

on its premises policy, which they say is not working.

'Premises policy success could make a significant difference to the development of general practice, but without investment GPs cannot develop,' the GPC says.

'GPs need to remain in control of their own premises so that they can respond flexibly and swiftly to changing circumstances.

'That cannot be [the case] if they are in third-party development premises, and this is particularly evident with private finance initiative projects.'

victory by overturning a deanery's one-in-one-out system for flexible training places.

The South West Peninsula Deanery announced in November last year that it had reached the maximum capacity for doctors who can work less than full time.

It said that any new applicants would have to wait until other doctors had left flexible training and places became free.

But lobbying by the BMA junior doctors committee and the association's regional services staff has led to the deanery agreeing not

This week, the JDC is launching a campaign to highlight the benefits of the junior doctors' contract, which allows juniors to train flexibly.

JDC joint deputy chair Shreelata Datta said: 'Flexible training is something that's very dear to a lot of juniors' hearts and is something that the government, the chief medical officer and junior doctors are very keen to pursue.'

She added: 'The South West Peninsula Deanery has written to us and says the one-in-one-out policy has now been addressed.'

relations at a grassroots level between BMA south-west regional services staff and the deanery.

The deanery said junior doctors no longer experienced significant delays to their ability to train less than full time.

Trainees who met the criteria for flexible working would be considered where there was the educational capacity to accommodate them, the deanery confirmed.

This would be in a slot-share or supernumerary capacity depending on specialities and locations.

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Body-part import rules strengthened

A STRENGTHENING of the rules relating to the import of bone and skin products has been welcomed by the BMA.

Companies that import bone products used in orthopaedic surgery and skin products used on injuries or burns will now need licences from the Human Tissue Authority.

The rules have been tightened as a response to body-part scandals that involved tissue from fraudulent or untraceable origins

entering the UK healthcare system.

Tissue containing cells is already regulated, yet products without cells have not been until now.

HTA chief executive Adrian McNeil said the rules would prevent fraudulent products from entering the UK health service.

'There are examples of bone and skin products being imported into the UK that are not traceable to their donors,' he said. 'The body parts scandal involving

broadcaster Alistair Cooke saw products being imported into the UK with fraudulent origins. Acellular bone products from donors that had cancers, and may have had infectious diseases, entered the healthcare system.'

BMA head of professional activities Vivienne Nathanson said the rules would help to reduce further a very small risk to patient safety.

'These products can make a great difference to individual patients, so further tightening up on the safety

aspects is a welcome reassurance,' she said.

The HTA said there was a very small risk of serious illnesses such as HIV, hepatitis C and CJD being transmitted through unregulated health products.

The improved regulations mean it will be possible to trace products to donors, rigorously test them before use and recall them if necessary.

Firms that import or store such products before they are distributed to end users must apply for licences by April 6.

director of accountancy practice Stanbridge Associates. You do not have to be a BMA member to attend. See www.bma.org.uk/whats_on/branch_practice_conferences/private09.jsp?page=1 for further information

Dignity in Care award launched

Doctors who have gone the extra mile to ensure dignity and respect in the delivery of healthcare are to be recognised. The Department of Health has launched the People's Award for Dignity in Care to honour the work of health and social care staff. All healthcare staff, including doctors, nurses, hospital porters and social workers, can be nominated by their colleagues or members of the public. Care services minister Phil Hope said:

'With this award we want to thank staff for the fantastic differences they are making to people's lives, both directly and by inspiring others to follow their lead.' Further information is available at www.dignityincares.org.uk

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BMA House Tavistock Square London WC1H 9JP
Editorial Tel: (020) 7383 6122 Fax: (020) 7383 6566
Advertising Tel: (020) 7383 6181 Fax: (020) 7383 6556
Email: bmanews@bma.org.uk

Editors Carol Harris/Caroline Winter-Jones **Deputy editor** Neil Hallows **News editor** Lisa Pritchard **Senior writers** Erin Dean, Mike Foster, Flavia Munn, Anita Wilkinson **Feature writer** Polly Newton **Ni correspondent** Nigel Gould (02838) 336806 **Scotland correspondent** Jennifer Trueland (01877) 384337 **Wales correspondent** Felicity Waters (07762) 167553 **Chief sub-editors** Emma Small/Rebecca Thomas **Deputy chief sub-editor** Ben Skelton **Sub-editor** Chris Patterson **Art editor/production manager** Fiona Edwards **Sales manager** Euan Currier **Advertisement production** Sean Johnson **Editorial administrator** Wendy Barford

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