

A letter from the Somerset LMC Chairman

3rd December 2021

Dear Colleagues

So, I have failed to become a social media sensation.

I started with good intentions and have for those of you who watched done the occasional Vlog. But in case you hadn't noticed life has become really hard in the past year or two and I have not had the time for the next instalment so I have taken to pen and paper.

A kind colleague on mentioning this plan said "Don't worry Karen not many of us looked at it anyway!"

For the first time in my career I feel overwhelmed. I no longer can finish a day's work and if I am being honest I haven't been able to since the lifting of lockdown measures at the start of year. If I really being honest it has been heading that way for a little while before that.

The patient demands are constant and increasing. We are supporting patients with new problems, old problems, waiting to be fixed problems while also looking after their families and carers who support them.

The figures confirm this. In October this year in Somerset we offered 322559 appointments which was higher than at any point since September 2019.

In another look at the data 61% appointments were face to face and 85% of our patients surveyed felt care received was good. 63% of our patients were having their needs met within one week.

You're doing okay. You really are. Thank you!

In other news we congratulated Jonathan Higman on becoming Chief Executive Designate of the future Somerset Integrated Care Board (ICB). Jonathan recently spent a morning with me in practice and also sat in with my reception team to hear and see the huge volume of work we manage on a daily basis in our practice.

He was genuinely appreciative of the work being done in General Practice and I hope we will continue to work together to make things better for our practices and for our patients.

We also congratulated Paul von der Heyde on becoming Chair Designate of Somerset ICB. How our system evolves over the next few months will take a clear vision and leadership. The LMC aims to play its role in supporting you in this process.

The LMC attended the England LMC Conference. A virtual event which in itself was difficult as my team will attest I have a short attention span (10-15mins. I wonder why?) I was cheered listening to Dr Farah Jameel new GPC chair's maiden speech. Most importantly she was POSITIVE and was keen to focus the troops on looking ahead (maybe she saw my Vlog "Forwards ever backwards never?") This was refreshing as Conference tends to be a deep dive into all the negative aspects of our

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working lives and when in person was broken up by frequent trips to get coffee and networking with colleagues from across the nation.

The PCN DES was debated and the GPC was mandated to ensure negotiations for future funding focused on our core contract. Locally I am keen to ensure all the hard work of our Clinical Directors and their teams continues to serve the population of Somerset who have benefited from new schemes introduced.

Somerset GP Provider Board continues to meet with Berge Balian as our chair. We are focused on ensuring General Practice both in and out of hours is heard and supported in the new ICS world. Congratulations to James Loader in becoming Wellbeing Lead for the SGPPB It is important we look after ourselves and each other. Do look at the SGPET updates for further support and of course the LMC Safehouse.

I'll stop here but I wanted to leave you with the following:

Maya Angelou said "Every storm runs out of rain."

Music buffs out there Gary Allen sang Every Storm (and Bob Marley No Woman No Cry!!).

Until the next update.

Kind regards



Dr Karen Sylvester
Chairman
Somerset LMC

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