



Workforce Survey - latest results

Thank you for supporting our November 2016 Workforce Survey. We had a fantastic response from 552 unique practices across the 1295 practices we represent in the Capital. That is the equivalent of nearly half of all the practices that we support (46%). 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, 30 practices are either considering closing to manage current/future vacancies or terminating their contract. 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 185,825.

With practice sizes ranging from single-handed to those with very large list sizes (over 25,000 patients), we heard directly from GPs and practice managers across London that over 256 individual practices, or nearly half of all of our respondents, currently have a vacancy in their practice and 45% 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 5,000 new GPs has already been watered down and seems less and less likely with every day that passes. The GP 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 with 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 90% of patient contacts on a paltry eight percent of its budget - and falling. To secure the future of general practice for Londoners we need more resource and more support. And we need it now, before it is too late.

We will continue to analyse the results of the workforce survey and will conduct the next survey in May/ June to see how / whether things have changed in the intervening 6 months. We are currently considering how we will use this data to influence at borough and pan-London levels, to help stabilise, transform and sustain general practice. 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

46%, or 256, responding practices have a vacancy for a member of staff, with a combined patient list of 2,250,680 patients.

42%, or 232, responding practices have a GP or practice nurse vacancy.

45%, or 249, responding practices have a GP planning to retire in the next three years.

23%, or 125, responding practices have both a vacancy and a GP planning to retire in the next three years, affecting 1,142,547 registered patients.

Contract termination statistics* (See note 1)

2% of responding practices, covering an estimated 50,663 patients, plan to terminate their contract to provide NHS services in the next three years.

13% of responding practices, covering an estimated 537,527 patients, do not know if they will terminate their contract in the next three years.

14% of responding practices, covering an estimated 695,399 patients, will not rule out terminating their contract in the next three years.

Only 70% of responding practices, covering an estimated 3,476,137 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

37% of practices are considering employing additional locum or agency staff

34% of practices are considering succession planning

17% of practices are considering employing a pharmacist

14% 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, 30 practices are either considering closing to manage current future vacancies or terminating their contract, affecting an estimated 185,825 patients

Notes

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

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

Londonwide LMCs is the only independent body in London representing full and part-time GPs and 1295 practice teams across London (as of 15/11/2016).

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 700 practice managers and principal GPs from 552 of Londonwide LMCs' member practices across the capital. Fieldwork was conducted between 25th November and 12th December 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.