September  2021

[EMAIL]

Dear [NAME]

**Urgent – Abuse of General Practice staff in [CONSTITUENCY]**

I write as a GP who practices in [CONSTITUENCY] to ask for your support in countering the growing anti-GP sentiment being experienced by GPs and practice staff.

I am worried about the volume of abuse which myself, fellow GPs and our teams are being subjected to on a daily basis, and the resultant mental and physical health impact.

Whilst the majority of patients in [CONSTITUENCY] have been fantastic in their support for their local GPs, abuse is growing among a minority. London practice staff are receiving profanity-filled messages and verbal abuse/threats. Sadly, this recently escalated in the physical assaults of GPs and their receptionists, resulting in broken bones and hospitalisation.

This underscores an urgent need to communicate that general practice is working as hard as it can, and that those on the other side of the reception desk, the consulting room or at the end of the phone are people, not a faceless sounding board for frustrations.

In response to demands from NHSE, and with patient and staff safety in mind, we had to change the way we consult but continue to try and meet the health demands of our patients, whilst delivering a flu and Covid-19 vaccination programme. London general practice remains fully, and safely, open. The number of GP appointments in London has increased. In June 2019 London GP appointments stood at 3.1 million; in June 2021 this had increased by 27% to 4 million, despite London having 60 fewer GP practices open and practices carrying significant vacancies. Whilst part of the latter may be accounted for by mergers, other practices will have simply closed.

We want to thank patients for their support in helping practices to prioritise those who are most in need. We need unambiguous communication to the public by local and national leaders to ensure that patients and communities have a clear understanding and expectation of what services can be offered and how best to access them. We will continue to prioritise covering immediate essential needs to diagnose/treat serious illness, whilst maintaining other essential services such as long-term condition management and childhood vaccinations.

We need your help to work with GPs in [CONSTITUENCY] to communicate with patients the changes to how best they access their GPs, what their reasonable expectations should be, and to offer your support in responding to any abuse aimed at GPs and their teams.

Londonwide LMCs, the representative organisation of GPs in London, has already reached out to you on the 23rd of September to offer a meeting to discuss these concerns further and hear the views and experiences of constituent GPs. I hope you are able to accommodate this, and, if so, please contact sam.dowling@lmc.org.uk to arrange a date.

If you would like to find out more about the work general practice has been doing in [CONSTITUENCY], or get the view from the frontline/spend some time in a practice, this can also be arranged through Londonwide LMCs’ Communications Director Sam Dowling at sam.dowling@lmc.org.uk.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

LOCAL GP/ LMC MEMBER