PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release.

**General Practitioners in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland condemn the government’s plan released today regarding general practice (2).**

**“Although the government has reached the correct diagnosis, the prescription is more likely to kill rather than save general practice”**

The government correctly recognises that general practice has worked throughout the pandemic, have done the lion’s share of the Covid-19 Vaccination programme, and have “never been busier.” It notes that there are now more appointments in general practice than ever before (5 million more per month in England).

The government also recognises that “workload pressures in general practice are intense” but, despite this, patient satisfaction in general practice has actually increased ( 3)!

But although the government has got the diagnosis right, their solutions are wrong and likely to damage general practice further.

The government promises an additional £250million over winter to improve access to same day primary care. First, in this case, money is not the answer, but second this fails to recognise that access has already increased. The number of patients seen within one day has increased by 10% since 2019 to 55%. Only 6.6% of patients are now waiting more than a week for an appointment – half the figure seen in 2019. (3)

The conservative government promised 5000 additional GPs in 2015 and 6000 more in 2019 (4). In reality, since 2015, the number of GPs has reduced by 2000. The government did not understand the problem then, and does not understand the problem now.

The government core response is to name and shame the bottom 20% of practices, without any regard to the problems the practices have, nor even whether the services they are providing are appropriate and liked by their patients.

The government’s policy prior to the pandemic was to increase remote consultations, and indeed it is ironic that the legislation to require general practice to do this, and promote it, only came into force this month!.

There are some minor positive parts to the plan, including increasing penalties for people who abuse NHS staff, and a slight reduction in bureaucracy. But these are too insignificant to have any positive effect.

Dr Nainesh Chotai (GP in Glenfield and LLR LMC Chair) said “although the government has reached the correct diagnosis, the prescription is more likely to kill rather than save general practice.”

He added “general practice was being run into the ground by conservative governments prior to the pandemic, but despite this GPs and their teams have worked tirelessly to continue to provide 90% of healthcare throughout the pandemic, whilst delivering the successful vaccination programme, in very difficult circumstances. I am appalled that the government’s solution is not to address the actual problems of workload and poor morale but to further denigrate and undermine my colleagues and their teams. It shows how out of touch the government are with reality. The long term outcome of this ill-conceived plan will be to the detriment of practices and their patients.”

Ends

**Further Information:**

Dr Grant Ingrams, LLRLMC Press Officer 07973 630838

**Notes to Editors:**

1. The Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Local Medical Committee is an elected representative body with a statutory function to represent NHS GPs in this area.
2. Our plan for improving access for patients and supporting general practice
3. GP Patient Survey
4. Conservative party General Election pledge 2019