

Dear colleagues

General Practice: Critically Endangered - Facing Extinction

Last Thursday, GPC England met at BMA House for the first meeting of 2026; this week marked 'Blue Monday' - the lowest emotional point of the winter. You won't be alone in struggling to find the joy in general practice currently, especially given relentless online demand and respiratory illnesses which have taken their toll on practices and GPs nationwide. We are seeing some of our busiest days, with record numbers of patient contacts leaving us feeling unsafe and unsupported - taking us further away from face-to-face continuity of care with our patients, the true bedrock of general practice.

We see and hear the immense effort you're putting into adjusting staffing, systems, and subcontracting arrangements following on from October. We're also grateful to those of you raising concerns about the sustainability and safety of the implementation. Your GPCE representatives discussed managing pressure, particularly when demand consistently outstrips capacity, and when we inevitably encounter situations where full compliance with the three access modes across the full hours of the day is just not feasible.

To this end, we will be holding two webinars at the end of the month - these will be of most interest to GMS contractors but will be open to all GPs - please sign up below.

This week your elected officer team will be meeting DHSC and NHSE to press on with discussions around the Government's consultation on the 2026/27 GMS Contract and discussing our recent practice finance survey results, and we shall be following-up again with NHS England the week after too. Following these discussions once a final contract has been proposed, GPC England will vote on the final offer.

The committee also received:

- Feedback from national GP focus groups – painting a widespread bleak midwinter picture – overworked, under-resourced, but importantly, still feeling the sense of value and pride in the work GPs do for our patients
- A keynote speaker from the Irish Medical Organisation who provided an overview of the GMS contract in the Republic of Ireland and the experience of negotiating their public/private 2019 contract
- Breakout groups to consider next steps in our contract dispute with reflections from our team of external strategic advisers with whom we are working on the new GMS contract

We know how vital these discussions are to the whole profession, we want your feedback and to bring you along with us, so please do join us either over lunch on the Wednesday, or on the Thursday evening:

- **Wednesday 28 January 12 - 2pm** [register here](#)
- **Thursday 29 January 7 - 9pm** [register here](#)

Practice not to blame for A&E attendances

GPC England chair Dr Katie Bramall recently responded to a Guardian article: [Huge rise in number of people in England's A&Es for coughs or hiccups, 31 December](#). Dr Bramall said:

England's general practice meets unsustainable pressures with record productivity: 250,000 additional GP practice appointments are being delivered a day compared with 2019. It is the fall in the number of inpatient beds gumming up the A&E system, not a fall in GPs' capacity to treat patients.

With that said, we have thousands of GPs looking for [NHS](#) work across England right now. Just 105 more GPs could have delivered the 1.9m appointments for people seeking help for headaches that the article mentions who went instead to A&E over the last five years.

We are still 750 GPs short of where we stood a decade ago, with GPs receiving only 34p per patient per day. The government is keen to progress its "neighbourhood" model, but without more GPs and more funding for them, patients won't see any meaningful change.

Ambient voice technologies

Late last Thursday (15 January) NHS England published a [press release](#) claiming AI note taking 'could save clinicians up to 2 or 3 minutes for each patient consultation, freeing up more time for them to see other patients'. Practices are reminded of the [guidance NHS England publishes](#) and the necessary steps they must take should they choose to make use of these technologies. Patients must be made aware that consultations are recorded for interpretation by computer and their rights of access to any recordings made, and any interim transcripts created by the AVT should be made available for review. Errors, or 'hallucinations', in the AVT output, in addition to immediate correction, should be reported to the MHRA via its [Yellow Card reporting scheme](#).

OpenSAFELY

Practices in England are reminded to continue to activate the OpenSAFELY data analytics service if they haven't yet done so. This service the full support of the BMA and RCGP. [Read more >](#)

Power in numbers: uniting sessional GPs for change

3 Feb, 7–8.30pm

This is the second event in our national engagement series created to bring sessional GPs together, amplify your experiences, and ensure your voice drives the BMA's work on your behalf.

At our first event, you told us the top three issues facing sessional GPs today:

- pay rates that are too low
- underemployment and lack of available work
- contracts not being honoured.

We listened, and this event is all about what the BMA can do to act on your behalf, and the rights you hold as a sessional GP. [Register your place >](#)

GP wellbeing resources

A range of wellbeing and support services are available to doctors, and we encourage anybody who is feeling under strain to seek support. Please take a moment to check in on your colleagues' wellbeing and look out for each other.

Support comes in various forms, from our 24/7 confidential [counselling and peer support services](#) and [NHS practitioner health service](#) to non-medical support services such as [Samaritans](#). The organisation [Doctors in Distress](#) provides mental health support for health workers in the UK, and confidential peer support group sessions.

We have produced a [poster with 10 top tips](#) to help maintain and support the wellbeing of your colleagues and yourself.

The [Cameron Fund](#) supports GPs and their families in times of financial need, whether through ill health, disability, bereavement, relationship breakdown or loss of employment.

The [RCGP](#) also has information on GP wellbeing support.

Please visit the BMA's [wellbeing support services page](#), refer to our [extended directory](#), or call [0330 123 1245](#) for the counselling line or peer support.

- The [BMA's GP campaign webpage](#)
- GPCE [Safe Working Guidance Handbook](#)
- Read more about the work of [GPC England](#) and practical guidance for [GP practices](#)
- See the latest update on X [@BMA_GP](#) and read about [BMA in the media](#)

Read the GPCE bulletin: [GPC meeting update](#) | [GP contract webinars](#) | [ambient voice technologies](#)

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