



GP Professional Support Network now offering online help for Coronavirus and other pressures

Londonwide LMCs' new GP Professional Support Network provides a single point of online access to match GPs with the most appropriate form of professional support for them. The launch of this new service today is largely driven by the need to innovate as Coronavirus infection control measures make accessing face-to-face support very difficult. It is open to all GPs who work within the areas of London covered by Londonwide LMCs, providing confidential, expert and impartial one-to-one advice and support to any individual GP.

You can visit the website at this address: <https://londonwide.onpld.com/>.

GPs can encounter a range of challenges and difficulties which may require support, guidance and information, for example they work in a complex regulatory environment and sometimes need guiding through specific rules and processes.

However one of the main aims of the GP Professional Support Network is to encourage GPs to seek help early, before small issues develop into big problems. A peer to peer conversation from another GP can support and signpost them to help manage changes in their career, such as switching jobs, or changes in their personal life which may impact on their work, such as having a loved one who has developed long-term care needs.

After registering GPs can access:

GP support services

Peer to peer professional advice and support

Educational support and supervision

Professional coaching

Talking therapy support

The services offered are either directly provided by Londonwide LMCs's GP Support Team or by matching GPs with a carefully selected network of other GPs and organisations, who work independently of Londonwide LMCs.

Registering with the platform and linking to any of the services is free to Londonwide LMCs's constituent GPs, along with the GP Support Team's services, the peer to peer support service and the first three talking therapy sessions. There are some costs for other professional services, payable to the provider, once a client GP has been linked with them. Details are clearly available on the site.

The GP Professional Support Network has been developed by a multi-disciplinary team at Londonwide LMCs led by Dr Sara Riley and Dr Richard Stacey.

Dr Lisa Harrod-Rothwell, Deputy CEO, Londonwide LMCs:

"Even before the Coronavirus pandemic, GPs across London were working flat-out provide high quality care to over nine million Londoners, against a background of increasingly complex health needs, dwindling resources and time-consuming bureaucracy. And with further changes to the way GPs and their teams work looming, it is likely that many will need extra support in the face of these pressures and turn to us for this. Keeping GPs healthy, guiding them through professional difficulties and supporting their learning is both good for the individual doctors, but also keeps them in the workforce and seeing patients at a time when so many are leaving the profession because of burnout."

Dr Sara Riley, Medical Director, Londonwide LMCs:

"In my experience GPs often view their own welfare as far too low a priority and only seek help when a problem has reached crisis point. At Londonwide LMCs we want to lead and support GPs to change this to proactively seeking assistance at the first sign of difficulty or uncertainty. A doctor who is working under great stress or who has burned out and stopped working suffers personally, but is almost always more concerned about the effect this has on their family, friends, practice colleague and patients. Self-care requires active attention to our well-being, and then action to seek out others who can support our professional and personal development."

Dr Richard Stacey, Medical Director, Londonwide LMCs:

"The Coronavirus epidemic has changed how GPs provide care to their patients and added to the already substantial pressures on them, as more appointments are delivered remotely, infection control measure complicate in-person consultations and tight-knit practice teams can go days or even weeks without meeting in person. At Londonwide LMCs we are matching the innovation seen in the practices we represent by launching our new

online GP Professional Support Network. Managed through our expert internal team, I know that this service will make a real difference to those colleagues who are suffering from burnout or stress and I am proud to be a part of it."

You can visit the website at: <https://londonwide.onpld.com/>.

If you have any queries please contact Rizwana Ahmed at Londonwide LMCs: rizwana.ahmed@lmc.org.uk.

If you are a journalist and want to know more about the GP Professional Support Network please email: comms@lmc.org.uk.