

# Brief: GP Shortages in England



July 2022

## Overview

General practice is the cornerstone of the NHS, helping around 50 million people in England every year, carrying out 370 million consultations last year. So, when GPs and their patients tell us that general practice is in crisis, we should all be concerned.

Targets to deliver more GPs continue to be drastically missed. We simply do not have enough GPs to meet the needs of a growing and ageing population, with increasingly complex needs, on top of managing the fallout from the pandemic. This includes increasing numbers of people experiencing 'Long COVID' and mental health issues.

## Key Statistics

### *GP Workforce*

- Despite an agreement from Government that we need 6,000 extra GPs the number of FTE fully qualified GPs has fallen by 5% between September 2015 and 2021 whilst the population is 4% larger and health problems are getting more complex.
- There were 45 fully qualified FTE GPs per 100,000 patients in April 2022 compared to 52 in September 2015, when records began. This means that on average, GPs are currently looking after 2,056 patients, which is more than 10% more patients than in 2015.
- 42% of GPs say that they are planning to quit the profession in the next five years.
- 80% of GPs expect working in general practice to get worse over the next few years, compared to only 6% who expect it to get better.

### *GP Workload*

- Last year, general practice in England carried out almost 370 million consultations, this is 18.5% more than in 2019. Over the same time period, the number of clinical administration tasks delivered by GPs in England rose by 28%, up to 107 million in 2021.
- In 2021 over 45% of all patients had an appointment on the day that they contacted their practice and 76% were seen within a week.

### *Multi-Disciplinary Teams in General Practice/Additional Roles*

- Over half of GPs (57%) surveyed in our annual tracking survey said that their practice does not have access to the support and guidance to effectively integrate the new staff roles
- 74% of respondents to our survey said that their practice does not have sufficient physical space necessary to accommodate new staff.

## What do we want

- A detailed plan to achieve and go beyond the targets of 6000 extra full time equivalent GPs and 26,000 additional staff in non-GP roles. This should include measures to:
  - Make the funding rules more flexible so practices are free to use money from the Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme to hire the staff they need, including nurses, and invest in supporting supervision and training to better integrate teams.
  - Expand the number of GP training places by at least 10% year on year. This must sit alongside action to increase the number of trainers and improvements to premises to further expand teaching in general practice.
- A greater proportion of NHS budgets allocated to general practice to return funding to 11% of total health spend. This should allow investment in:
  - A nationally ringfenced retention fund of at least £150 million annually for GP retention and career development programmes.
  - Extra funding for practices serving the most deprived populations to recruit and retain staff in under-doctored areas, as part of a comprehensive review of the Carr-Hill formula.
  - Investing £1 billion to make general practice premises fit for purpose, including sufficient space to accommodate expanded multidisciplinary teams.
- An easier process for international doctors who complete their training as NHS GPs to apply for long-term visas to stay and work in the UK, bringing the situation into line with trainee doctors in other parts of the NHS.

Further information can be found on [our website](#).