



Londonwide reaction to GPC motion of no-confidence in NHS England Executive

Earlier today GPC England considered and voted on a confidence motion, following the publication of letter BO497 on 13 May 2021.

Londonwide Response

Dr Michelle Drage, CEO of Londonwide LMCs, said: "On behalf of Londonwide LMCs and general practice across the Capital, I'm relieved that the BMA is taking action as the profession's Trade Union to defend GPs and our staff in the face of relentless morale-sapping and destructive missives from NHS England. "This is not the first time during the pandemic that GPs have been given guidance by NHS England instructing us to work in a particular way, then found ourselves subject to public statements decrying such practices from the very same commissioners. "We are all at our wits end. After general practice staff across London have shown our commitment to patient care throughout the pandemic: working at levels which well-exceed our full capacity; often making personal sacrifices for our patients' safety at the cost of our own; it is outrageous to criticise our adaptability and agility. Rather, NHS England should join us in praising the diligence and commitment of doctors, nurses, practice managers, HCAs, pharmacists and all of the other essential members of the general practice team. "With the extraordinary level of demand practices are currently experiencing showing no sign of reducing, NHS England should be supporting and developing good general practice care for the benefit of patients, and our already exhausted and increasingly burned-out workforce. Rather than continually sticking the boot in." Ends

The Motion

GPC England is outraged by NHS England and NHS Improvement's lack of understanding of the pressures facing General Practice and: i) Calls for formal BMA action by escalating concerns about NHS England's apparent lack of knowledge of the applicable contracts and regulations relating to the delivery of General Practice services ii) Seeks both senior explanation and public action from the Department of Health and Social Care in view of the unacceptable decision to publish letter BO497 on 13 May 2021 iii) Has no confidence in the Executive Directors of NHS England iv) Calls upon the Chair of BMA U.K. Council to support the Chair of GPC England in demanding an urgent meeting with the Secretary of State for Health & Social Care, to discuss the spiralling crisis in General Practice v) Calls for GPC England's Executive to immediately cease all formal meetings with NHS England until a motion is brought back to GPC England by the Executive, requesting a vote on their recommendation that sufficient steps have been taken to restore the Committee's confidence in the Executive Directors of NHS England, to justify the resumption of such meetings.

BMA GPC Response

The BMA's England GP committee has passed a motion¹ of no confidence in the leadership of NHS England following its "tone deaf" letter to practices last week around face-to-face appointments, and longer-term failure to support, or recognise the efforts of, the profession over the last 14 months. The motion, passed at GPC England's online meeting today, also demands an explanation from the Government as to why the letter was sent last week. Dr Richard Vautrey, BMA GP committee England chair, said: "For the representatives of England's GPs to pass a vote of no confidence in NHS England's senior leaders, is a clear wake-up call to NHS England and also for the Government. Without doubt, the motivation for this comes entirely from the widespread anger, frustration and disappointment felt by tens of thousands of GPs about the cavalier ways in which they have been treated and badly let down by the Government and NHS England. "These organisations have repeatedly failed not only to resolve the crisis of falling numbers of GPs who are trying to make inroads into a mammoth backlog of patients needing care, but also properly recognise and celebrate the incredible contribution of general practice throughout the pandemic and the vaccination programme. "Last week's woefully badly judged letter from NHS England was the final straw for many hard-working GPs who have gone above and beyond over the last year, continuing to provide care for their patients under the most difficult circumstances, only for their efforts to be undermined and instead issued a public rebuke which also inferred that surgeries had been closed to face-to-face appointments. This could not be farther from the truth; almost 164 million face-to-face patient appointments were undertaken between March 2020 and March 2021. And for NHS England to glibly announce that practices should now see even more patients face-to-face without providing anything in the way of extra support or guidance on how to continue to protect patients and staff from the risk of a potentially lethal virus, is at best nonsense, but at worst extremely dangerous. "The profession has had enough of ill-conceived top-down directives that fail to consider the day-to-day reality in scores of doctors' surgeries. We know that some patients are frustrated at long waits for treatment or being unable to get a face-to-face appointment when they'd prefer one. GPs everywhere share that frustration. This is not the fault of individual practices or doctors, and instead of issuing tone deaf letters, in what seems to be a reaction to media coverage, rather than based on the needs of the profession, NHS England and the Government must shoulder the responsibility and face the reality of years of failing to value, support and invest in general practice to ensure that GPs and their teams have the capacity to meet the growing needs of the population.

"This motion sounds a much-needed warning bell, rung by GPs at the end of their tether, emotionally and physically exhausted by the past 14 months. The onus is now on NHS England and ministers to fix a broken system so that patients as well as doctors have a GP service that is fit for purpose in every way." Ends