



Londonwide LMCs

The professional voice of London general practice

Workforce shortages hit hard as 49% of London GP practices have a vacancy, 43% expect a GP to retire in the next three years and 35 practices are considering closing, survey shows

As the workforce crumbles in the face of staff shortages, Dr Michelle Drage, Chief Executive of Londonwide LMCs, warns that general practice in London is in a state of emergency following a survey of GP practices in the areas represented by Londonwide LMCs. Londonwide LMCs represents 27 local medical committees and 1317 GP practices.

Dr Drage says: "Half of London's general practices are short a key member of staff, over a third are missing at least one GP. Whilst the remaining GPs, practice nurses and their teams are working flat out to fill in the gaps, they're at breaking point and need help to deal with the growing complexity of London's health needs. Without increased support, the future of community general practice looks decidedly gloomy: delivering current service with fewer staff is unsustainable and unsafe in the long term, let alone stretching to an extended seven day services. "The Government's promised influx of 5000 new GPs has already been watered down and seems less and less likely with every day that passes. As we near October 2016, the point at which the NHS's Five Year Forward View aspired to stabilise funding for general practice, the situation is still dire. The Forward View claimed to tackle retention and recruitment and introduce stability, but with our survey showing more GPs leaving the profession month on month; increasing vacancies for GPs and key staff across every part of the Capital; and a steady rise in the number of practice closures, it is clear the plan is not working.

"Our general practices are the backbone of the NHS - providing for 90% of patients' needs on a paltry eight percent of its budget - and falling. To secure the future of general practice for the citizens of London we need more resource and more support. And we need it now, before it is too late."

Vacancy and retirement – half have vacancies, two fifths have a GP retiring and fifth have both

48%, or 305, responding practices have a vacancy for a member of staff, with a combined patient list of 2,688,018 patients.

37%, or 234, responding practices have a GP vacancy.

43%, or 269, responding practices have a GP planning to retire in the next three years.

22%, or 141, responding practices have both a vacancy and a GP planning to retire in the next three years, affecting 1,241,002 registered patients.

Contract termination statistics*

3% of responding practices, covering an estimated 88,000 patients, plan to terminate their contract to provide NHS services in the next three years.

13% of responding practices, covering an estimated 580,058 patients, do not know if they will terminate their contract in the next three years.

15% of responding practices, covering an estimated 753,215 patients, will not rule out terminating their contract in the next three years.

Only 70% of responding practices, covering an estimated 3,798,142 patients, say they do not intend to terminate their NHS contract in the next three years.

*See note 1

Actions practices are considering to manage current or future vacancies

39% of practices are considering employing additional locum or agency staff

31% of practices are considering succession planning

17% of practices are considering employing a pharmacist

15% of practices are considering reducing services

5% of practices are considering closing

Practices considering closing to manage current or future vacancies or terminating their contract

Combined, 35 practices are either considering closing to manage current future vacancies or terminating their contract

Notes to editors

All percentages are rounded, further information on methodology is available upon request

The Londonwide LMCs Workforce Survey was completed on behalf of London general practices by Practice Managers and Principal GPs from member practices across the 27 areas represented by Londonwide LMCs.

The survey was conducted online between 25th May and 10th June 2016, with a total of 813 responses from 628 individual member practices. Of Londonwide LMCs's 1,317 member practices that were invited to participate in the research, this represents a response rate of 48%.

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Londonwide LMCs is the only independent body in London representing 7,365 full and part-time GPs and 1317 practice teams across London (as of 15/04/2016).

Local medical committees are the statutory body representing GPs and practices; 27 London boroughs have a local medical committee, supported by Medical Directors working for the umbrella organisation (Londonwide LMCs) covering NW, NCE and South London.

Further information on Londonwide LMCs can be found on our website lmc.org.uk ; via Twitter @londonwidelmcs ; or on our campaigning website www.gpsoe.org.uk.

Methodology note

ComRes interviewed 813 practice managers and principal GPs from 628 of Londonwide LMCs's member practices across the capital. Fieldwork was conducted between 25th May and 10th June 2016. The data have been weighted so that in total each practice counts as one response. ComRes is a member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules. Full data tables are available at www.comres.co.uk.