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| **Meeting attended: GPC England Committee Meeting** | | | |
| **Date of meeting: 20/07/23** | **Time:** **10AM-5PM** | **Venue:** **BMA House** | |
| **Background**  This was the first meeting of GPC England in the BMA’s 2023-2024 session. This meeting followed the last meeting of the previous session on 15 June, where the committee discussed the timeline for contract preparations & negotiations, and potential industrial action, along with plans around communicating the committee’s asks, developing activism and a potential Plan B should negotiations prove unhelpful. | | | |
| **Items discussed**  Below is a brief summary of the key issues discussed at the meeting.  **Vote of no confidence in the chair of GPC England**  At the beginning of the meeting the committee passed a vote of no confidence in its elected chair, Farah Jameel, as a means of electing a new chair.  The vote was part of a motion proposed by committee member Rachel Ali and seconded by several colleagues.  As per the standing orders of the committee, the terms of all the GPC England deputy chairs will end once the new chair is elected.  Nominations for the next chair and deputy chairs of GPC England will open noon Monday 24 July, and the acting chair and deputies will remain in post until a new chair and deputies have been elected. One of the seats for deputy chair will be open to a non-GPC member who is a BMA GP member practising in England.  Read the BMA statement [here](https://www.bma.org.uk/bma-media-centre/gp-committee-in-england-to-elect-new-chair)  The motion in full is copied below, all parts were passed convincingly.  *That this committee is deeply concerned at the lack of clarity surrounding the status of the alleged suspension of the Chair of GPCE ahead of significant impending contractual and political upheaval from now through 2024, and:*   1. *is sympathetic towards the Chair and the difficult circumstances surrounding her absence* 2. *applauds the Acting Chair and Officer Team for their commitment, work, and leadership during the Chair's absence* 3. *asserts that the proper, effective, democratic representation of the profession is of paramount importance to this committee* 4. *regrets that it has no alternative but to declare that this committee has no confidence in the current elected Chair of GPCE, and demands elections be held as soon as possible for a new Chair (and subsequent Officer Team) in accordance with Standing Orders*   **Draft heads of terms for contract reform negotiations**  The committee were presented with a draft heads of terms for the forthcoming contract negotiations with NHS England and DHSC. These heads of terms had been developed by the GPC England officer team and were based on the headline asks of GPC England’s Call to Action. The intention of this item was to enable GPC England to submit a set of heads of terms to NHSE / DHSC prior to receiving one, to ensure that GPCE was setting the agenda for the negotiations, rather than the government.  Feedback was received from Committee members regarding the heads of terms. Some Committee members wanted the HoT to be more radical, with specific call for there to be protection for core funding in the independent contractor model.  The feedback received will inform the further development of these Heads of Terms.  **Yearly pound per patients target investment figure concept**  The Committee discussed developing a pounds per patient ask to add to the Call to Action. Practices currently receive about 57 pence per patient per day to provide GP services. The Committee believe that with increased workload and demand in general practice this should be significantly increased, and that practices cannot provide safe patient care with this level of investment. The Committee agreed to develop this demand and shall be seeking actuarial support to identify an appropriate figure which, if not met, could be the basis for a dispute with government.  **Legal advice around GPs undertaking Industrial Action**  Oliver Segal KC attended the meeting to present legal advice that had been shared with the committee, as well as field questions from committee members.  During this item, committee members explored the challenges that GPs would face in taking industrial action, as well as exploring how GPs could undertake industrial action most effectively. Following this session, further guidance will be developed to be issued to GPs and LMCs as part of the preparations for potential industrial action.  **Developing activism amongst the profession**  The committee received an update from the BMA’s Director of Member Relations on an outline plan around how we intend to develop a network of activists amongst GPs across the country. This network would be there to support GPCE advance its aims, take actions on behalf of GPCE, and galvanise solidarity amongst the profession ahead of any industrial action.  As part of these efforts, grassroot members will be offered the opportunity to undertake activist training offered by the BMA. In addition, GPCE will be seeking to collaborate and coordinate with LMCs to engage the profession as a whole.  Once this plan is implemented, GPCE will issue regular actions for both activists and LMCs to take to demonstrate the unity of the profession and give GPCE leverage in negotiations with the government.  **Update on Accelerated Access to Records programme**  GPCE reported on the work they had undertaken since October last year, engaging with NHSE over the planned rollout of the accelerated access to records programme to address outstanding information governance, patient safety and workload issues. GPCE had sought to bring a legal challenge against NHSE to delay the launch of the programme but due to resourcing issues and the legal merits of the case not meeting the threshold for success, was unable to progress this. The Committee heard from members who expressed concern around the implications for patient safety of vulnerable patients having full record access and of the projected workload that GPs would take on in trying to implement the programme. Committee reiterated its grave concerns regarding the safety implications of this imposed contractual clause.  GPCE will thus raise these concerns and issues with NHSE again ahead of the planned October 31st go-live date with a view to finding a way to safely implement prospective record access with the support of the profession.  **Covid vaccination programme**  GPCE discussed the proposals by NHSE to reduce the Item of Service fee for Covid vaccinations. NHSE believe that the fee should be reduced as flu and Covid can be administered jointly. GPCE do not agree with this, as the IoS does not cover the cost of delivering the immunisation and reducing the IoS will make delivering the programme financially unviable. GPCE passed a motion unanimously that the fee should not be reduced. GPCE will continue to lobby government and NHSE about this.  The motion passed was:  *GPC England condemns any proposed or actual cut in funding for the Covid-19 Vaccination Programme, and, if this funding reduction does occur, will advise practices to strongly consider the viability of continued participation in the provision of the vaccines* | | | |
| **Action points**   * Committee members are asked to engage with their constituents and LMCs around the preparations for action by GPs in England. * Committee members should discuss with their constituents about what they want to see in a new contract, along with what forms of action they would be prepared to take, and address any reticence around taking action in the future. * Committee members are asked to sign-up for the safe working guidance implementation training, as well as encouraging their LMC colleagues in their regions to sign up to the training advertised in the LMC update. * *Committee members are invited to add any other actions that they will take following the meeting.* | | | |
| **Next Steps**   * At further meetings of GPCE, further planning and preparation for contract negotiations and potential industrial action by GPs in England will continue. * The BMA will be actively engaging members in the coming weeks and months, to ensure the membership are prepared to take action if required. | | | |
| **Name of attendee:** | | | **Date: 21/07/2023** |