:

- The preferred option is to recruit a part-time Medical Secretary, provided that the terms are affordable and a suitable candidate can be found. The search will start in mid-July.
- A fall-back solution would be to recruit a Lay Secretary, whether part-time or full-time, starting the advertising process in late October.
- Should neither process produce an acceptable candidate then the situation will be reviewed at the January 2019 LMC meeting with the possibility of considering Option 3 above as a temporary measure.

Mike Forster

M J D FORSTER
Lay Secretary

Atts:

1. Draft contract, largely based on current contract
2. Outline Job Descriptions for each option.

DRAFT CONTRACT
FOR THE SECRETARY OF THE
GLOUCESTERSHIRE LOCAL MEDICAL COMMITTEE

1. NAMES OF PARTIES

- 1.1 Gloucestershire LMC ('The Committee')
- 1.2 ... ('The Secretary')

2. COMMENCEMENT OF CONTRACT

- 2.1 Your contract will start on 1st April 2019.
- 2.2 There will be a 6-month period of mutual assessment.

3. REMUNERATION

- 3.1 You will be remunerated at the rate of **£...** per annum rising after 6 months to the rate of **£...** per annum.
- 3.2 You will be paid monthly in arrears.
- 3.3 The rate of remuneration will be reviewed annually.
- 3.4 In addition to your remuneration you will receive a contribution of 14% of your remuneration towards a pension fund of your choice.
- 3.5 The Committee shall by way of reimbursement, pay or procure to be paid to you, all reasonable travelling, hotel and other expenses wholly exclusively and necessarily incurred by you on the business of the LMC in the performance of your duties. The rate at which mileage shall be paid shall be agreed by the Committee annually.

4. JOB TITLE AND DUTIES

- 4.1 Your job title is 'Secretary' and your normal duties are as set out in the annexed job description (*To Follow*).
- 4.2 You will be required to work sufficient hours in the office to attend to the business of the Committee and which would not normally be expected to exceed ... hours per week.
- 4.3 You will be required to attend meetings and sub-committee meetings of the LMC, some of which may be during the evening.

5. LEAVE AND STUDY LEAVE ARRANGEMENTS

- 5.1 The holiday year runs from 1st April to 31st March.
- 5.2 In each holiday year you will be entitled to 30 days holidays.
- 5.3 Proposed holiday dates must be agreed with the Committee in order to ensure a continuing provision of services to the Committee.
- 5.4 In each year you shall be entitled to relevant study leave and expenses, up to a maximum of 5 days with the agreement of the Committee.

6. SICKNESS

- 6.1 You must notify the Committee, using a self-certification form to be completed for any absence due to sickness or injury.
- 6.2 If you are absent due to sickness or injury, which continues for more than seven days (including weekends), you must provide the Committee with a medical certificate by the eighth day of sickness or injury. Thereafter, medical certificates must be provided to the Committee to cover any continued absence.
- 6.3 After the satisfactory conclusion of your six-month mutual assessment period, absence from work due to sickness or injury which complies with the preceding provisions regarding notification of absence, will be remunerated in any twelve-week period:
- 6.3.1 Full remuneration for a period of 6 weeks
- 6.3.2 Half pay for an additional (6 weeks)
- 6.4 If your absence shall exceed 12 weeks the Committee reserves the right to require you to be examined at any time by an independent medical practitioner at its expense and to cease payment of sick pay if advised by such practitioner that you are fit to return to work.
- 6.5 If you are absent and you are unable to fulfil your duties due to sickness or injury for 12 weeks, the Committee has a right to terminate this Contract.

7. ACCOMMODATION AND COMMUNICATION

- 7.1 You are required to keep your residence connected to the public telephone service and to reside in a place convenient to your main place of work.

8. PLACE OF WORK

- 8.1 Your main place of work will be at the Committee's offices at Unit 10, Westgate Business Centre, The Island, Westgate Street, Gloucester, GL1 2RU
- 8.2 You may be required to travel to the surgeries of member practices within the area of the Committee.

9. TRANSPORT

- 9.1 You are required to hold a current full driving licence and loss thereof shall entitle the Committee to terminate your contract.
- 9.2 You will be paid an allowance for your car on LMC business. The rate at which mileage shall be calculated shall be agreed by the Committee annually.
- 9.3 You must provide evidence to the Committee of appropriate insurance cover for use on the Committee's business.

