

Your GP cares



General practice in the UK: Your GP cares

Background

The UK family doctor service is widely admired around the world for its equitable, cost effective and leading edge provision of locally accessible high quality care¹ and doctors remain our most trusted professionals.² However, the environment which GPs are striving to provide services in is increasingly challenging. An increased demand on general practice caused by demographic changes, more complex health needs, and some care moving out of hospitals is all contributing to unsustainable pressures on the service. These inter-related factors are having a worrying impact on how care is delivered to patients.

Issues within General Practice

NHS England estimates that some 340 million consultations are now undertaken every year, an increase of 40 million since 2008.³ The number of consultations in Scotland has also increased, with NHS Scotland estimating that at least 24.2 million patient consultations are now undertaken every year, up by 1.6 million since 2006.⁴ Patients in some areas are not always able to get an appointment when they need one. In 2013, an estimated 26.2 million people waited over one week to see their GP.⁵

The needs of patients visiting their GP practice have also changed. For example in England 15 million people live with a chronic condition.⁶ More care for patients with chronic diseases, such as diabetes and asthma, previously carried out in hospital settings is now increasingly being provided through GP services. NHS Wales estimates that Wales has the highest rates of long-term limiting illness in the UK.⁷

GPs are also facing rising patient demand from an ageing population. In Northern Ireland, for example, the proportion of the population aged 75 and over is predicted to rise from 6.7% in 2012 to 9.2% in 2024.⁸

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That is why the BMA's General Practitioners Committee has launched a new campaign, *Your GP cares*, to highlight some of the pressing issues facing general practice. Your GP and practice team care about the current situation and want to work with patients and government to find solutions and provide a better service. The BMA is calling for long term, sustainable investment in GP services now to:

- Attract, retain and expand the number of GPs
- Expand the number of practice staff
- Improve the premises that GP services are provided from

Over the coming months, we will be encouraging debate so that politicians and policy makers understand the urgent need for long term, sustainable investment in GP services for today and tomorrow.

Find out more and join the campaign at bma.org.uk/YourGPcares

Tell @TheBMA on Twitter why you care about your GP practice #YourGPcares

Notes and References

- 1 A survey of Primary Care Physicians in 11 Countries, 2009: Perspective on Care, Costs and Experiences, Schoen, Osborn, Doty, Squires, Peugh, Applebaum, The Commonwealth Fund 2009: <http://www.commonwealthfund.org/Publications/In-the-Literature/2009/Nov/A-Survey-of-Primary-Care-Physicians.aspx>
- 2 Ipsos MORI Trust and Confidence Survey Published 15th February 2013 http://www.ipsos-mori.com/Assets/Docs/Polls/Feb2013_Trust_Topline.PDF
- 3 Information from NHS England's Call for Action (General Practice) 2013: <http://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/gp-cta-evid.pdf>
- 4 NHS Scotland IDS (2013). *Practice Team Information*.
- 5 <http://www.rcgp.org.uk/news/2013/december/27m-patients-to-wait-week-or-more-to-see-gp-in-2014.aspx>
- 6 Department of Health (2012). *Long-term conditions compendium of Information: 3rd edition*.
- 7 NHS Wales (2007). *Designed to Improve Health and the Management of Chronic Conditions in Wales: An Integrated Model and Framework*.
- 8 Office for National Statistics (2012). Available at: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/npp/national-population-projections/2012-based-projections/stb-2012-based-npp-principal-and-key-variants.html>