

Somerset LMC Medical Director Report on GPC Chair Dr Richard Vautrey's Annual Report to England LMCs Conference – 23rd November 2018

Dr Richard Vautrey, the chair of GPC England, gave his report saying that NHS winter pressure was now a misnomer - the pressure was on every day. Staff, colleagues and patients were struggling. Short term fixes would not help cure the NHS. Thriving general practice would be the bedrock of a properly funded NHS. It was about time: the PM had said we had come to the end of austerity and it was about time to invest in general practice after 12 years of soaring workload and shrinking resources and workforce. The newsmedia was obsessed with A&E but so many more patients needed general practice. That CQC had judged 96% of practices to be good or outstanding despite this was a tribute to us and our teams who all deserved thanks. There was good news in places with five new medical schools opening each with an emphasis on community care. GP trainee numbers were finally on the rise. Younger doctors were understanding that primary care could make a difference to individuals and communities. GPC had negotiated the biggest increase in investment in our contracts for many years. The new Secretary of State had listened to the GPC and had stressed the importance of GPs and how we needed more of them and for them to be better supported. He strongly agreed with the need to shift the balance of funding. But warm words would mean nothing if practices continued to close and services lost. The extra £20.5b must not be lost to hospital deficits. Action was needed now. The day before the PM had announced that £3.5b of the money would be spent on community health care with more investment in primary care. However welcome some argued that this was what was needed only to stand still. The devil would be in the detail and the last thing we needed was a 1000 micro schemes tied up in bureaucracy (cries of "hear, hear").

He hoped Mr Hancock would also understand that PCSE outsourcing had been a disaster. The pensions crisis was bad enough with GPs left in limbo with huge tax liabilities but the cervical smear scandal was an absolute disgrace. NHSE could not outsource its responsibilities.

It was no wonder colleagues were reducing clinical commitment and many "part time" GPs worked longer hours than full timers in other jobs. "Part time" has become an unwarranted insult. (Applause). It allowed colleagues to keep working but what was needed were stronger teams. In contrast NHSE and CCGs were too quick to blame practices for infrastructure failings.

Community-based practice was threatened by unfair competition from new online providers who cherry picked easy patients: we turned no one away and practices needed support to offer similar new services to all their patients. We served communities in their hearts, not from a call centre in Soho. (Loud applause)

He warned against ICSs which could be a one way street to loss of autonomy and direct management control. He welcomed Nigel Watson's partnership review and listed the litany of undue pressures of unlimited liability on partners. Now the government had to act on Dr Watson's report not just to accept it. The first thing which must be sorted was indemnity and he was committed to the new state back scheme next April.

NHSE was about to announce its 10 year plan but committing resources to primary care: if the 70 year old model of NHS general practice action was needed now. It was about time!

Dr Vautrey received a standing ovation for about a minute.