10. HEALTH AND SAFETY AND WORKPLACE

- 10.1 The Committee will take all reasonable practical steps to ensure your health and safety while at the Committee's office.
- 10.2 The Committee will ensure the provision of suitable and appropriate clerical and administrative support to you whilst at work.

11. CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS

- 11.1 You must report forthwith to the Committee any convictions or offences with which you are charged.

12. APPRAISAL

12.1 Your performance of the contract will be reviewed annually by the Committee.

13. TERM OF CONTRACT

13.1 The contract shall be a two-year rolling contract, but in the first instance 3 years.

14. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

14.1 Complaints brought to the attention of the Committee by constituents or members of the Committee, shall be investigated by a panel of the Committee. The Committee shall decide on any action necessary.

15. CONFIDENTIALITY

15.1 Subject to the necessary sharing of information with colleagues and other health professionals, you are required to preserve the absolute confidentiality of the Committee, its members and of all matters connected with your contract and this obligation shall continue in perpetuity.

15.2 A breach of clause 15.1 above will be grounds for instant termination of your contract.

16. TERMINATION OF CONTRACT

16.1 You may terminate your contract by giving three months written notice to the Committee subject to the provisions of Clause 2.2 above.

16.2 The Committee may terminate your contract by giving three months written notice.

16.3 Notwithstanding the provisions of 16.1 and 16.2 above, either party may waive the rights to notice on any occasion, accept or make payment in lieu of it or treat the agreement as terminable without notice in law by reason of the conduct of the other party.

Signed for the Committee

Dr T Yerburgh
Chairman

Date:

Signed by the Secretary

Date:

GLOUCESTERSHIRE LMC SECRETARY – OUTLINE JOB DESCRIPTION

LAY SECRETARY	MEDICAL SECRETARY	REMARKS
<u>Ad Hoc</u>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receive and deal with issues, queries and problems from GPs and practices (mostly by email but also by post and telephone). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receive and deal with issues, queries and problems from GPs and practices (mostly by email but also by post and telephone). 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receive, assess and disseminate any guidance received (local or national). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receive, assess and disseminate any guidance received (local or national). 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer medical/clinical matters to the Executive before answering/advising on behalf of the LMC. 		Med Sec already has the necessary knowledge so may consult the Exec but only in cases of doubt.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Production of Hot Topic emails for GPs and practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Production of Hot Topic emails for GPs and practices. 	Experience may dictate whether this can be delegated
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain a list of issues and answers. 		This could be delegated to the Office Manager
Monitor the LMC Listserver, keeping any definitive posts and deleting the remainder to facilitate looking back for answers.	Monitor the LMC Listserver, keeping any definitive posts and deleting the remainder to facilitate looking back for answers.	
<u>Meetings</u>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compile meeting agendas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compile meeting agendas 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o LMC Main meetings every other month (Jan, Mar, May, Jul, Sep, Nov and, exceptionally, in Dec). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o LMC Main meetings every other month (Jan, Mar, May, Jul, Sep, Nov and, exceptionally, in Dec). 	Office Assistant already does first draft for main meeting agendas and does all the admin for them.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o LMC Executive meetings once a month. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o LMC Executive meetings once a month. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o LMC/CCG Negotiating meetings once a month. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o LMC/CCG Negotiating meetings once a month. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write or forward on meeting briefing papers as needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write or forward on meeting briefing papers as needed. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take meeting notes and write minutes of every meeting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take meeting notes and write minutes of <i>Negs (essential), Exec and Main,(desirable)</i> 	Office Assistant could attend and take Minutes of the Main meeting to allow Med Sec opportunity to participate

