



May 2016 workforce survey – Headlines

Thank you for supporting our May 2016 Workforce. We had a fantastic response from 628 unique practices across the capital. That is the equivalent of nearly half of all the practices that we support (48%). Headlines reveal concerns about closures across the Capital, vacancies reaching a critical mass, and significant numbers of retirements anticipated within the next three years.

Worryingly, 35 practices responded to our survey indicating that they are considering terminating their contract within the next three years or closing to manage vacancies. Based on responses to our question about list size this means that were they to go ahead, the total patient population affected by these closures is estimated at 211,914.

With practice sizes ranging from single handed practices to those with very large list sizes (over 25,000 patients), we heard directly from GPs and practice managers across London that over 305 individual practices, or nearly half of all of our respondents, currently have a vacancy in their practice and 43% of practices expect a GP to retire in the next three years.

Further information about the type of vacancies and the length of time these positions have been vacant is being analysed to see what we can do to help, and to identify trends.

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. So the Evening Standard, Pulse, The Health Service Journal, GPOnline, Primary Care Today have run pieces and we will continue to use the findings from this survey to inform our work over the coming months.

We will continue to analyse the results of the workforce survey and will conduct the next survey in November / December to see how / whether things have changed in the intervening 6 months. If you are interested in helping us to understand some of the workforce issues facing London's general practice community, please contact comms@lmc.org.uk for a chat about the next steps in this project.

Headlines

Download slides of the survey findings

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

49%, 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.

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

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' 1,317 member practices that were invited to participate in the research, this represents a response rate of 48%.