



Chief Executive/Secretary: **Dr Brian D Balmer**

Deputy Chief Executive: **Dr Vaiyapuri Raja**

16th March 2023

Sent to All GP Practices in Essex

Dear colleagues

I know many of you are working way beyond your safe capacity and have been for some time now. I also know that this is not sustainable.

General practice in England is at an ever-increasing risk of collapse, with unsafe volumes of work being expected of an ever diminishing and demoralised profession. To protect patients, GPs and practice staff, something has to change.

The BMA's GPCE (GP Committee England) voted to reject the Government's proposed contract changes for 2023/24 on 1st February 2023. Despite further lobbying and discussions throughout last month, no further changes were made. These damaging changes will subsequently be imposed on us and will come into force on 1st April 2023.

GPCE voted to reject these contract changes because:

- The government increased the bureaucratic burden on practices - unnecessary work at a time when patient waits for care are at an all-time high and every moment spent on patient facing care is precious.
- They place unachievable arbitrary access targets on practices that, we fear, will likely leave at least some in breach of contract through no fault of their own.
- There is no support for practices with huge inflationary and minimum wage pressures, despite hospitals receiving £1.5bn of support for these pressures.

These changes come at a time when [practices are providing more appointments with fewer GPs](#)

GPCE know that this workload is leading to burn out of GPs, many of whom are reducing their number of working days to stave off burnout and protect their ability to continue working, or leaving the profession altogether as a result.

As the workload increases and the number of GPs decreases, the capacity for general practice to provide safe care diminishes. This affects our patients.

To protect patient safety, and GP wellbeing, GPCE is looking to bring Government back to the negotiating table to agree a contract that helps, rather than hinders, retention of GPs, protects practices, and ensures safe and high-quality patient care. Urgent action by our politicians is needed right now. I'm afraid to say, however, despite the significant evidence to the contrary, they currently do not recognise the severity of the problems they have just exacerbated.



To force Government into meaningful talks, GPCE is preparing to ballot GPs. We have exhausted all other means of changing the Government's minds on this and we need the profession to act together now in order to secure meaningful change. It is vital that GPs take up this request when it comes, as it has reached the point where not acting will lead to increasing patient harm. We will be publishing more updates, briefings and guidance for you in the coming weeks on potential options and answering all your questions.

In the meantime, please discuss the state of general practice, the imposed 2023/24 contract changes and the importance of constructive change with your colleagues, patients, and the LMC as frequently as you can. All feedback and profession insight will be gratefully received. Informing and sharing concerns about the current contract, as well as hopes for a much-improved contract, will go a long way to protecting general practice and, one day, allowing it to thrive in this country on behalf of patients once again. To be part of a future ballot GPs must be a BMA member to participate.

GPCE will be continually communicating with all GPs and LMCs in the near future about next steps and progress. In the first instance, please do attend one of the [GPCE Contract Webinars](#) which are open to all GPs, practice managers, and LMC colleagues.

Best wishes

Dr Brian Balmer
Chief Executive