

The last year has seen Londonwide LMCs and the LMC family continue to build influence in London with NHS England, the Mayor, GLA, STPs, CCGs and local government on the transformation agenda and other important issues – while remaining a tenaciously independent voice.

We continue to meet the ongoing support needs of LMCs, conducting the core work of keeping GPs in practice, preventing closures and navigating everyone through these unstable times. As the pressures on general practice have grown, so have the demands on the Londonwide team and I respect and admire the dedication, focus and determination they bring daily to shoring up London GPs and their teams.

In 2018 more practices faced workforce and sustainability challenges than ever before and responded to these challenges in various ways: 19 chose to merge, or felt they had no other option, two single-handed contractors resigned, six practices handed back their contract and only five were able to secure partnerships. We have seen more aggressive list dispersals, with the largest one being 8,500 patients.

The regulatory burden on GPs weighed as heavily as ever, with our GP and Practice Support team managing a total of 273 cases in 2018, saving more than 20 practices from closure and helping 48 with CQC issues, including special measures, suspensions, terminations and appeals. The team also helped 41 practices with premises problems and guided 45 individual GPs through GMC and NHS England performance processes and supported them with clinical complaints. Partnerships are feeling the pressure as well and disputes between partners are on the increase – last year we facilitated constructive discussions in 18 partnerships, out of which only one resulted in a split. In addition to regular casework, GP and Practice Support have worked collaboratively with primary care colleagues on the PMS review and supported tens of practices through the review process and its impact.

We worked with the Independent GP Partnership Review, exploring the future of general practice ownership models, to ensure that the voices of London's GPs were heard by Ministers and opinion formers. We have also worked closely with the Mayor's Office throughout the year, ensuring general practice support for social prescribing and devolved authorities, alongside involvement in the mayoral team's consideration of population level requirements to support general practice and the wider care system.

Our mission to ensure that general practice's core values remain at the heart of the developing at-scale new models of care saw us work closely with NHS England to make the *Next Steps for the Strategic Commissioning Framework* document reflective of the needs of general practice. Now the system in London has accepted that models with independent practices, closely collaborating, are a completely viable way of achieving the ambition of at-scale provision, without losing sight of the value and benefits which small can bring.



We continue to see the emergence of new online health apps rolled out to private and NHS patients across London at a greater scale than ever before. Londonwide LMCs have championed the cause of every patient in London having equal access to NHS care in this new landscape and made the case that new services should not destabilise existing ones, used by those most in need. We continue to scrutinise and hold to account these digital providers and those who commission them.

Last year saw a number of additions to our talented LMC leadership team, with elections across the capital. Our LMCs lead the way, with 84 of the 227 elected and co-opted members in sessional or salaried roles, and 44 appointed practice manager or GP nurse representatives. Gender balance on LMCs is 50/50, reflecting the make-up of the general practice workforce.

Looking ahead, at the risk of sounding like a broken record, workforce shortages continue to be one of the main reasons that London general practice remains in a state of emergency. We have continued to monitor this with our twice-yearly survey and to provide resources to push back against non-essential work via our GP State of Emergency campaign. We are also encouraging practitioners to alert us to non-contractual requests and demands using our Beam to LMC app.

With the first few months of 2019 heralding the arrival of the state-backed indemnity scheme, the UK's official departure from the EU and Londonwide LMCs' annual conference, I can say with certainty that we are set for another busy year. Rest assured that we will keep you updated on what state-backed indemnity and Brexit actually mean for your practice once the goalposts have stopped moving. Londonwide LMCs and London's LMCs will also continue to beat the drum on behalf of London's practice teams – partners, employed GPs, locums, nurses, practice managers and all those essential in delivering general practice to patients; as well as working with patients, press and politicians to raise awareness and increase knowledge of the challenges facing general practice teams in London.

There is more that unites than divides our profession, those of us working in London's general practices must ensure that transformation and change are driven in a way that brings us together, rather than sowing division.



Michelle Drage.

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Chief Executive

