

24<sup>th</sup> February 2023

Good morning everyone

I am writing to introduce myself as the new Chair of Somerset LMC. For those who don't know me I trained as a GP in Somerset where I worked as a locum for 7 years (in about 50 of our local practices) before taking up a position as a partner at East Quay Medical Centre in Bridgwater in 2017 where I work 6 clinical sessions per week. I have been a member of the LMC since I was a trainee.

Firstly, I would like to thank our outgoing Chair, Dr Karen Sylvester. The last 3 years have been incredibly difficult and Karen did a fabulous job at leading the LMC through some incredibly challenging times. It was a pleasure working with you Karen.

Being a part of the LMC is an incredibly rewarding and interesting part of my job as a GP. Helping to understand and shape the environment in which we work is a privilege and I will do my best, alongside the fantastic team at the LMC, to help ensure that the voice of General Practice is heard at the highest levels and that the effect on Primary Care is always considered when changes are made. As a GP 'on the ground' I have a good idea of the stress we are under. Via the committee we have insight into even more practices. But 'knowledge is power' and our aim as an LMC is to be able to provide a comprehensive picture of the incredible work that General Practice in Somerset does every week. The GPAS alert system is the first part of this and, on behalf of the entire team, I want to thank every practice who has responded so far. The response rate has been fantastic so far but I won't be content until it is 100%. I worry that the practices who can't find the time to respond are the practices that we need to hear from the most!

The last few years have been incredibly difficult for many of us. Both at work and at home we have had to deal with the effects of the pandemic, rising patient demand, increasing expectation and a seeming lack of political appreciation. Many of you have given too much for too long and are now feeling the strain. Burnout is no longer a rarity but instead a reality for many. We cannot continue working as we have done. I, and the LMC, are here to help. You will find a strong message regarding [safe working](#) and self-care in our communication and I make no apologies for this. Sometimes when things are so busy it feels impossible to find the headspace to look after yourself and your colleagues but if we don't do it then no one else is going to.

At East Quay we recently spent time discussing how we can move towards the BMA safe working guidance. The outcome of this is not just change to working patterns but also a real feeling of positivity.

Somerset LMC are the only statutory representative body for General practice in Somerset and it is of vital importance that the LMC are consulted on any local arrangements that impact General Practice terms and conditions. However, we are not alone in working to improve General Practice and I look forward to working with the GP Provider Board, Primary Care Networks, Somerset Primary

Somerset Local Medical Committee Crown Medical Centre Venture Way Taunton TA2 8QY

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Vice Chairman: TBC

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Healthcare and Clinical Directors as well as the Primary Care team in the ICB to shape a safe and sustainable future to allow General Practice in Somerset to thrive.

It is with that feeling of positivity and optimism that I start my journey as Chair. Although the situation 'on the ground' is as difficult as it ever has been and it is easy to see nothing but negatives I will do everything I can to remain positive. If we control what we can, always try and take the best next step and above all if we look after each other then we will have done the best that we can.

I look forward to hearing from and meeting many of you over my time as Chair. When you do see me, if I am looking particularly stressed and glum then you can cheerfully remind me that I am supposed to be positive. We do have to look after each other after all!

Kind regards



**Dr Tim Horlock**  
**Chair, Somerset LMC**

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