

'Team GP' – creating a United Primary Care Voice

A message from Rosie Benneyworth

I have now been working with the Somerset STP for 3 months, and during that time the need for us to create a united primary care voice has become increasingly urgent. At the moment, the partners in the STP (YDH, T+S, SomPar, SCC, SCCG and Primary Care) are working on a large number of work streams to meet the 'triple aims' of the STP - improving health and wellbeing, improving the quality of care, and ensuring efficiency both in terms of finance and workforce. The large organisations all have well developed structures in place that enable communication and representation of views into the discussion. However, in Primary Care we have practices, federations, the LMC, SPH, CCG GPs and other provider groups all being involved in discussions and often our system partners are not clear who to go to, for what purpose and what mandate that individual has when attending a meeting. We do not co-ordinate our GP attendance at meetings and that can lead to either duplication of effort or lack of communication across the work streams. In addition, because often we are giving mixed messages, our voice in the discussions is weakened and we usually do not have a strong negotiating position as a result.

We talk frequently about the differences across the practices and federations, but I believe we need to start talking about the similarities and capturing these, to help our system partners understand some of the fundamental aspects of primary care that we want to ensure we do not lose as plans progress both nationally and locally. We need to find mechanisms to enable all practices to have a voice and be heard, and feel confident that the people who sit in the various meetings that occur across the county are aware of their views. We need to be able to find a common position on significant developments that practices can agree to, so that we are heard in the discussion.

The LMC, SPH and I have been having regular discussions about how we create 'Team GP' - a strong united primary care voice. We are having an away day next week to progress this, and we shall then be discussing this with a much wider audience. Please do not hesitate to send me your thoughts at any time – rosie.benneyworth@nhs.net. I am always happy to come out to practices/federations to discuss the STP and hear your views.