



M word - Issue 17

Dear Colleagues,

Three things to tell you right now:

1. Yesterday's CQC/media onslaught
2. Christmas and New Year Opening
3. Valuing General Practice - our assurance to you in this climate of uncertainty and fear

1. Yesterday's CQC/media onslaught

Yesterday was simply the pits for GPs and the practice nurses, managers and all staff who support us caring for our patients. We had to endure the most unbalanced and negative wall to wall news coverage I can ever remember, and there has been plenty to recall. It started with a distorted press release from the CQC claiming that 1/3 of practices failed to meet its standards, and named and shamed its 'worst' 9 practices in the most sensational way. Throughout the day we and our sister colleagues in the BMA and RCGP were challenging the misleading statements and opinions and that we're being portrayed. Towards the end of the day the TV, Radio and social media were beginning to get it - that this was a tiny number in a small sample of preselected victims, and as one newsreader said to me on air on Sky News, her own practice is fantastic, every time. Another, on Channel 5, gave us another opportunity to say how it really is. That Channel 5 interview can be viewed here. Thankfully, you can be relieved that none of these were in London, but worryingly, you cannot be reassured that this 'witch hunt' will not come to your street soon.

2. Christmas and New Year Opening

As if yesterday wasn't enough, we have reports from some practices of a reversal of the NHSE London AT's approach to subcontracting your practices' in-hours workload on these two days. This is absolutely frustrating for all of us and our teams who will have made plans based on our contractual right to do so, underpinned by extant guidance based on accurate legal advice issued by the GPC and consequently ourselves. And know this - we at Londonwide LMCs are robustly supporting practices on this issue, and as I write this we are anticipating further imminent guidance from the GPC and we will let you have it as soon as it becomes available.

3. Valuing General Practice - our assurance to you in this climate of uncertainty and fear

And so, whilst we cannot reassure you that the 'witch hunt' in certain media will cease, or that the chaotic behaviours from the NHSE world will be 'over by Christmas', I can assure you of this - that we at Londonwide LMCs do understand and recognise the struggles you make every day to provide care to your patients. We do recognise the fact that you are doing so in a world of topsy turvey funding where you get only 7.5% of the overall NHS resource, and have to manage demand which has escalated through the stratosphere. We do recognise that you do so with grace and with resilience. That you do so when bombs go off in our city, when pandemics of bird flu threaten, when riots happen outside your surgery doors, and when you are feeling so very undervalued from a system that seems to have totally lost its direction. You are the stability in that system, and you stabilise it in the million consultations you have with your patients every week. And they do understand. And they do value you. And what you do for them, and how the value it is what makes what you do for them worth getting up for. Yes we will need to adapt. Yes our practices will need to work more closely together. But of this you can be certain, we are here to support you as you do so. No other organisation can or will. No other organisation cares for you. Please hold on to that and use us when you need us. We are here for you.

And although there will be more from us, I wish you now a peaceful, Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from all of us at Londonwide LMCs.

With best wishes

Dr Michelle Drage FRCGP Chief Executive