

BMA

Support for GPs

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Cymru Wales



Why would a GP need support?

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- Individual stress / burn out / other personal or family problems
- Practice stress / strain
- Receipt of a complaint (esp to GMC)
- Undergoing performance assessment / remediation processes



What evidence is out there?

1/8 GPs have sought help from pastoral or wellbeing services within the past year

BMA Ombudsman Survey

- I. 45% response rate
- II. 93% heavy workload has negatively impacted on quality of service to patients
- III. 37% workload unmanageable
- IV. 43% insufficient time with patients
- V. 34% considering retiring in next 5 years
- VI. (2/3 of those with more than 20 years in practice)
- VII. 19% of GP trainees considering moving abroad in next 5 years



What evidence is out there?

- The 8th DH National GP Worklife survey found rising workload, constant change, paperwork and a lack of time to do the job justice contributed to rising stress levels & reduced job satisfaction. Also a 5% increase in intention to quit direct patient care within next 5 years in GPs aged <50 years old and 7% in those aged >50 years.
- RCGP survey 2013: 85% of family doctors say general practice 'in crisis' as half say they can no longer guarantee safe patient care & 22% have had to seek guidance, support or help for work related stress



How do we identify the struggling GP?

- May self identify – although most fear being considered a “failure” or “weak”
- Concerns raised from colleagues
- Identified at appraisal or revalidation
- Concerns identified from sources external to the practice e.g. from other health care professionals, HB concerns, patient complaints to practice / HB / ombudsman / GMC soft concerns, complaints reviews, ombudsman reports, significant event analyses etc



Local support available

- Mentoring
- Ambassador role
- Buddying
- Peer support from other practices
- LMC support – personal and practice (including “Three Wise Men”)
- BMA and RCGP
- Local HB Occupational Health& wellbeing services



All Wales Support

- Wales Deanery's Professional Support Unit for doctors in training (Cardiff University)
- Individual support programme for doctors and medical students identified as having performance issues
- Further practice training network
- Health for Health Practitioners (funded by Welsh Government)
- Mandated each HB provide Occupational Health Services for GPs
- PMCAT & NCAS – primarily investigatory bodies but can advise individual doctors and refer for Occ Health and advise on remediation



UK Initiatives available (1)

Doctors support network

- ◆ Primarily for mental health issues
- ◆ Staffed by trained doctors – confidential & anonymous
- ◆ Website: www.dsn.org.uk
- ◆ Telephone: 0844 395 3010

BMA Counselling & Doctor Advisor Service

- ◆ 24/7 telephone counselling service – primarily counsellor provided but you can speak to doctors
- ◆ Not an emergency service, does not provide diagnoses or treatment, although inevitably any interaction will have a therapeutic aspect.
- ◆ Telephone: 08459 200 169
- ◆ Website: www.bma.org.uk/doctorsfordoctors



UK Initiatives available (2)

DOCHEALTH

- ◆ Self-referral not for profit psychotherapy service
- ◆ Offers up to 6 face to face consultations on a sliding fee basis with senior clinicians
- ◆ Funded by BMA and RMBF
- ◆ www.dochealth.org.uk

Doctor support Service

- ◆ Run by the BMA (see their website)
- ◆ Specifically for doctors having had a GMC complaint
- ◆ Access via website or ring 02073836707



UK Initiatives available (3)

Support4Doctors

(supported by Royal Medical Benevolent Fund)

- ◆ wide range of specialist advice and support for doctors and their families. There are also links to organisations that can provide further help.

www.support4doctors.org

Tel: 0208 545 8443

Cameron Fund

- ◆ GPs' own charity. Solely supports general practitioners and their dependents in times of financial need, whether through ill-health, disability, death or loss of employment.



UK Initiatives available (4)

Royal Medical Benevolent Fund

- ◆ RMBF offers support to members of the medical profession and their dependants who, through illness or misfortune, find themselves in financial hardship.
- ◆ **Website:** www.rmbf.org
- ◆ **Telephone:** 020 8540 9194

Sick Doctors Trust

- 24 hour confidential telephone helpline for doctors with drug and alcohol problems.
- **Website:** www.sick-doctors-trust.co.uk
- **Telephone:** 0370 444 5163 (24 hours)



Others

- ◆ Don't forget support from indemnity organisation for professional issues / regulatory investigations and complaint management
- ◆ National or local charities for specific issues (e.g. Samaritans)
- ◆ GMC – has a section called “Your Health Matters” which includes lots of resources



Funding – who pays? Are there funds?

- There is little information for practitioners about how individuals may access funds to support them if off work for long periods of time
- Organisations are also not often aware about *how* they can access funds when they have a requirement to provide adjustments, reskilling and/or supervision for practitioners.
- Many of the external organisations are free to access



Other problems

- Across Intra Health Board/ Trusts there is no equity in service provision but all HAVE to now provide Occupational Health for GPs
- There are many interventions that are cost neutral but are not implemented in all Health Boards/Trusts e.g. mentoring, peer support, advocacy role for practitioners
- Poor knowledge of services available and how to access them



What practical advice can you give?

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- Obviously acknowledge issues and impact this is having on them
- Encourage them to see their own GP – if not registered, advise them to register
- Encourage them to share problems with family / friends / colleagues as appropriate
- Encourage them to think about creating “me” time
- Signpost them to appropriate resources / organisations that can help and advise them that these are sources of confidential support and encourage them to keep an open mind about accepting support



Questions?

