REBUILD GENERAL PRACTICE

OPEN LETTER TO PARTY LEADERS

Dear National and Party Leaders,

We are writing to you on behalf of the family doctors of Great Britain.

As Local Medical Committees (LMCs) we represent every General Practitioner in our geographical area. The latest data shows that there are 27,606 full-time equivalent (FTE) GPs in England[1], 3,478 FTE GPs in Scotland[2], and 1,445 FTE GPs in Wales[3].

In a historic show of unity, over 80% of LMCs across England, Scotland, and Wales, representing thousands of GPs, have spoken with one united voice - to call for urgent action to address the crisis in general practice.

We write to you as one - in the hope that you can put aside party politics and in this crucial election year make solving the issues in general practice a core part of your campaigns.

We are united by the Rebuild General Practice campaign to ask you - the political leaders of our nations - to fix a broken system across Great Britain.

Because general practice *is* broken.

We don't have enough doctors to treat our patients.

GPs are still subjected to unbearable working conditions, experiencing anxiety, stress and depression in record numbers.[4]

Thousands of GPs are leaving the profession and practices are closing as a consequence.

As expert generalists, we know our patients best. We're aware of their holistic needs in ways other professionals cannot be, and we can diagnose what other professionals cannot.

We alone can provide the continuity of care that patients want, and that saves lives.

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[1] BMA
[2] NHS Scotland
[3] BMA
[4] Polling of 372 GPs by Rebuild General Practice:

- **83.1%** agreed or strongly agreed that they had experienced symptoms of anxiety, stress or depression in the past year because of their job, a similar figure to 2022 (84%).
- **87.9%** agreed or strongly agreed that a member of staff in their practice had experienced mental abuse from a patient in the past year, slightly down from 2022 (90%).
- **43.5%** agreed or strongly agreed that a member of staff in their practice had experienced physical abuse from a patient in the past year, up from 31% in 2022.
- **50.6%** of respondents said their practice had lost GPs in the last 5 years due to unmanageable workload, a similar figure to 2022 (51%).
- **49.7%** of respondents said their practice had lost GPs in the last 5 years due to mental health or burnout issues, compared to 48% in 2022.

Without concerted effort to rebuild our services, the entire NHS will crumble under the weight of unsustainable pressure.

As the very bedrock of the health service, if general practice fails, the entire NHS fails.

Political decisions have led to this decline in general practice. And patients are paying the price.

In England:

- Since 2015, we have lost more than 1,300 practices and more than 10,000 GPs, but we're seeing 8 million more patients.
- At the same time, since 2019, GP funding has been cut by almost £350m in real terms - with funding per patient cut by just under 7% over the same period[5].

In Scotland:

- In the last 10 years the population has increased by 7% , while the number of practices has reduced by 9% and average list sizes have increased by 18%[6].
- The Scottish government is not on track to meet its commitment of 800 new GPs by 2027, having added only 271 in the past 6 years[7].

In Wales:

- There's a deficit of 664 GPs (compared with other OECD countries), 18% fewer surgeries available to people and GPs are taking on an unsustainable 32% more patients each[8].
- Only 6.1% of NHS Wales funding went towards general practice in the year 2020-21 and less than 8% of NHS Wales funding goes towards general practice at present, which is lower than in 2005-6[9].

But we know that this situation is not what you want.

Like us, you believe that general practice should be at the heart of every community – keeping patients safe, and providing strong foundations for the rest of the NHS.

You agree that patients should be able to see us when they need to – and that our colleagues across the NHS should be able to work closely with us to provide the right care, at the right time.

You know that a strong general practice keeps people healthy and gives them the care they need in their community.

We hope therefore that you will join our calls for a stronger, more sustainable general practice by prioritising the necessary measures.

We are asking for:

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[5] Research by the Liberal Democrats
[6] BMA Scotland.
[7] RCGP
[8] BMA Wales
[9] BMA Wales Save Our Surgeries Report

- **A plan to retain the GP workforce:** Deliver a fully funded and well delivered national general practice retention programme, which would incentivise GPs and trainees to remain in the profession. This should be part of a wider workforce plan to ensure we have the GPs we need into the future.

- **Fair funding as part of the wider NHS:** Increase in the percentage of NHS funding in primary care with at least an 8.7% uplift (to match 2019/2020 funding), and match the share of funding allocated to general practice to reflect the increasing proportion of care it delivers.

- **Greater freedom and autonomy to do our jobs**: GPs know best when it comes to how to care for their patients. This is why the practice of ringfencing funding should stop. GP partners should be able to allocate resources according to need. This includes having control over hiring and retaining staff according to the needs of the practice and patients.

We only have a few weeks before the public goes to the polls to vote in the general election. Before then, please consider how important general practice is to the whole of the country.

We would be delighted to meet you to discuss these proposals, and we look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,
The GPs of Great Britain

Signed:

ENGLAND

Avon LMC
BaNES Swindon & Wiltshire LMC
Barnet LMC
Barnsley LMC
Bedfordshire LMC
Berkshire LMC
Bexley LMC
Birmingham LMC
Bolton LMC
Bradford & Airedale LMC
Bromley LMC
Buckinghamshire LMC
Calderdale LMC
Cambridgeshire LMC
Camden LMC
Central Lancashire LMC
Cheshire LMC
Cleveland LMC
Cornwall & Isles of Scilly (Kernow) LMC
County Durham & Darlington LMC
Coventry LMC
Cumbria LMC
Derby & Derbyshire LMC
Devon LMC
Dorset LMC
Ealing LMC
Enfield LMC
Essex North LMC
Essex South LMC
Gateshead & South Tyneside LMC
Gloucestershire LMC
Greenwich LMC
Hammersmith & Fulham LMC
Hampshire & Isle of Wight LMC
Haringey LMC
Harrow LMC
Hillingdon LMC
Hull & East Yorkshire LMC
Islington LMC
Kent LMC
Kirklees LMC

Lambeth LMC
Lancashire Coastal LMC
Lancashire Pennine LMC
Leeds LMC
Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland LMC
Lincolnshire LMC
Liverpool LMC
Manchester LMC
Merton LMC
Mid Mersey LMC
Morecambe Bay LMC
Newcastle & North Tyneside LMC
Newham LMC
Norfolk & Waveney LMC
North & North East Lincolnshire LMC
North Yorkshire LMC
Northamptonshire LMC
Northumberland LMC
Nottinghamshire LMC
Oxfordshire LMC
Rotherham LMC
Salford, Stockport and Trafford LMC
Sefton LMC
Sheffield LMC
Solihull LMC
Somerset LMC
Staffordshire North LMC
Staffordshire South LMC
Suffolk LMC
Sunderland LMC
Sussex East LMC
Sussex West LMC
Sutton LMC
Tower Hamlets LMC
Wakefield LMC
Waltham Forest LMC
Warwickshire LMC
Westminster LMC
West Pennine LMC
Wigan LMC
Wirral LMC
Worcestershire LMC

SCOTLAND

Ayrshire & Arran LMC
Borders LMC
Dumfries LMC
Fife LMC
Forth Valley LMC
Glasgow LMC
Grampian LMC
Highland LMC
Lanarkshire LMC
Lothian LMC
Orkney LMC
Tayside LMC

WALES

Bro Taf LMC
Morgannwg LMC
North Wales LMC