

LMC Statement in Response to ICB Board Report

The Norfolk & Waveney Local Medical Committee thanks the ICB for the opportunity to see the draft report ahead of it being published, which has allowed us to formally respond to its content. The report covers a wide range of areas, all of which impact general practice specifically; however, two areas that are having a significant impact on general practice are the primary-secondary care interface and workforce.

The content of the final presented report, and the situation as known locally, shows there is still a large amount of work that needs to be undertaken to improve the current primary-secondary interface.

Norfolk and Waveney Local Medical Committee has been striving to help resolve these issues which have plagued general practice for years, but which have become significantly more prevalent since the onset of the Covid 19 pandemic in 2020.

Since 2021, when NHS England and the BMA agreed additional contract requirements for all non-primary medical care providers, we have pushed for these to be enforced by the commissioner. However, little progress has been made and practices continue to report no tangible improvements in too many areas. The consequences of having other providers regularly breaching their contracts is overwhelming for both GPs and practice staff and is impacting the patients of Norfolk and Waveney and the quality of their care.

The LMC, and local practices, believe that Norfolk and Waveney ICB are failing to address the ongoing problems caused by provider contract breaches and is not meeting its responsibilities in managing the secondary care primary care interface.

In advance of this Board meeting, we wrote to Norfolk and Waveney ICB, and NHS England, to request they urgently address these significant concerns and take prompt action to rectify the current interface situation.

Workforce also remains a huge issue for general practice and, whilst the report refers to the additional staff brought into general practice via the PCN DES, it must also be acknowledged that these roles do not include GPs, which is the practice role most needed to sustain general practice in the long term. Encouraging more GPs into general practice and listening to established GPs, trusting them, and taking prompt, effective action will all surely help in the recruitment and retention of GPs into local general practice. This must be one of the absolute highest priorities of the ICB.

The future of general practice in Norfolk and Waveney depends, in no-small part, on these areas being addressed at the very earliest opportunity, to reduce some of the enormous pressure on GPs and their practice staff, who are at breaking point.

Dr Wendy Outwin
Chair, Norfolk & Waveney Local Medical Committee