

RCGP Briefing: What recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of funding for the NHS.

Richard Burgon MP, Health oral questions, 24th January 2023

Overview

General practice is the cornerstone of the NHS, helping around 50 million people in England every year, carrying out 370 million consultations last year. Latest data from NHS Digital showed that **12,623,360** appointments were carried out by GPs in August 2022, an increase of **608,732** compared to August 2021. This means that GPs carried out over **5%** more appointments in a year despite a declining workforce.

At the same time, we are facing a situation with a falling number of Full Time Equivalent (FTE) GPs looking after an increasing number of patients with ever more complex needs. As of August 2022, workforce statistics for general practice show:

- There were 27,515 fully qualified FTE GPs, a loss of 242 GPs since the start of the year. This figure also represents a 2.1% since June 2019 and a considerable 6.3% decrease since records began in 2015.
- The number of patients signed up to a GP practice has increased by 9% since 2015. In August 2022, each GP was looking after 2,248 patients on average, compared to 1,938 in 2015 - a 16% increase.

A recent RCGP survey paints a worrying picture of a service in crisis. 1,262 GPs responded to our survey between 3 March and 4 April 2022. The survey showed that:

- **42% of GPs say that they are planning to quit the profession in the next five years.**
- **65% of GPs say that patient safety is being compromised due to appointments being too short.**
- **68% of GPs say they don't have enough time to adequately assess and treat patients during appointments.**

Years of under-investment in general practice and the chronic shortage of GPs and other members of the practice team means that without urgent action from politicians and NHS decision makers, the ability of general practice to meet patients' needs is in jeopardy.

Recommendations:

The RCGP are calling on politicians and decision makers with responsibility for the NHS in England to urgently commit to a bold new plan to provide GPs and patients with the support that they need.

As outlined in our campaign - [**Fit for the future: a new plan for GPs and their patients**](#) - we are calling for:

- Allocate a bigger share of the NHS budget to general practice to return funding to 11% of total health spend - with £1 billion additional investment in GP premises, more funding for practices serving deprived communities, and extra money for

primary care networks to provide preventative care and promote population health.

- A nationally ringfenced retention fund of at least £150 million annually for GP retention and career development programmes.
- Additional funding of at least £100m per year to develop primary care networks to take a lead role in transforming patient care and population health. This should include funding to employ community health leads, increased funding for Clinical Directors or management staff and support to help practices work at scale and to implement new ways of working.
- Extra funding for practices serving the most deprived populations to recruit and retain staff in under-doctored areas, as part of a comprehensive review of the Carr-Hill formula.
- Investing £1 billion to make general practice premises fit for purpose, including sufficient space to accommodate expanded multidisciplinary teams.