

# Stockton Borough Council Scrutiny Review of Access to General Practice

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Interim CEO



# What is General Practice?

- Services provided by traditional GP surgeries
  - Routine GP care in the evenings and weekends (Enhanced Access)
  - The Out of Hours GP service
  - Digital General Practice
  - Private General Practice
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- Primary Care includes General Practice, alongside pharmacy, optometry and dentistry

# Who are Cleveland LMC?

- Representative body for all GPs and GP practices within Tees
  - Authority to speak on behalf of all GPs and GP practices
  - Authority to negotiate on behalf of all GPs and GP practices
- Funded solely by our practices on a voluntary basis
- Elected Board drawn from our constituents
- Elected leadership team drawn from our Board
- Independent of other organisations and any political party

# What do Cleveland LMC do?

- Support our constituents
  - Formal guidance
  - Represent their views to other stakeholders
  - Escalate their concerns to our national negotiators
  - Contract implementation advice
  - Dispute resolution
  - Job advert service
- Outbound communication is via our weekly bulletin and our website
- Inbound communication is by email or telephone, and at our bimonthly Board meetings



# National Trends regarding GP Access

- Over the past 8 years, the population has grown, and GP numbers have fallen
  - Population increase of 5.8 million, 10.3%
  - WTE GP numbers have reduced by 2,062, 7%
  - 19% increase in number of patients allocated to each WTE GP
- There are significant GP retention issues that are set to worsen
  - Doubling of GP training places has had no impact
  - Trend to reduce working hours
  - Ageing workforce, with 18% of GPs being over the age of 55

**REBUILD**

**GENERAL**

**PRACTICE**

**Patient safety is at risk.**

Nearly **9 in 10** GPs fear patients aren't always safe at their surgeries.

**7** out of **10** GPs feel the risk to 'patient safety' is increasing.

(source: survey of GPs, March 2022)



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# General Practice Capacity

- More appointments than ever are being delivered
  - 2019 (pre-pandemic) – 23.8 million appointments per month
  - 2023 – 29.4 million appointments per month
- This is an average of **6 appointments per year** for every registered patient
- It is not possible to **safely** deliver more appointments
- National drive to focus on Safer Working in General Practice

# 57%

OF PATIENTS IN THE NORTH SAY IT'S IMPORTANT  
THAT THEY SEE THE **SAME GP EACH TIME** WHEN  
THEY VISIT THEIR LOCAL SURGERY

REBUILD

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PRACTICE

SOURCE: YOUNG & RUBICAM, SEP 2023



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# Funding pressures

- Primary Care receives just 8% of the NHS budget
- Funding for core services has not been sufficient
  - Current global sum is £104.73
  - It should be £129.98 just to keep up with inflation
- Investment has been focused on PCNs
  - ARRS funding cannot be spent on core staff
  - ARRS underspend is lost funding
  - Reduction in patient facing time for GPs
    - Increased management
    - Increased supervision
  - Outsourcing of appointments

# Care Navigation

- Call handlers asking personal questions before an appointment is made
- Attempt to manage overall demand
- Attempt to better use non-GP appointments
  
- Incredibly stressful for our patients and our reception teams

# Views on recovery plan

- Limited impact as does not address the key issues
  - Funding
  - Workload
- Improved telephony systems don't increase the number of people available to answer the phones, nor appointment capacity
- A greater focus on the interface with secondary care would be welcomed and supportive
- GPs want to be GPs, spending time with their patients

**REBUILD**

**GENERAL**

**PRACTICE**

**86% of GPs stated they didn't have enough time with patients.**

**77% of GPs said GP shortages were putting patient safety at risk.**

**General Practice is in crisis.  
Patient safety is at risk.**

(source: survey of GPs, March 2022)



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# What is needed?

- More funding overall into general practice
  - Prioritisation of core practice funding
- Focus on Safe Working
- Reduction in bureaucracy
  - Fewer targets
  - Reduced management demands
  - More time with patients
- Improved collaboration with secondary care colleagues



**We need:**

**Recruitment**

**6,000 GPs in England by 2024**

**Retention**

**Tackling the factors driving GPs out**

**Safety**

**A plan to reduce GP workload and  
in turn improve patient safety**

**General Practice is in crisis.**

**Patient safety is at risk.**



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# Further reading

- [clevelandlmc.org.uk](http://clevelandlmc.org.uk)
- [“I need to see a doctor!” | Healthwatch Middlesbrough](#)
- [Pressures in general practice data analysis \(bma.org.uk\)](#)
- [Safe working in general practice \(bma.org.uk\)](#)
- [Home | Rebuild General Practice \(rebuildgp.co.uk\)](#)