24 February 2017

Ongoing issues with NHSPS

Dear Ian

We are writing to you following our meeting with NHSPS on 9 February 2017, to follow up on our request that NHSPS urgently retract current service charge invoices until a robust process was in place for calculating reasonable charges which also takes account of practices’ historic arrangements. We would also request that you desist writing to practices demanding payments until the issues surrounding the charges are resolved and a fair and sensible process has been introduced.

As we outlined in the meeting, we are hearing alarming reports of significant rises in service charges, which practices are receiving invoices for without any information as to the basis upon which the charges are being levied (many practices don’t for instance have written agreements in place) and without any itemisation. As agreed in the meeting, practices should not be responsible for funding repairs due to historic neglect of the buildings, yet we are hearing of this is the case for some practices.

With the above in mind it is essential that a robust process is put in place immediately so as to ensure that charges have reference to historic arrangements, are reasonable, itemised and not include charges for historic neglect of premises.

Practices have also reported that NHSPS are using a very heavy handed and threatening approach to pressure practices to pay these charges. We do not believe that practices should pay these charges while any part of the charges are in dispute, and taking this heavy handed approach is putting significant strain on practices. As we have highlighted above, we believe that a reasonable process must be implemented to ensure reasonable charges and encourage collaborative working between NHSPS, GPC and practices.

While the issues outlined in this letter remain unresolved, we will be writing to practices to be cautious of signing up to any new lease and to encourage them to continue to seek clarity on disputed service charges.

These issues are causing significant distress for practices. We would ask you to retract current invoices for service charges and desist sending threatening letters to practices over payments of such charges. We
would like to accept your invitation to meet in person and request that you respond to us over the issues outlined above and the proposals for addressing the same at the meeting.

Yours sincerely

Ian Hume
GPC policy lead