LAY SECRETARY	MEDICAL SECRETARY	REMARKS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take action on LMC decisions and correspond on behalf of LMC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take action on LMC decisions and correspond on behalf of LMC. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor performance of delegated tasks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor performance of delegated tasks. 	
<u>Pastoral Care</u>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receive alerts about concerns or relationship issues from GPs or practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receive alerts about concerns or relationship issues from GPs or practices. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss issue with the alerter and agree the next step. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss issue with the alerter and agree the next step. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Send alerter any relevant guidance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Send alerter any relevant guidance. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with individual GPs as requested. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with individual GPs as requested. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend (and sometimes chair) any subsequent meeting with the parties. (The LMC provides a safe environment for all to say what they want to say without unnecessarily harming relationships.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend (and sometimes chair) any subsequent meeting with the parties. (The LMC provides a safe environment for all to say what they want to say without unnecessarily harming relationships.) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor use of and suitability of the Gloucestershire GP Safe-House website, 		This could be delegated to the Office Manager who already deals with password issues.
<u>Administrative</u>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support LMC Office staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support LMC Office staff. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write and amend terms and conditions of service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write and amend terms and conditions of service. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain close liaison with the Chairman and other Exec officers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain close liaison with the Chairman and other Exec officers 	A Med Sec, by virtue of qualifications and experience may have a different relationship with the Chairman etc than a Lay Sec
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain interest in the LMC budget and financial performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain interest in the LMC budget and financial performance 	The Office Manager has primary responsibility, under the Treasurer, for LMC finances.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advise Executive on emerging issues and action any resultant requests. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advise Executive on emerging issues and action any resultant requests. 	

LAY SECRETARY	MEDICAL SECRETARY	REMARKS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the LMC has a usable list of practices and GPs for communication purposes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the LMC has a usable list of practices and GPs for communication purposes. 	The Office Assistant does the work. The Secretary is responsible that it happens.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organise and supervise the arrangements for elections to the LMC and to the LMC Executive Committee. 		This could be delegated to the Office Assistant, who has in the past done this successfully.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate attendance at LMC Conferences and the writing of motions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate attendance at LMC Conferences and the writing of motions. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Glos LMC Website webmaster. 		This should be delegated to the Office Manager
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute the detailed section of the Annual Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute the detailed section of the Annual Report 	The Office Assistant collates all input and publishes the Report.
<u>Problem Spotting and Solving</u>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Represent the LMC, and practices where appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Represent the LMC, and practices where appropriate. 	May be more call for a Med Sec to do this alone
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor and troubleshoot new funding flows outside GMS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor and troubleshoot new funding flows outside GMS. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor workforce issues, skill mix developments and recruitment drives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor workforce issues, skill mix developments and recruitment drives. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor CQC activity and help with adverse reports and process issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor CQC activity and help with adverse reports and process issues 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor Data Sharing Agreements and their legality/clarity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor Data Sharing Agreements and their legality/clarity. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor evolution of general practice to identify good and bad points 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor evolution of general practice to identify good and bad points 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disseminate useful information as it emerges. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disseminate useful information as it emerges. 	See newsletter below
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor emerging issues with tenancy arrangements and the premises cost directions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor emerging issues with tenancy arrangements and the premises cost directions. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor changing IT arrangements and their impact on practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor changing IT arrangements and their impact on practices. 	

LAY SECRETARY	MEDICAL SECRETARY	REMARKS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor decisions concerning Violent Patient Services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor decisions concerning Violent Patient Services. 	
<u>Knowledge Acquisition and Dissemination</u>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advise practitioners on the NHS Act, Regulations, Terms of Service, contracts and all matters relating to the provision of General Medical Services, Personal Medical Services, salaried employment and Complaints Procedures and any other legislation affecting GPs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advise practitioners on the NHS Act, Regulations, Terms of Service, contracts and all matters relating to the provision of General Medical Services, Personal Medical Services, salaried employment and Complaints Procedures and any other legislation affecting GPs. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create and issue a monthly newsletter 	<i>Supervision of the creation and dissemination of the monthly newsletter</i>	Much of the preparation and dissemination of the newsletter could be delegated within the office.
<u>Media and Promotion of General Practice</u>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue press statements and appear on radio/TV and maintain appropriate relations with the press and media. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue press statements and appear on radio/TV and maintain appropriate relations with the press and media. 	A Med Sec's opinion should carry more weight than a Lay Sec's
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain contact lists for, and as required contact, MPs for the area. 		This could be delegated to the Office Manager or Office Assistant
<u>Liaison</u>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Representation of the GPs in Gloucestershire sometimes requires contact with any or all of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GPC Other LMCs Other Local Representative Committees (LRCs) (dental, pharmacy & optometry) especially the LPC. Sessional and locum GP groups. Practice managers, individually or in groups. Other primary care-involved bodies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Representation of the GPs in Gloucestershire sometimes requires contact with any or all of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GPC Other LMCs Other Local Representative Committees (LRCs) (dental, pharmacy & optometry) especially the LPC. Sessional and locum GP groups. Practice managers, individually or in groups. Other primary care-involved bodies. 	

Further details. A full handover brief will be made available on appointment.